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**Addressing gender relations through sport for  
development programmes in Zambia: An analysis of the  
lived experiences of female peer leaders**

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A thesis submitted to Durham University in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2024



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## Abstract

The field of Sport for Development (SfD) has grown in prominence in recent decades, and is now well established in the Global South, where non-governmental organisations (NGOs) deliver sport-based programmes in an attempt to address existing structures of inequality (Spaaij et al. 2018). In recent years, SfD has seen a growing focus on the empowerment of women and girls which has been positioned as a key to improving marginalised communities and societies (Lindsey et al. 2017). An increasing number of SfD NGOs have also adopted peer education programmes, which are dependent upon a volunteer workforce comprised of local unemployed youth who operate as peer leaders (Schulenkorf et al. 2023).

Despite the integral nature of peer leaders as the main implementer of SfD programmes, research into issues concerning their involvement in the field remains limited, particularly in the Global South (Mxekezo-Lallie and Burnett, 2022). This study addresses this gap by critically examining the lived experiences of female peer leaders in SfD programmes in Zambia, extending existing literature in a number of ways. First, the study presents the first-hand localised accounts of young women in SfD who, to date, remain overlooked and marginalised (Zipp et al. 2019). Second, it explores how SfD programmes feature in the broader trajectory of women's lives; a rarity in SfD research which traditionally focuses heavily on 'impacts' and 'outcomes' (Jeanes and Lindsey, 2014). Third, as gender inequality is a stark reality which positions Zambian women and girls as subordinate to men (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016), this study examines how deeply rooted gender relations influence participation in SfD as a peer leader.

This qualitative study collected data across two fieldwork visits. During the visits primary data were collected through semi-structured and informal interviews with female peer leaders and also with other connected SfD actors. Across my fieldwork, a total of 46 individual interviews were undertaken, of which 27 were with female peer leaders, including some oriented towards a life history approach. Data collection was supported by ethnographic methods including participant observation and an ethnographic diary. Theoretical work on empowerment (Rowlands, 1995; 1997; Cornwall, 2016) and gender performativity (Goffman, 1956; Butler, 1990) informed the study and interpretation of data.

The key findings highlight the extent and varied scope of contextual influences that determine engagement with, and participation in, SfD programmes in Zambia. This is a vital insight for SfD programmes that are focused on empowering women and girls, as these internal and external constraints influence the extent to which SfD can foster or hinder empowerment processes (Rowlands, 1997). SfD programmes were found to provide a 'safe space' in which change on an individual level can occur, yet the research also demonstrated that young women are often constrained in applying these changes to situations outside of the SfD field. The programmes enable young women to occupy a traditionally masculine domain, developing their critical consciousness to collectively resist and challenge traditional gender norms. This links to the performative conception of gender, indicating how some young women are able to adopt an identity reflective of the new context they have moved into in sport, beyond identities typically prescribed to Zambian women (Butler, 1988; 1990). It also links to the relational nature of empowerment, and how the young women used the collective identity and connections they had formed in sport to facilitate change (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014).

To conclude, for SfD programmes to fully achieve their intended aims, this study advocates for a greater recognition of the ways in which gender influence young women in and around sport; further consideration of how to disrupt broader social structures of inequality by moving beyond an individualist focus; and differential support for peer leaders within SfD programmes dependent on the wider context of their lives.

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## Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCO	British Colonial Office
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program
BSA	British South Africa
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDEALS	International Development Through Excellence and Leadership in Sport
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NCDP	National Commission for Development Planning
NDPs	National Development Plans
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
OYDC	Olympic Youth Development Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Sport for Development and Peace
SDPIWG	Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group
SfD	Sport for Development
SFDT	Sport-for-Development Theory
SFHM	Sport-for-Health model
SIA	Sport in Action
SOCs	State-owned corporations
S4D	Sport for development Framework
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YPE	Youth Peer Education

## **Statement of Copyright**

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis has been the result of a journey, which at times, has taken a lot longer than anticipated but one I hope, and trust has remained true to its purpose. I set out on this academic journey with a hope, and desire to generate meaningful research, in a field which I value, and I hope, as you read this thesis, the stories of the participants come through.

I do not imagine it is possible to acknowledge and thank everyone who has helped me complete this thesis and who have supported me over the duration of this research project. There are countless individuals I would like to express my gratitude to, who have contributed in different ways, and without whom this this thesis would not have been possible. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Iain Lindsey and Professor Gina Porter, for your support, guidance and inspiration. Your enthusiasm for your respective fields has further fuelled my passion for this research. Thank you for saying yes to becoming my supervisors over a video call from Zambia back in 2015, for your patience, for trusting me through this process, and for helping me navigate this paper successfully, especially in the final moments of this PhD. There is absolutely no way I could have done this without you both, thank you, I am forever indebted to you.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This research is focused on the lived experiences of female peer leaders in sport for development (SfD) programmes in Zambia. Through exploring the relationship between sport and gender relations this research sought to understand the lived experiences of female peer leaders in depth and in the broadest context, considering how the socialisation of gender relations and norms influence their involvement in particular peer education components of SfD programmes. The research also explored how SfD programmes influence gender relations, thus ultimately enabling a wider examination of the complexities of the interplay of gender and SfD programmes.

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis, identifying my initial personal rationale, presenting relevant aspects of the Zambian context, and introducing the relevant SfD, gender and youth literature that sets the stage for this research project. The chapter will also provide information surrounding the researcher's rationale for conducting this project, the significance of the topic studied, the research questions and, for clarity, a structural overview of the entire thesis.

### **1.2 Personal Rationale**

This thesis is the result of an experience which shaped my life and subsequently led to a desire to further explore and critically examine the field of “sport for development” (hereafter, SfD). Many view life as a journey, where the focus does not lie with the end destination, but the route through which one goes to get there: a journey that is characterised by opportunities, and challenges, highs and lows, triumphs, and failures, all of which contribute towards the present moment.

The thesis commenced from a particular life moment, emerging from my time spent in Zambia supporting the delivery of SfD programmes in partnership with two Zambian non-governmental organisations (NGOs); organisations which lie at the centre of this study. Starting with six weeks in Zambia in 2010, followed by six months in 2015, these experiences shaped my outlook, my life, and subsequently my interest in this area, with those experiences being the catalyst for this PhD thesis. During my time in Zambia, I spent many days in different parts of Lusaka, interacting with various communities, getting to know the community members, and forming connections with the young people who were part of those communities. Some of those connections turned into friendships, friendships that have stood the test of time, and distance, and still exist today. My familiarity with the context turned to curiosity, as I began to observe the nature of the lives of those I spent my days with, particularly the young women. I was drawn into the way the young women lived their lives, and I wanted to learn about the way they navigated their place as a young woman partaking in sport in a society that has been

shaped, at least in part, by the colonial legacy of gender stereotypes, norms, and behaviours; something that became evident the more time I spent in the various communities. I wanted to understand what it meant to be a young woman involved with sport in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Zambia, and I wanted to represent those experiences in as authentic light as possible. This thesis has thus been more than simply a choice of studying, but an opportunity to critically explore and examine a field of personal interest. These life experiences occurred alongside the burgeoning growth in the use of sport within international development efforts. These efforts have become increasingly recognised more widely, reflecting a belief in sports' perceived capacity to contribute towards the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and before these, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I would attribute my interest in the SfD area to three factors. Firstly, as alluded to above, I would consider my personal experiences in Zambia as the catalyst for this research. My time spent in Zambia in the summer of 2010 as part of UK Sport's International Development Through Excellence and Leadership in Sport programme (IDEALS) first sparked my interest in international development; a field that had remained relatively unknown to me before that experience. During my time on this international programme, I spent time volunteering for both Sport in Action and EduSport Foundation (hereafter, EduSport), the two NGOs that feature at the centre of this study. This initial experience left such a profound impression on my life that I felt moved to continue to engage in SfD work. The many hours spent processing my experiences, reflecting on my interactions and, over time, critically questioning the work I had done, stimulated a curiosity about SfD programmes. This led to a second factor, an ever-increasing inclination to view SfD through a critical lens. I wished to apply such a critical lens to consider how the perceived power of sport could be used as a transformative tool for social change and the extent to which this aligns with the lives of young women in Zambia today. Thirdly, sport has always played a pivotal role in my life, and I have been fortunate enough to experience sport as a competitor, coach, fan, through my career and academically, and this in turn has presented many opportunities. Sport is an aspect I identify with, and the roles above are places where I have found my own personal identity.

Having had a lifelong involvement in sport, I previously used to hold firm a belief in the power of sport, especially given my first-hand experience throughout my entire life, and largely and initially shared a view that echoed the words of the late Nelson Mandela:

*“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than*

*governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination”<sup>1</sup>.*

However, this mythopoeic view of sport needs to be taken with caution, as the rationale for using sport has consistently been grounded on supposed externalities, where it has been conceived as a tool for development based on its perceived capability to address issues of personal and social development. This is a view that I initially held when I returned from my time in Zambia, and I largely used to believe in sport’s ability to change lives for the better. But, following my subsequent Masters in the field of sport and development within an international context, my knowledge increased, my critical lens broadened, and I am now able to understand the SfD field beyond this mythopoeic view. This view of sport has also been widely criticised in SfD literature, where there is a growing position that is concerned with scrutinising and interrogating evidence to establish what works, for whom, and in what circumstances (Adams and Harris, 2014). As such, I undertook this research to expand my understanding of and critically reflect on my prior beliefs.

Through outlining the above from the start, I am identifying my personal influence as a ‘situated’ observer, acknowledging an awareness that my background and experience has shaped the following research process, directly and indirectly (Markula and Silk, 2011). My individual position encompasses elements such as my gender, history, culture, and personal experience, all of which are reflected in, and through, the research processes I adopted (Creswell and Creswell, 2017), and will be further considered at relevant points in the thesis, in particular in the methodological and conclusions chapter (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 9 respectively).

### **1.3 Situating the research in the SfD field**

Over the past three decades, the field of SfD has grown in prominence, leading to the exponential growth of a global sector of research, policy, and practice (Giulianotti, 2012). SfD sits as a subset of ‘sport for development and peace’ (SDP), with the latter specifically encompassing peace building efforts, and is also commonly known as ‘sport in development’ and ‘development-through-sport’ (Black 2010, Hayhurst, Kay and Chawansky 2016; Kidd 2008, Levermore 2008; Darnell, 2012). SfD has been taken to refer to:

*“...the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youth and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of*

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson Mandela quoted at the 2000 inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards: <https://www.globalgoals.org/sport-for-development-and-peace/>

*region and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution” (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011, p.311).*

SfD has been associated with a diverse range of development goals, ranging from education to employment and training, peace-building and conflict resolution, social inclusion, and health education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing crime and urban violence, poverty reduction and the social inclusion of marginalised groups (Giulianotti, Collison and Hognestad, 2022). The actual specific goal of any SfD organisation, programme or project will depend largely on the perceived needs of the recipients and their local area (Collison et al. 2019). The ‘sport’ aspect of SfD is also a highly diverse area, ranging from globally prominent sports such as football, which has been identified as the most commonly featured sport in programmes and initiatives (Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe, 2016), to the involvement of varied types of play, games, and physical culture (Collison et al. 2019; Giulianotti et al. 2022).

The field of SfD has received significant attention and backing from various parties such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academics, practitioners, and government agencies (Akindes and Kirwin, 2012; Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe, 2016). As a result of the growing attention, and institutional and political support, the number of sport-based programmes operating within the development field has been constantly increasing (Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe, 2016). This increase highlights a common belief that sport can act as a conduit to achieving wider development agendas and broader objectives (Kidd, 2008), often for marginalised or disadvantaged communities, with SfD focusing its ambition on addressing and altering existing structures of inequality (Spaaij et al. 2018). SfD activity is most prominent in low- and middle-income countries in the Global South<sup>2</sup> and involves the planning and implementation of sport-based programmes with young people in pursuit of these social and development goals (Giulianotti et al. 2022).

Giulianotti and Armstrong (2011) outlined three historical phases that provide a backdrop against which the emergence of SfD can be contextualised. These phases, although distinct, are not hermetically sealed and therefore features and trends that may be visible in one stage, may also be apparent in another stage. The first phase, ‘colonialism and civilisation’, was characterised by the introduction of sport through colonial projects. In this phase, the authors highlighted how sport was used as a key element in wider

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout development literature there have been many terms used to distinguish between countries such as ‘First World’ and ‘Third World’, ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’, ‘underdeveloped’, ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ and ‘western’ and ‘eastern’. These terms are linked to the ideological and geographical binaries of countries, which Hayhurst et al. (2011) and Darnell (2012) have recognised are highly controversial. Other critical writers have made the distinction between countries based on population, removing geographical boundaries through opting for terms such as ‘one-third world’ and ‘two-third worlds’ (Mohanty 2003). This study utilised the terminology of ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ throughout, referring to the ‘Global South’ as “a community of people at different geographical locations who experience a common set of problems – problems which emanate, by and large, from deep inequities of power within and between nations” (Mwaanga 2012, p. 12). The ‘Global South’ thus constitutes part of the world, which is understood as separate from, and therefore resistant to the economically and culturally dominant Global North (Darnell 2012). However, the use of alternative terms when quoting from literature will be followed.

colonial projects, including empire building, colonial expansion, and the control of indigenous people across different territories (Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011). Many indigenous groups across non-European territories were able to experience sport, with the games revolution, which refers to the emergence of modern team games, providing the means through which sport was spread across the colonies (Nielsen, 2014). In Zambia, during the colonial period, sport was used to inculcate western culture, introducing sport and games within the country (Muindi, 2022), laying the foundation upon which the SfD space in Zambia has emerged.

The second phase, ‘nationalism, ideology and armed conflict’, occurred between the 1940s and 1990s, and highlighted a period where “sport was inevitably caught up in highly contested colonial and postcolonial struggles, particularly in Africa and Latin America, and within the cold war context” (Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011, p. 383). Throughout this phase, the authors suggest that sport was used as a catalyst for warfare, as the symbolic flexing of militarised and nationalist powers, and a populist medium through which authoritarian regimes were able to mobilise the support of the masses (ibid). In Zambia, President Kaunda took advantage of the national interest in football and used the game as a tool for propagating his political agenda and power, highlighting the extent to which the game had become enmeshed in postcolonial culture (Chipande, 2016).

A third phase began in the mid-1990s, according to Giulianotti and Armstrong (2011), a phase that marked the growing use of sport as a tool for promoting peace and development. Whilst there were outstanding associations between sport and the military within this phase, the start of a new phase highlighted the emergence of a different use of sport to achieve ‘alternative’ military purposes (ibid). This phase created the field of SDP in the contemporary setting and reflected a growing number of development programmes being operated around the globe (Black, 2010). In 1993, the UN formally introduced sport onto its agenda, resolving to use ‘sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace’, which in turn signalled the start of an expansive growth in the sector as well as a close alignment with the MDGs policy and agenda (United Nations, 2024).

Since the 1990s, the following decades have been marked by a growing engagement from governments, international agencies, non-profit organisations, and a range of other stakeholders with the potential role sport can play to alleviate humanitarian issues (Nauright and Parrish, 2012), with this practice becoming more and more established in the international development space (Kidd, 2008). With this increase in practice, the popularity of sport’s role in development has received increased attention in academia (Darnell 2012), with the emerging literature facilitating the creation of sport and development as a field of study (Kidd 2008).

#### **1.4 The Context of Zambia and SfD Programmes working with Girls and Women**

The context explained in this section indicates the suitability of Zambia as a context for this research. Zambia has been recognised as a ‘quintessential location for development efforts’ and an early site of significant African SfD organisations and subsequent programmes (Lindsey et al. 2017). Unlike many organisations across the Global South, Sport in Action and EduSport were programmes locally developed and implemented through local people (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014). This research was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia’s capital city, focusing on the informal settlements within which young people live. A full discussion of the local context is included within Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3.1).

Zambia has a predominantly youthful population, with current data showing that 82% of the country’s population is comprised of young people below the age of 35, equating to 10.7 million people (UNFPA, 2022). This is the largest youth population in the history of Zambia, and whilst the country continues to improve in key development indicators, addressing the range of issues affecting young women remains a critical development challenge (ibid). For young women in Zambia, adolescence is a critical transitional period in terms of their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development (Soler-Hampejsek et al., 2020). The importance of education for girls and young women has been highlighted as a crucial factor in the development of any country, however, for young women in Zambia, their educational journey is often inhibited due to poverty, early marriage, and early pregnancy (Milimo et al. 2021). Data shows that in Zambia, one in three girls become young mothers before the age of 18-years-old, and a similar proportion are married by the same age (UNFPA, 2022). The difficulties that girls and young women face through being unable to access education affects their earnings in adulthood, their career prospects, their health, as well as their wider agency within communities and society (UNESCO, 2024). Girls and young women face gender-specific vulnerabilities and risks that challenge their healthy development, including sexual and gender-based violence, HIV, and childbearing (Austrian et al. 2020), with girls’ education being identified as the most important socioeconomic determinant (Tanner et al. 2022).

Against this backdrop, girls and young women in Zambia disproportionately face considerable structural disadvantages in what is a patriarchal society, disadvantages that are heightened for those who live in poverty (Jeanes et al. 2013). The opportunities for Zambian young women are limited in comparison to their male peers, with families living in poverty prioritising the education of boy children over their female siblings, and girls’ education being considered a low priority (Jeanes, 2020). As a result, Zambian young women are left with limited opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy, and critical life skills (ibid). In response to these ongoing inequalities for girls and young women, sport has become an attractive tool to address gender inequalities, focusing on the empowerment of socio-economically underserved girls through sport (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016).

In sub-Saharan Africa specifically, sport initially gained contemporary impetus as a tool for development in relation to the wider HIV/AIDS pandemic (Banda, 2017). Zambia, in particular, “found

itself at the epicentre of the HIV pandemic in Central and South Africa” once the first case of HIV was diagnosed there in the mid-1980s (UNDP, 2011, p. 31). Since then, and over the last three decades especially, the emergence and growth of the SfD sector in Zambia has been reflected in the unprecedented increase in the number of SfD NGOs operating in country. Two points are of particular relevance to the influx and expansion of SfD organisations in Zambia. Firstly, the greater prevalence of SfD organisations in Zambia, compared to some other southern African countries, can be attributed to the categorisation of the country as low-income, but one that has low levels of social unrest and is politically peaceful and stable (Lindsey et al. 2017). This positioning of the country is supported by Smith-Höhn (2009) whose strategic assessment of Zambia highlighted it as a relatively politically stable country, unlike many of its neighbours, with any arising conflicts generally being resolved through non-violent means. This characterisation of Zambia reinforced its status as an ideal place to receive international aid (Lindsey et al. 2017). At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was an increasing prevalence of foreign funding from international development agencies, charities, private sector organisations and international sports federations for SfD programmes in low-income countries with a similar status to Zambia, which has resulted in expansion and growth of SfD both in Zambia and beyond (Banda, 2017; Lindsey et al. 2017).

Secondly, SfD NGOs in Zambia have developed and operated with a degree of independence from government. Early relations between government agencies and SfD NGOs were hostile, with growing donors’ resources being directed towards the emerging SfD NGOs over government agencies, which in turn further raised their international profile (Lindsey et al. 2017). This funding climate was reflective of the wider development practice and space, whereby more resources were being made available to community-based organisation, due to a growing preference amongst donors for working directly with grassroots organisations (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). This preference was due to the belief that community-based organisations (CBOs) were best situated to effectively reach the poorest members of society, including many indigenous sectors of the population (Vakil, 2018). Currently, many NGOs work within the SfD field and continue to play a central role as providers of sport-based initiatives within communities throughout Zambia (Jeanes et al. 2013). NGOs have become the organisations at the forefront of the SfD field, assuming responsibility for advancing development through sport in various localities (Mwaanga 2014).

This thesis explores female peer leaders volunteering with two local and indigenous Zambian NGOs, Sport in Action and EduSport. Both organisations involved in the study are based in Lusaka, Zambia and they were selected due to their prominence within the field of SfD, particularly Zambian SfD. They have both also received considerable external attention, attracting funding from across the globe to devise and deliver SfD initiatives targeting young people (Banda, 2011).



Founded by Clement Chileshe in 1998, Sport in Action began operating as a sports organisation with a purpose to improve the quality of people's lives through sport and recreation activities (Sport in Action, 2024). In 1999, it was officially registered as a non-for-profit organisation and was the first registered 'sporting NGO' in Zambia with SfD at its core principles (Darnell, Field, and Kidd, 2019; sportanddev.org, 2021). Sport in Action focuses on using sport as a vehicle to address wider societal problems, working in collaboration with schools and community groups (Banda, 2011). Sport in Action predominantly works in the capital Lusaka, but delivers activities across 12 districts in Zambia, with a concentration of delivery in the Northern Province - Lunte, Lupososhi, Luwingu, Mporokoso, Nsama and Kaputa districts; the Lusaka Province – Chongwe, Lusaka, and Kafue districts; the Central Province - Chibombo, and Kabwe districts and the Southern Province – Livingstone (Sport in Action, 2019). These programmes are a combined package of sport, cultural exchange, traditional games and HIV/AIDS education that aim to enhance young people's knowledge in the areas of health and life skills and social, cultural, and economic empowerment (Banda, 2011; Sport in Action, 2024). As an organisation, Sport in Action works with a number of target groups, including women and girls. To support this, Sport in Action delivers a sport-based gender empowerment programme called 'Girls in Action', which is aimed at educating and empowering girls through sport and recreational activity (Sport in Action, 2024b). Girls in Action is delivered across all Sport in Action delivery sites, targeting girls aged 12 to 20 years old with activities to educate them about gender, HIV/AIDS, health, and social issues, with the combination of sport and education aimed at making difficult and uncomfortable topics easier to talk about. Through this programme, Sport in Action seeks to 'empower girls to live an active, healthy lifestyle' (Sport in Action, 2024b).

From 1996, EduSport Foundation operated in targeted Zambian communities before formally registering as an NGO in 1999. Founded by Oscar Mwaanga, EduSport derives its name from Education through Sport, and was built upon the values and principles of Christianity and Ubuntu<sup>3</sup> (Mwaanga and Mwansa, 2013). EduSport was formed in response to the identified gaps in opportunities for communities to participate in sport and youth empowerment (EduSport, 2021) as well as the pressing issues of poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and children's rights (Hayhurst, MacNeill and Frisby, 2011). EduSport aims to facilitate and support empowerment and development through sport initiatives in under-served and vulnerable communities in Zambia (Mwaanga and Mwansa, 2013). Through its work, EduSport 'seeks to equip communities with the skills, knowledge and resources needed to control their own lives, providing them with the tools to develop local initiatives' (ibid). Similar to Sport in Action's Girls in Action programme, EduSport launched their female-focused 'Go Sisters' programme

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<sup>3</sup> Ubuntu has been described as the art of being a human being (Bhengu, 1996), and is a common African aphorism that is often articulated as "a person is a person through other persons" (Ramose, 1999, p. 49). Ubuntu speaks to the interconnectedness of humanity and at its core stresses that an African person is only complete through other persons (Mwaanga and Adeosun, 2020). This communal participation relates to African culture as an underpinning way of life where human beings should relate to one another with compassion, dignity, harmony, reciprocity, and respect (Brookdryk, 2002; Nussbaum, 2003).

to help address the myriad of problems facing girls in Zambia. Go Sisters is delivered as a priority programme of EduSport, targeting socio-economically underprivileged girls between the ages of 5 to 25 years old (Namukanga, 2024). The stated aims of ‘Go Sisters’ are two-fold: first, to increase the participation of girls and young women in sport, physical education, and other recreational activities; and second, to use sport as a tool to empower girls and young women with the knowledge, skills and resources to prepare them to pursue equality, and to improve their outlook for their future (Namukanga, 2024; United Purpose, 2024). Through focusing on advocacy and empowerment, Go Sisters runs leadership development opportunities for marginalised girls and young women, so as to enable them take on positions with decision making responsibilities in their local communities (United Purpose, 2024). Go Sisters also facilitates empowerment through activities such as mentoring, peer leadership, peer-led workshops, public speaking and sports administration (EduSport, 2018a).

Sport in Action and EduSport led to SfD gaining increasing recognition both within Zambia and beyond (Lindsey et al. 2017). Both NGOs have focused on indigenous culture, with traditional Zambian culture, games and dances utilised as part of their physical and health education programmes (Darnell et al. 2019). Operating via a peer-led delivery model, Sport in Action and EduSport utilise the efforts of young people to lead their programmes, to deliver a variety of sporting activities, to provide mentorship for their peers (Nicholls, 2009), and to facilitate the delivery of sport and health education (Reid and Tattersall, 2017). Peer leadership has been recognised to lie at the heart of SfD delivery, where programmes are reliant upon local volunteer peer leaders (Lindsey et al. 2017), and both NGOs in this study utilise this approach. The approach relies on a team of committed volunteers who act as the liaison between the organisation, the local community, and the project site (Sport in Action, 2024a). My research focuses primarily on these young volunteers, so as to examine the contextual realities of the female peer leaders through SfD programmes in Zambia.

## **1.5 Research Focus and Questions**

The focus of this research study on the lived experiences of female peer leaders in Zambia addressed existing limitations within academic literature on the SfD. There are different, if connected, rationales for the relevance and importance of this research. Firstly, peer leaders are central to the delivery of SfD programmes, with their involvement being so prominent that Nicholls (2009) describes SfD as occurring “on the back of peer educators” (p. 167). The presence of peer-led activities within the SfD field has received attention with academia, with a cluster of authors exploring the impact of peer education within this space (Jeanes, 2013; Nicholls, 2009; Peachey et al. 2014; Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013; Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes, 2013). However, despite peer leaders’ key involvement there has been little empirical research into this particular aspect within the literature (Lindsey et al. 2017). Therefore, this

research seeks to increase the understanding and knowledge about peer leaders' experiences, particularly that of female peer leaders in a Zambian context.

Secondly, the main discourses concerning gender in sport relate to the unequal power relations, differential access, and deeply rooted disparities that are associated with culturally inspired roles and gender identities of men and women (Burnett, 2022; Forsyth et al. 2019). Gender inequality is a stark reality that influences people in all spheres of their existence in sub-Saharan Africa (Burnett, 2018), with Zambian women and girls traditionally being subordinate to men (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016). As a result, the place of young women in sport in Zambia is constantly being contested and debated. As SfD programmes seek to increase girls' and young women's participation in sport, as well their presence in holding positions of power in the sporting field, such as that of a peer leader, there is a need to explore and document the lived experiences of the young women who occupy this space.

Thirdly, by focusing specifically on the lived experiences of young women, this research addresses a recognised gap, in that the 'lived experiences' of girls and women remain marginalised in SfD (Zipp et al. 2019) and first-hand indigenous accounts have not made a significant contribution to our understanding of SfD (Seiler and Chepyator-Thomson, 2023). Indigenous voices are currently underrepresented in SfD research and practice, particularly those of indigenous women whose voices are largely absent (Stewart-Withers and Hapeta, 2023). Most particularly, Nicholls et al. argued in 2011 that young female Africans' knowledge "is rarely considered as part of the evidence base of sport for development and is often dismissed" (2011, p. 250). The voices of subaltern individuals, who are often 'muted' through research, can provide a greater account of the specificities of SfD programmes in action, contributing towards the way in which we perceive development (Briggs and Sharp, 2004). Therefore, by focusing on the lived experiences of female young people who are involved in SfD in Zambia, this research aimed to address a recognised gap by capturing and presenting first-hand localised accounts of sport and their views and experiences through it. This will contribute towards addressing Banda and Holmes' (2017) concerns that the continued limited inclusion of local voices will only exacerbate their ability to resist or contest hegemonic power relations and social structures. With Thorpe and Chawanksy (2017) calling for a greater recognition of "women's lived experiences as a valid and valuable form of knowledge" (p. 558), this thesis seeks to ensure that peer leaders experiences and inputs are heard in meaningful ways, providing a space where female peer leaders can contribute towards strengthening development practices (Elabor-Idemudia, 2002).

Finally, previous research has focused heavily on the analysis of SfD 'impacts' and 'outcomes', rather than the ways in which SfD programmes may feature in the broader trajectory of an individual's life (Jeanes and Lindsey, 2014). Therefore, this research takes an investigative approach, aiming to fill a gap in the literature by obtaining the perspectives of female peer leaders on their experiences of SfD and how this has been influenced by, and influenced aspects of, their broader lives. The aim in so doing

is to prompt a shift, moving female peer leaders from the “silent margins of discourses on sport-in-development to the active and vocal centre” (Nicholls, 2009, p. 162). By prioritising the knowledge of peer leaders in the Global South, the research aims to uncover the hidden influences and factors that shape experiences, investigating the visible and invisible facets within the SfD field.

This research thus attempts to contribute to contextual understandings of gender and SfD, by providing a critical examination of the experiences of female peer leaders within SfD programmes in Zambia, making extensive use of the knowledge and first-hand insights of young women to achieve this.. To achieve this, this study was focused around three primary research questions:

- What consequences do sport-for-development programmes have in the broader trajectory of a young woman’s life in Zambia?
- What are the contextual factors that influence the participation of young women as peer leaders within SfD programmes?
- What are the influences of gender norms on young women as peer leaders?

## **1.6 Structure of Thesis**

In pursuit of the research questions outlined above, this thesis is structured as follows. The next three chapters draw on and review existing literature from a range of academic disciplines, in order to situate the subsequent empirical research. The first of these chapters is focused on the ‘Sport for Development in the Global South and Zambia’, exploring the growth of the SfD field, and contextualising it within the broader development field, as well as the specific SfD landscape in Zambia, which is a significant focus of this thesis. Chapter 3 examines ‘Gender, Power and Empowerment’, setting out theoretical frameworks that underpin this research through exploring concepts of gender, power, feminism, and empowerment, and seeking to consider how these impact, and shape, the relational nature of the lives of young women in Zambia. As part of this chapter, an exploration of the various conceptualisations of empowerment in the literature is undertaken, discussing how empowerment has been considered within the SfD field. Chapter 4 focuses on ‘Young People and Women in Africa’ so as to provide understanding of the social and development contexts within which young people and women in Zambia lead their everyday lives. This chapter considers the physical and institutional environments that shape relevant contexts, including education, (un)employment and entrepreneurship.

Chapter 5 connects the conceptual frameworks considered in the previous chapter with the methodological position and research design of the study. This chapter explains the components of the research, noting the key philosophical, methodological, ethical, and procedural aspects of the study. It specifically justifies the utilisation of an interpretive methodological approach to capture how young women make sense of their life experiences, recognising that this occurs in a given space, context, and

time (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Drawing on the insights captured, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present and discuss findings from the research. Chapter 6 is centred on a life histories approach, to provide retrospective accounts of the lives of the participants. Through this chapter, three different life histories of particular female peer leaders will be shared, exploring how these participants view their own lives, their experiences through sport and SfD programmes. Furthermore, this chapter will also explain how their lives sit within the broader social, political, and economic contexts (Daly, 2007) and how they connect with the broader facets of Zambian young women's lives. Chapter 7 draws on the experiences of the young women within sport, looking at the influence sport, SfD programmes and their experiences in and through sport have had on their life. Chapter 8 delves more into an exploration of the experiences faced by the peer leaders outside of sport, recognising the influences that their environments have had on their life journeys. Through this exploration, a nuanced understanding of the wider contextual factors is presented, providing insights into the influence that external factors outside of sport have on an individuals' journey through SfD programmes. The thesis concludes with Chapter 9 outlining the contribution of this research to knowledge on SfD, summarising the key findings, and offering recommendations for future research, policy, and practice within SfD.

## **Chapter 2: Sport for Development in the Global South and Zambia**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 1, the emergence and growth of the SfD field was discussed, highlighting the growing focus on how sport can be leveraged to achieve broader development goals by a range of stakeholders (Hozhabri, 2022; Giulianotti and Armstrong, 2011). Building on this background, this chapter will focus specifically on SfD in Zambia, examining the roles of NGOs within this field, outlining the broader context within which this research was conducted. More so, this chapter will delve into the various aspects of SfD programmes such as peer education programmes and the pivotal role of peer leaders.

In the context of this research project that is centred on the experiences of young women within SfD programmes, it is important to outline and present the current status of SfD, to enable these experiences to be framed within their broader context. More so, it is equally as important to thoroughly draw on previous literature on SfD to consolidate what is already known about the field, identify any gaps, and to provide the background upon which this thesis is written. To enable this to be achieved, the following chapter is split into two overarching sections: (1) organisational context for development and SfD programmes, and (2) youth peer education and peer leaders. Through doing this, this will help outline the landscape upon which this research has been conducted, whilst also helping to contextualise the following chapters.

### **2.2 Organisational Context for Development and SfD Programmes**

This first overarching section will consider the organisational context for development and SfD programmes in Zambia as well as more generally. Through providing this broad overview, this section will introduce the development landscape and the role of NGOs within development, which has in turn led to the emergence of SfD NGOs. Following this, the wider political and economic context in post-independence Zambia will be examined, identifying how it has shaped the expansion of SfD in the country. This history is important in understanding the significance of sport in Zambia, and how the colonial history and legacy of gender has influenced modern day society. This backdrop is also crucial for achieving one of the research questions. Through centring the research on two Zambia NGOs, and situating the experience of the participants within the broader context, this will help the thesis determine: ‘What are the contextual factors that influence the participation of young women as peer leaders within SfD programmes?’.

Over the past three decades, a shift in the global development agenda has resulted in different emphasises being placed on the relative roles of the state, market, and civil society (Hulme, 2013), with the prominence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) increasing dramatically across the wider development sector (Lewis, 2006). NGOs are generally understood to operate in the ‘third sector’,

concerned with addressing problems of social justice and global poverty (Lewis, 2014). The gap that enabled the expansion of NGOs emerged as the result of large-scale reductions in the delivery of state-provided services, increasing structural adjustments in aid policies and a decrease in public expenditure (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards, 2015). As private organisations, NGOs are neither formed by the government nor do they speak on behalf of the government, rather operating from an aspiration to push for change or to take action to create change (McCormick, 2023). A considerable amount of literature has emerged in an attempt to conceptualise NGOs, with the term NGO generally encompassing any organisation working for a social, cultural, economic, educational, or religious cause (Abraham, 2011), and engaging in development and poverty reduction at a local, national, or global level (Lewis, 2006). These organisations tend to advocate across a range of developmental themes and work in many fields including education, rural and urban development, women's empowerment, child rehabilitation and awareness, and advocacy of rights (Abichandani and Babu, 2018). Despite the diverse nature of NGOs, such organisations commonly reflect four similar attributes in being voluntary, independent of outside inference, not-for-profit and not self-serving. (Panday, 2016). Other researchers have identified similar characteristics, with Salamon and Anheier (1999) referring to five traits that define NGOs, those being formal, non-governmental, non-profit, self-governing, and voluntary.

The NGO landscape has become diverse and expansive, especially as they have become significant actors on the global stage, with NGOs coming in many shapes and sizes, operating at many levels, from the local to the global (Nasiritousi, 2019). The term 'NGO' is very broad and encompasses many different types of organisations, and this is reflected in the plethora of terms used to describe NGOs in literature, which include, but are not limited to international NGOs (INGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), grassroots organisations (GROs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), environmental NGOs, indigenous NGOs, and civil society organisations (CSOs) (Vakil, 1997; 2018). Whilst defining NGOs appears to still be 'a work in progress' (Vakil, 2018), with some referring to this as 'the unanswerable question' (Banks et al. 2015, p. 708), for this thesis there needs to be a clear distinction between the different types of NGOs to enable the SfD NGOs in this study to be understood in their broader context, in how their characteristics align with those drawn from literature. For the nature of this thesis, two key types of NGOs will be highlighted: International NGOs (INGOs) and indigenous NGOs.

INGOs are NGOs which are based in one country, often the Global North, seeking to achieve development objectives in another country, often the Global South (Banks and Hume, 2012). These organisations often have limited country-level knowledge, and as a result, choose to work through domestic and local partners, who are in closer proximity to the target population geographically, culturally, and linguistically (ibid). Calls have been made to address the increasing complex challenge of North-South partnerships, which are fraught with power imbalances and unequal relationships (WACSI, 2021). The nature of these 'partnerships' will be discussed later in this chapter, but tend to

heavily favour the INGO, who have adequate finance and resources (Banks and Hume, 2012). Conversely, indigenous NGOs, which include the two NGOs who feature in this research, Sport in Action and EduSport, are also referred to as local or national or Southern NGOs or more commonly indigenous organisations in literature. Indigenous NGOs are local-level institutions with a community base, such as ethnic associations, traditional religious groups, women's groups and a wide variety of other social groups (Blunt and Warren, 1996). Indigenous NGOs advocate for change in their home countries, using the indigenous knowledge of their members to correct and restore past imbalances and injustices (Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell, 2017). This knowledge is embedded in community socio-cultural practices, institutions, relationships, and rituals (Kayombo, 2013). To strengthen their place in development, indigenous NGOs have integrated conventional knowledge alongside their indigenous knowledge to develop activities and strengthen their knowledge base to influence national strategy (Lwoga et al. 2017). Indigenous knowledge within an indigenous NGO holds significant value as it can be linked to the local culture and history of a particular community and may be used by the community for economic development, health promotion, culture preservation and political transformation, ideally leading to poverty reduction (Kayombo, 2013). Although not always the case, indigenous NGOs are usually founded and managed by the nationals of the country in which they operate, as was the case when both Sport in Action and EduSport were first launched.

Research has highlighted the significant contributions NGOs make to sustainable development worldwide (Rogers, Jalal, and Boyd, 2008), with their international presence and influence in policymaking ever growing (Vedder, 2007). Some NGOs appear to assume a role of mediating between people and the government, defining new realms within social life (Shariati and Dadfar, 2017) by establishing themselves as an important element of 'civil society' (Lewis, 2006). This reflects their position as potentially a favourable alternative, in comparison to state-led development approaches, for their ability to work innovatively with the poor and connect with beneficiaries (Banks and Hulme, 2012). Through their strong grassroots connections (Nega and Schneider, 2014), some NGOs operate from a 'bottom-up' approach to development (Hearn, 2007), informed by local knowledges and contexts which promote and sustain a more socially just and transformative change in the Global South (Haqpana and Tsouroufli, 2023). The bottom-up approach ideally emphasises community participation, local decision making and grassroots movements (Finger, 1994), which is reflective of the aspirations of two NGOs featured in this research. Alternatively, some NGOs deploy a top-down approach, focusing on lobbying and advocacy, bargaining with decision-making authorities, and creating pressure through various campaigns (Panda, 2007). Research has indicated that it is difficult to associate NGOs exclusively with either a bottom-up or top-down approach, as strategies and approaches are often blurred. However, it is perceived that grassroots and smaller national NGOs predominantly deploy a bottom-up approach, compared to international NGOs who follow a top-down approach (Panda, 2007).



Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an exponential growth in the number of NGOs present, especially those operating within the Global South (Aginam, 2008), as Global North countries have supported economic development, and sought to improve effectiveness of foreign aid in the Global South (Dupuy and Prakash, 2022). The weakening of the state and civil society, as a result of the debt-ridden crises throughout many African societies, provided an opportunity for external funders to strongly influence policy and practice in areas such as education, health, and welfare-provision (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004). For example, Sport in Action partner with, and are funded by, a range of international organisations including USAID, UK Aid Direct, World Vision and Norges Idrettsforbund, the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (Sport in Action, 2024). It was within this gap that a proliferation of NGOs emerged as governments began to retreat from ambitious socioeconomic development ‘from above’ (Bratton, 1989), with NGOs operating as a vehicle through which basic services can be provided, whilst serving as drivers of economic development in African countries (Nega and Schneider, 2014).

The climate of development practice has evolved, with changing global and geopolitical trends, a financial and economic crisis as well as growing inequalities shaping the field (van Zeeland, 2014). To combat and address the growing poverty agenda, many NGOs, particularly those operating in the Global South, were encouraged to work in partnership with other societal actors (Bately and Rose, 2011). The term partnership, which has also frequently referred to as relationship or collaborative activity, has become more prominent in all sectors. This is particularly evident in the partnership between the three main societal actors - business, government, and civil society - which had become popular approach to adopt to address social issues and causes (Selsky and Parker, 2005). For those organisations located in the Global South, this partnership has often assumed to be with an external organisation located in the Global North, offering additional resources through technical support and networking assistance (Levermore and Beacom, 2009). This notion of partnership between the Global North and Global South stems from the 1970s and initially highlighted an ideological aspiration of international solidarity (Fowler, 1997). Subsequently, these partnerships have become a central tenet within international development for addressing the world’s complex problems such as poverty, hunger, and inequality (Contu and Girei, 2014), with many smaller NGOs frequently relying on funding from the Global North to operate (Rogers et al. 2008).

### **2.2.1 The Rise of Sport for Development NGOs and Current Landscape**

As highlighted in Chapter 1 (see section 1.3 and 1.4), the emergence of NGOs with a specific sport-related focus is a relatively new phenomenon, originating in the late 1990s (Sanders, Phillips and Vanreusel, 2014), but has seen since a rapid growth, with NGOs now constituting the core of the earlier discussed SfD sector (Suzuki, 2019). This section will build on this, specifically detailing the varying

elements of the current landscape of SfD, exploring the breadth of programmes now present, the growing focus in academia, the role of partnerships and the challenge around power imbalances.

The number of organisations working within the SfD has exploded, growing more than five-fold in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Kay, 2010), reflecting the rapid growth of the field. Compared to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when interest was limited, the field has since received significant attention from government agencies, practitioners, academics, and NGOs (Schulenkorf et al. 2016). As a result of growing institutional and political support, the number of NGOs operating within SfD has increased, as well as the number of programmes being delivered that are using sport as a strategic vehicle for positive development (Coalter 2003; Schulenkorf and Adair, 2014; Schulenkorf, 2017). This is particularly prevalent in disadvantaged community settings (Schulenkorf, 2017), where a notable number of SfD programmes are now operating in low-income countries (Levermore, 2008a). However, the SfD landscape also encompasses more developed countries who look to take advantage of the potential of sport to contribute towards international development objectives (ibid). A range of global bodies and academic authors have recognised this growth, such as the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDPIWG, 2008) which noted:

*“Non-governmental organizations were among the first to recognize sport’s development and peace potential and have been at the forefront of the Sport for Development and Peace movement since its inception” (p. 8).*

NGOs operating within the SfD sector can be differentiated by their focus; sport-specific or generalist. Some NGOs, such as Sport in Action and EduSport, were founded specifically to deliver SfD programmes whereas, for some other NGOs, sport is one of a range of interventionist techniques utilised to support the wider development work they are delivering (Giulianotti, 2011). Regularly being identified as principal actors within global civil society (Lechner, 2009), NGOs vary in size, mission, and scope of activities within SfD but tend to advocate ‘developmental interventionist themes’ such as the value of sport as a tool of intervention, the critical role of building human capacity within underdeveloped settings, and the right to intervene when the personal safety of individuals is threatened (Giulianotti, 2011). As with development NGOs more generally, the value of SfD NGOs has been suggested to lie in the innovative processes which they adopt to deliver on the ground (Suzuki, 2019), although this is not always reflected in NGOs practice.

As the SfD field has grown, not only has the number of NGOs operating in the space also increased (see: Hancock et al. 2013; Svedson and Woods, 2017), but so has the breadth of programmes, including a growing interest from SfD NGOs to focus on, and address, gender issues. When exploring programme delivery specifically, Saavedra’s (2009) early attempt to capture the existence of girl centred SfD programming identified that, as of March 2008, only 30 of the 264 total programmes registered on the International Platform on Sport and Development documented an attempt to address gender. A similar

finding was reflected nearly a decade later in Svensson and Woods' (2017) systematic analysis of organisations listed on a wider set of five key SfD platforms. The authors utilised a codebook for organisations based on the seven thematic areas of the Journal of Sport for Development and found that gender was one of the least represented thematic areas alongside disability. In percentage terms, only 4.7% of organisations in SfD were identified as having a primary focus on gender, reflecting 44 organisations out of the 945 included in the final sample (Svensson and Woods, 2017).

A further extensive assessment of SfD programmes was undertaken by Hancock, Lyras, and Ha (2013), which found that of the 1,033 programmes that they identified, 440 of them were specifically targeting women and girls: representing a significant 42.5% proportion. This large percentage highlights a substantial presence of programmes using sport as a tool for development to address gender issues, as is the case with Sport in Action and EduSport and their female-focused programmes. Although there appears to be a small number of specific gender-focused SfD organisations, the prevalence of gender-focus programmes is growing. Despite this, research published by other authors at a similar time proposed that there were still not enough programmes in SfD that are dedicated specifically to the advancement of access and rights for women and girls (Schulenkorf et al. 2016). However, Zipp et al. (2023) have recently identified that SfD programmes which focus on the goal of gender equality have proliferated in recent years, with further targeted programmes specifically addressing the social, political, and economic challenges women and girls face being implemented (Zipp et al. 2019).

Along with the growing number of organisations and programmes operational in SfD, there has been an increase in academic attention which has provided a greater insight into the complexity of the field (Svensson and Woods, 2017). Associated with this expansion of academic attention, SfD has been studied across a number of disciplines including gender studies (Meier and Saavedra, 2009; Zipp et al. 2023), education (Jeanes, 2013; Jeanes and Truskewycz, 2023), and policy (Giulianotti, 2011a; Lindsey, 2023). Amongst the diverse range of disciplinary interest in SfD, other insights are also available from health (Hershow et al. 2015), anthropology (Bateman and Binns, 2014; Brownell, 2023), geography (Hamilton, Foster, and Richards, 2016) and business and management (Rowe, Phillips and Raw, 2023).

The SfD sector was founded on the early work of localised NGOs, focused on keeping close relations with programme's beneficiaries (Coalter, 2010). This perception has contributed to the current practice of SfD, in which there is a heavy reliance on NGOs carrying responsibility for being the implementers of programmes on the ground and seeking to make an impact on local communities (Suzuki, 2019). It is also worth noting that SfD also shares some challenges with conventional international development, with accusations surrounding the imposition of Global North agendas upon communities in the Global South being prevalent (Darnell, 2012). This extends beyond programme implementation to the practitioners within the SfD field, where accusations of evangelical rhetoric and neo-colonialism has been reflected in key characteristics and motives of those involved. This is particularly prevalent for

those from higher-income countries in the Global North, where neo-colonial approaches have been visible in their practice (Welty-Peachey et al. 2017), linking to concerns of power imbalances within the field (Nicholls et al. 2011).

As with the wider global development domain, there has been widespread recognition of the importance of partnerships to SfD policy and practice (Lindsey and Bitugu, 2019). ‘Partnership’ within SfD is commonly applied to the relationship between organisations, whereby one is the provider of, and one is the recipient of resources (Lindsey and Bitugu, 2019). On the surface, the offer of additional resources and funding to operate would appear to support the benefits of partnerships between NGOs in the Global North and Global South (Rogers et al. 2012), particularly as funding provided through such relationships is often essential in enabling the delivery of SfD activities within the Global South (Akindes and Kirwan, 2009). These partnerships are not simply limited to financial support and resources but include reciprocal activities such as the provision of placements for staff and volunteers for countries both in the Global South and Global North (Lindsey and Banda, 2010), providing additional human resources and capacity (Darnell, 2012). The collaborative nature of partnerships can enhance learning opportunities (Black, 2010) and provide a conduit for the sharing of ‘expertise’, including knowledge, skills, and capacities (Lindsey and Bitugu, 2019).

However, as existing research shows, the SfD field reflects the broader NGO space (Hulme and Edwards, 1996), where there is a complex relationship with donor funding which can limit the role that SfD NGOs can play in development. The SfD sector is largely reliant on short-term funding which places pressure on implementing organisations to work in a way which meets the needs of the funders (Moustakas, 2024). SfD NGOs face ongoing challenges in obtaining sufficient, sustainable funding for their work, with the nature of funding available placing significant constraints on their delivery as it is often accompanied by numerous terms and conditions (Harris and Adams, 2016). This context impedes their ability to achieve their desired goals, being pressured to demonstrate ‘success’ which often results in a focus on individual outcomes as opposed to working on larger, systematic issues (Moustakas, 2024). Literature has often utilised postcolonial or neocolonial theoretical lenses to explore the relationship associated with the provision of funding and resources in SfD and have identified the imprint of historical relations of colonialism on SfD (Lindsey and Bitugu, 2019). In this light, when exploring the relationship between international organisations and in-country organisations, a gap appears between “the promise and practice of partnership” (Brinkerhoff 2002, p. 1), with inequality prevailing (Contu and Girei, 2014).

These longstanding power imbalances and global inequalities provide the context for the international partnership in SfD (Nicholls et al. 2011), with the label of partnership serving to hide the reality of an ongoing power battle that exists in the field (Hayhurst, 2009). As a result, a prominent criticism has emerged which suggests that SfD practices may exacerbate the unequal power relations between the

Global North, and the Global South (Collison et al. 2018; Giulianotti et al. 2016). Therefore, despite NGOs being recognised as alternatives to state-centred provision within the development field (Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin 2008), the suggestion of the rhetoric of partnership is blurred, with an apparent dependency shaping development activities (Laird 2007). This has significant implications for SfD, linking not only to funding and resources, but also policy and strategic development and implementation and delivery (Lindsey and Bitugu, 2019), with critical questions of power at play that apply to the power dynamics both within the SfD sector, and between organisations in SfD (Clarke, 2023; Giulianotti et al. 2016).

When analysing trends in research, Schulenkorf et al. (2016) highlighted that the majority of SfD programmes are delivered in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, yet 90% of SfD authors are based in North America, Europe, and Australia, presenting an interesting paradox (Schulenkorf et al., 2016). The geographical context of authorship suggests that SfD research has failed to fully engage with the diversity of local knowledge, expertise, and experience, with a need to be more inclusive and collaborative moving forwards (Spaaij et al. 2018). A central issue emerging from SfD literature relates to the ‘voices’ acknowledged, and in turn, whose knowledges are centred and privileged, with local indigenous voices within SfD remaining under-represented (Schulenkorf et al. 2023). This is particularly pertinent for women, where their voices within SfD theorisation, policy and practice remains underrepresented, and for indigenous women, they are mostly missing (Stewart-Withers and Hapeta, 2023). Furthermore, local contributors and staff are often not represented within the research team, with only 8% of SfD studies detailing personnel that were located or residing in the country in which the programme was delivered (Schulenkorf et al., 2016). As a result, Schulenkorf et al. (2023) argue that scholars need to actively adopt practices and initiatives that address this ongoing marginalisation; something this research intends to address, by presenting new ideas, and experiences directly from the SfD field by using the voices and lived experiences of young women in Zambia.

When exploring other trends in research, it appears that scholars have drawn from different strands of feminist theory when studying sport generally, to reveal the politics of race, culture, religion, and ethnicity in women’s experience of sport (Hayhurst, Thorpe and Chawansky, 2021). Recent years has seen an increasing trend in the theorising and assessment of SfD whereby critical feminist approaches have been applied to examine how gender is experienced in SfD (Zipp, Smith and Darnell, 2019). Nevertheless, there remains a paucity of empirical evidence about how sport can contribute towards gender-related development goals (Chong et al. 2022). The current state of research findings on gender and SfD practice has been dominated and shaped by neoliberal and colonial influences (Zipp et al. 2023). In this regard, Zipp et al. (2023) highlight that there is a trend in SfD programming that focuses largely on the integration of girls and women into existing patriarchal systems and, as a result, may function to further reinforce gender inequalities (ibid). This approach is considered a gender in development strategy. To better understand how SfD can operate to support gender equality, there is a

need to adopt an approach which challenges, and transforms the patriarchal, neoliberal, colonial sports structures that currently exist, encompassing an understanding that gender equality is a topic of importance for both women and men, and girls and boys (Zipp et al. 2023). The increased presence of women and girls in SfD warrants more attention, particularly concerning how young women and girls feel about their experiences as part of these programmes (Chawansky and Hayhurst, 2015), providing a recommendation for future work within the field. Gender, alongside empowerment and power, will be discussed further in Chapter 3, which will specifically explore the intersection of sport, gender, and development.

### **2.2.2 Sport in Post-Independence Zambia**

It is important to provide an overview of the Zambian context as this highlights the history and significance of sport in the country, capturing the influence of the period of colonial rule prior to Zambia gaining independence. This includes demonstrating the impact of colonial gender norms on modern Zambian society. This in turn frames the emergence of, and the current situation for SfD, and enables the experiences of the young women participating in this research to be properly contextualised. Formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, the Republic of Zambia is a member of the Central African Federation of Rhodesia and is a former British colony (Banda, 2010). Since the establishment of colonial rule, the Zambian economy has largely centred on the extraction of minerals (Chitonge, 2016). Although firstly administered by the British South Africa (BSA) Company and then handed over to the British Colonial Office (BCO), the BSA Company maintained full rights over the mineral rights to the deposits (Faber and Potter, 1971), with Britain retaining ultimate control until independence (Tordoff and Molteno, 1974). As a result of colonial rule, deep inequalities were entrenched within the country with the development of infrastructure and the distribution of resources favouring British interests explicitly in South Africa and Zimbabwe over those in Zambia (Lindsey et al, 2017). Prevalent issues within this preceding period of colonial rule were characterised by racial segregation and exploitation, with race, gender and income inequalities dividing the indigenous Africans and European workers. British colonial officers established gender norms within Zambian society that mirrored traditional Victorian values, a stance which has been maintained in the independent era and positions women as having limited power or voice within the public domain (Jeanes et al. 2013).

The impact of British colonialism cannot be underestimated, with its enduring consequences shaping the skewed economic development the country experiences in modern times (Banda, 2010). An analysis of colonialism in Africa reveals that the British colonisers brought with them gender biases that reinforced male patriarchy and female subservience (Siwila, 2017). These gender biases and norms are still prevalent, with current gender norms reflecting a legacy of the male and female expectations that were established during the colonial era in Zambia (Jeanes et al. 2013). Zambian women suffered a

double oppression during this period, firstly within their own African cultures, with the western patriarchal system oppressing them even further, contributing to how Zambian women are viewed by society (ibid). As Evans (2015) highlights:

*“The prescriptive stereotypes of male breadwinner and female housewife were encouraged by colonial–capitalist ambitions, as well as Zambian aspirations for middle-class status – secured by emulating white people... Gender divisions of labour seem to have shaped gender status beliefs and inequalities. Men monopolised valorised, better remunerated productive activities. Women’s earnings and unpaid care work were largely unappreciated, regarded as ‘supplementary’ at most” (p. 358)*

As a result, the progression of women in Zambia was impeded by colonial rule, with cultural expectations and a patriarchal society controlling women’s bodies, exerting forms of control, power, and surveillance. These cultural factors still play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes towards gender roles, dictating expectations regarding masculinity, femininity and power dynamics within families and communities in Zambia (Thelma, 2024). The power to control the choices women had regarding labour and their participation in economic development reflected the colonial patriarchy that Zambia had inherited (Siwila, 2017), valuing male dominance over women as a means of maintaining the social order (Thelma, 2024).

The rules of colonial Zambia also extended to the sports field, with many sports replicating the European elitist model, imposing European sports onto indigenous physical cultures, sport, and games (Meier and Saavedra, 2009). Sport and physical activity were divided into ‘African sports’ and ‘expatriate sports’, with sports such as football and boxing gaining popularity within the African-dominated residential areas whereas golf, cricket, rugby, and bowls grew in prominence in white-settler communities (Lindsey et al. 2017). This segregation expanded beyond simply race and was characterised by inequalities of class and gender too, with access to, and provision of sport distributed unequally (Banda 2010; Lindsey et al. 2017). For example, many African communities gravitated towards the sport of football since it requires minimal equipment and facilities, some of which can be produced at home, thus attracting the interest of the local population (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004). Sport also functioned as a ‘new form of colonialism’, reinforcing neoliberal, colonial, patriarchal sport structures in a disempowering and damaging way, whilst imposing dominant Global North ideologies, beliefs, and values on indigenous participants (Darnell and Black, 2011; Jeanes et al. 2013). This is something that will be explored further through this thesis, where the experiences of young Zambian women at a local level are examined within the context of these broader critiques.

Christianity has been central to Zambia since its introduction in the mid-nineteenth century (Njelesani et al. 2015) and there is little question regarding the role of Christian missionaries in ushering in the colonial era, as well their influence in diminishing resistance to colonialism (Taylor, 2006). Like much

of Africa, Zambia encountered widespread interaction with Christianity in the 1800s, whereby an influx of missionaries claimed to come to serve a dual purpose; to save Africa spiritually as well as commercially (Taylor, 2006). During colonisation, Western missionaries introduced indigenous Zambians to European and American sports, with schools and mission stations established as a means through which colonial education, culture, and sport could be diffused (Chepyator-Thomson, 2014). The influence of Christianity upon the Zambian nation also contributed to what is now termed “evangelical sport-for-development” (Mwaanga, 2010, p. 62), with many colonial rulers committing to the concept of ‘muscular Christianity’, as a means through which the subaltern could be acculturated to the values and principles of the dominant culture (Jeanes et al. 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the potentially instrumental use of sport which served as a means of ‘civilising’ African societies during the colonial period through its disciplining nature. This was particularly prominent for British colonies, which reflected an idealised patriarchal gender order through sport which was permeated with the values of muscular Christianity (Meier and Saavedra, 2009).

The political struggle for independence, and the attempt to overthrow colonial rule, led to the emergence of Zambia’s nationalist movement, which strived to correct the wrongs wrought by colonialism (Noyoo, 2010). In the post-colonial era following independence in 1964, Zambia was rated one of the most prosperous countries in southern Africa, with a thriving economy rich in copper deposits and agricultural potential but with huge inequalities (Macola, 2008; Holmes, Banda and Chawansky, 2015). The first independent government, driven by a broadly socialist agenda, blamed the situation on prior colonial practices, attempting to address some of the imbalances in provision (Simutanyi, 2006). Radical changes were proposed to rectify the inherited inequalities, with measures imposed in sport and recreation that focused on the upward social mobility of native Africans into positions of leadership in sport associations (Banda, 2010). Sport became part of the process to re-address some of the consequences of colonialism, with proposals to diversify Zambia’s sporting provision of new facilities in rural areas, bridging what had been a rural-urban divide (Lindsey et al. 2017). Many Zambians took up sports which were traditionally viewed as ‘expatriate sports’, and along with the removal of racial barriers, this led to indigenous Africans having influence at strategic level with the formulation of new sports policies (Banda, 2010).

The high economic growth which propelled the development of sport forwards after independence subsequently declined in the 1970s, with a reduction in price of copper and stagnation of economic growth reflected in the decline of elite sport performance and mass provision of sporting opportunities (Banda, 2010; Nugent, 2004). The reduction of government subsidies to state-owned corporations, who at the time were central to the provision of sport, resulted in the decline of annual elite sporting events, the removal of sponsorship for tournaments, a lack of sports equipment and sports facilities falling into disrepair (Lindsey et al. 2017). Overall, this decline weakened the provision of sport and physical



activity across the country, with Banda (2010) identifying these factors as decisive in shaping the current provision of sport and recreation across Zambia.

The production of National Development Plans (NDPs) by the Zambian National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) indicated long-term objectives for each government department or ministry and has included policy for sport since independence. Although the first two NDPs, the Emergency National Development Plan (1964-1965) and the Transitional National Development Plan (1965-1966), did not give a specific priority to sport, the government's dual approach towards both elite participation and grassroots opportunities continued throughout the decades until an evident shift was visible in the fifth NDP (Banda, 2010). Within this NDP, sport took on a new meaning, moving from a focus on recreational sport and the benefits of being active and healthy, to the use of sport as a means for a more specific outcome:

*“This shift in focus from ‘sport as an end in itself’ to sport as a means to an end’ has helped firmly established the role of sport-for-development NGOs as potential partners in accomplishing sport and recreational objectives set by government” (Banda, 2010, p. 242)*

In the early 1990s, as a result, the contemporary SfD movement emerged in Zambia, gaining momentum within the broader context of NGO-led development (Jeanes et al. 2013). It was at this time that the recognition of sport as a tool for addressing human and economic development, achieving non-sport outcomes for youth and as a means through targeting the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic became well acknowledged (Banda, 2010; Banda and Chipande, 2019; GRZ, 2006). This political shift in focus towards viewing “sport as a means to an end” supported the establishment of the role of SfD NGOs as partners in achieving the sport and recreation objectives set by government (Banda, 2010, p. 242). Moreover, the economic decline in Zambia contributed to the emergent gap in sporting provision and thus created a fertile environment for SfD NGOs to emerge and establish themselves within the development field (Holmes, Banda and Chawansky, 2015), including both NGOs involved in this research. This trend was similarly visible in the health sector, with both international and locally emerging NGOs filling the burden of the gaps in the state provision (Boone and Batsell, 2001).

### **2.3 Youth Peer Education and Peer Leaders**

Following from the preceding overview of the organisational context for development and SfD programmes, this section will delve into youth peer education and peer leaders, and their importance in enabling the delivery of the aforementioned programmes. As such, the following section will explore elements that are closely aligned with the focus of this thesis, including the role of peer leaders in SfD, the influence of gender on peer leadership, and finally, the experience of peer leaders. This will help

frame Chapters 6, 7 and 8, where the experiences of the female peer leaders will be critically explored in depth.

### **2.3.1 Youth Peer Education and Peer Leaders in the Global South**

Many SfD organisations are highly dependent upon a volunteer workforce, particularly in the Global South, where this workforce can, in part, comprise of local and unemployed youth (Schulenkorf et al. 2023). Through this peer led sport delivery, development efforts are being facilitated by young people who are tasked with leading sporting activities and providing mentoring for their peers (Nicholls, 2009). ‘Youth Peer Education’ (YPE), also commonly referred to as ‘Peer Education’ or ‘Youth Peer Leadership’ programmes, is one of the most widely adopted health promotion strategies used with young people in the Global South (Price and Knibbs, 2009). Such programmes were developed as a solution to the perceived shortcomings of more individual-orientated education approaches (Campbell, 2004). Although believed to have originated in British schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where pupils were selected as monitors to be responsible for passing on what they had learned from their teacher to their younger peers, the concept of ‘peer education’ has been subject to burgeoning interest and has been used in relation to a range of pursuits (Parkin and McKeganey, 2000). Peer education approaches have been used as a strategy for combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic, being utilised worldwide (McKee, Bertrand, and Becker-Benton, 2004). Peer education has also been adopted as a wider approach in relation to sexual health education (Hatami, Kazemi and Mehrabi, 2015; Agha, 2002), to tackle teenage pregnancy and early motherhood (Mezey et al. 2017) and as part of broader strategies for facilitating change (de Vreede, Warner, and Pitter, 2014).

Youth peer education programmes are a common feature in sub-Saharan Africa, including Zambia and have been central to many public health programmes (Burke, Pedersen, and Williamson, 2012), gaining popularity particularly within the SfD sector (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013). Research has highlighted that YPE programmes have been widely implemented across Zambia, with approximately 40% of 15- to 24-year-olds having been exposed to YPE in Zambia (Svenson, Burke and Johnson, 2008). YPE programmes are built on peer education, which is a form of social learning, whereby influential members from a specific group act as role models and educators to their peers (Zeelen et al. 2010). Peer education has increasingly become an intervention of choice for programmes working with young people (Moolman et al. 2020), due to the belief that individuals are more likely to change their behaviour if they see that liked and trusted peers are changing theirs (Campbell, 2004). Through this approach, meaningful and authentic peer to peer learning opportunities may occur, with the youth volunteer workforce able to reach target populations of young people (Schulenkorf et al. 2023). Peer education models aim to reach and engage with a specific social demographic of citizens through members of the same social group utilising methods that may encompass understanding, empathy, respect, and

relationship building (Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes, 2016). In such approaches, peers are constituted as ‘members of similar age or status group’ and peer education is the means through which information is both taught and shared. The growth of peer education has centred on the idea that it provides an opportunity to enhance social learning and psychosocial support (Swartz et al. 2012), by utilising the energy and altruism of young volunteers to educate their peers regarding sensitive topics (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). Furthermore, peer education may provide opportunities for a “candid and genuine examinations of attitudes and choices” (Swartz et al. 2016, p. 359), allowing young people to see, hear, and share diverse ways of thinking and feeling about aspects of their world including addressing cultural taboos (ibid). It is within this context that learning can occur, with individuals moving beyond simply receiving new information but debating and discussing it before acquiring knowledge (Backett-Milburn and Wilson, 2000).

A central aspect in the delivery of peer education is the role of a peer leader, also commonly known as a peer educator, peer trainer, peer facilitator, peer tutor, peer helper or peer counsellor (Milburn, 1995), all individuals who are responsible for facilitating grassroots activities (Nicholls, 2009). Peer leaders within an YPE approach are made up of young people who give their time, energy, and efforts to deliver, coach and teach the next generation of young people within a community of which they are also a member (Reid and Tattersall, 2017). The peer education model leverages the position of the peer leader to serve as facilitators, tutors, support workers, counsellors and as information resources (Munalula-Nkandu et al. 2023). Several assumptions form the foundation of the role of a peer leader, and these include the central belief that young people are more likely to listen to and believe the information they receive from trusted peers than adults (Jeanes, 2013), with a peer leader’s age, local knowledge, social identity and personal experience equipping them to access specific communities amongst their peers (Munalula-Nkandu et al. 2023; Spaaij et al. 2016). Furthermore, peers who are looked up to in their communities and have a level of respect may exert a strong influence over the behaviour of those around them (Kerrigan, 1999) as well as those who are of the same social standing or societal group (Hope, 2003). This identification is considered to enhance the perceived credibility of the peer leaders, allowing them to act as reliable sources of knowledge beyond the objective accuracy of the information they provide (Munalula-Nkandu et al. 2023).

Peer education is a system which many consider to be adaptable to the diverse needs of the community within which it is implemented and can be delivered in a range of contextual settings (Evans and Tripp, 2006). In development contexts, peer education has been viewed as an appropriate and cost-effective intervention with many indigenous NGOs, including those at the centre of this research, prioritising the use of peer education as a central component of the activities that they deliver (Holmes, Banda and Chawansky, 2015; Visser, 2007). Within peer education, peer leaders are recruited via a variety of means, and are motivated by varying factors (Millburn, 1995). These motives may change and vary over time, dependent upon the life circumstances of that individual (ibid). Some young people may be

driven by a community-orientated motivation, which is built upon a concern for people, with some peer leaders in peer education acting ‘for the love of people’, wanting to help those in their community (Dickson, 2009). This essence is echoed by Molassiotis et al. (2004) whose research on peer leaders in a HIV prevention programme in Zambia highlighted, that for peer leaders, “being involved with the community they were raised in was a fundamental factor in their commitment and involvement (p. 186). Outside of a community-orientated motivation, other motives for peer leaders that have been highlighted include the opportunity for skill development, the possibility of rewards, a sense of belonging, and previous positive voluntary experiences driving a desire to volunteer again (Gill and McConnell, 2016; Sneddon, 2015). However, it is worth noting that research has indicated that some young people lose motivation after volunteering for a short period of time due to disempowering factors, and a realisation that they are not getting as much out of the opportunity as they had anticipated (Svenson and Burke, 2005).

### **2.3.2 Peer Leaders in Sport for Development**

Despite the integral nature of volunteers and peer leaders as the main implementer of SfD programmes, research into this area remains limited however, particularly in the Global South (Mxekezo-Lallie and Burnett, 2022). Jeanes and Spaaij’s (2015) work on the role of the educator in SfD programmes looked specifically at HIV/AIDS education in Zambia, analysing critical issues around pedagogies and the embeddedness of education in everyday lives along with raising questions of power and authority. They concluded that more rigorous research was required around the role of peer leaders as educators (Jeanes and Spaaij, 2015). Through their ethnographic research examining SfD in Zambia, Lindsey et al. (2017) provide one of the few detailed explorations of the dynamics that exist within peer education programmes. The findings of their research highlight that peer education in Zambia operates on the assumption that young leaders are appropriate educators who can automatically develop a rapport with the participants of SfD programmes (Lindsey et al. 2017). Other studies have drawn attention to further broader considerations relating to the involvement of peer leaders in SfD programmes, such as pedagogical processes involved in peer education (Jeanes and Truskewycz, 2023), the contrast between the rationalist approach of SfD and the complex reality of the field (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011), the limited influence of young people in shaping programmes and policy (Nicholls, 2009), which links into the assumed Northern dominance and dependency, and the importance of peer leaders in discussing taboo topics (Zipp and Mwamba, 2023). However, a need for greater attention on the role of peer leaders in SfD programmes is an issue which remains pertinent, and one which this research seeks to address.

Peer education has emerged as an increasingly significant aspect of development strategies, with SfD programmes commonly using peer-to-peer discussion groups, peer-facilitated workshops, and peer coaching as methodologies to engage with young people (Nicholls, 2009). In comparison to

institutionalised sport, the SfD sector relies predominantly on a volunteer ‘workforce’ such as peer leaders, who deliver their services to vulnerable populations (Schulenkorf, 2016). SfD literature has highlighted the role of young people in the delivery of activities as peer leaders, peer educators or coaches (Peacock-Villada et al. 2007; Maro et al. 2009). In Zambia, peer leaders are central to SfD approaches and form a vital part of SfD delivery (Lindsey et al. 2017). The role of a peer leader is a key element in the provision offered by both Sport in Action and EduSport, the two NGOs featured in this research, with peer leaders given responsibility for the delivery of sport and education activities within their local communities. Within this context, these Zambian NGOs establish links with local communities through which young people are nominated to undertake training to become peer leaders. These young people are trained and equipped with the skills to deliver sports and life skills education workshops (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013), as well as HIV/AIDS education (Kay et al. 2007). More broadly within development in Zambia, research on YPE programmes highlighted that they are often donor-funded, investing time and resources into recruiting, training and supervising volunteers who work on a local level in the communities (Burke, Pedersen, and Williamson, 2012); elements which are also reflected in the characteristics of both Sport in Action and EduSport’s programmatic structure. The peer leaders involved in Sport in Action and EduSport use sport as a platform to engage their peers, before delivering core educational messages around relevant issues affecting their lives such as alcohol and drug use, unprotected sex, and early marriage (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013). Within this light, peer education is regarded as being able to achieve not only individual outcomes but also societal outcomes, working at various levels (Swartz et al. 2012).

Young people constitute a critical element of the SfD process as peer leaders (Mxekezo-Lallie and Burnett, 2022). As well as being the main participants of many SfD programmes and interventions, Nicholls (2009) has highlighted that the practical delivery of such programmes and interventions is also:

*“...largely occurring on the backs of young people through peer education, as they carry the responsibility for achieving a large majority of sport in development objectives” (p. 157).*

Through adopting a YPE approach and the use of peer leaders, many SfD organisation involve young people at various levels within the planning and implementation of programmes, suggesting a sense of collective responsibility across the organisation (Coalter, 2010). Despite this reliance on young people, and the important status of peer leaders, the role of a peer leader is further complicated as considerations of power and knowledge within SfD tend to be dominated by a vertical hierarchy (Nicholls, 2009). Within this hierarchy, Nicholls (2009) argues that young people are situated at the bottom, removed from positions of authority, and rarely involved in programme or policy development processes, but still holding responsibility for delivering programmes. This trend in SfD reflects wider peer education, where peer leaders are often limited to simply the implementation of activities, with little control over

the designing and organisation of activities, and do not participate formally in decision-making or evaluation (Price and Knibbs, 2009). Removing young people from the planning process has been suggested to lead to disenchantment, where they feel as if they have no choice or influence on the activities incorporated into delivery (Njelesani et al. 2014).

However, other studies do indicate different perspectives with Lindsey et al. (2017) drawing on interviews with peer leaders in Zambia to illustrate their own accounts of undertaking work to form sports teams, organise competitions, and initiate different developments in their communities. Similarly, Lindsey and Grattan's (2012) earlier research on sport and community development in Lusaka, highlighted that peer leaders often had "a significant role in the determination of local programmes" (p. 104). Encompassed within this is the peer leaders' position as primarily the 'implementers', where they are often far removed from the strategic approach of an organisation, creating a distance that could potentially impede the flow of knowledge (Nicholls, 2009).

For the more active peer leaders, this 'volunteer' role can consume a significant amount of time in their lives, with some of them also engaging in additional forms of education, employment, and volunteering alongside their role (Lindsey et al. 2017). There is evidence which suggests that some young people may gain additional benefits from their role as a peer leader including sponsorship of school fees or support with accommodation, but this is limited and may not be apparent for all peer leaders (Lindsey and Grattan, 2012). Even with peer leadership and peer leaders lying at the heart of SfD delivery, particularly in the Global South, there is a lack of research into the peer leader role (Lindsey et al. 2017) which is addressed in this thesis by placing peer leaders at the centre of this study.

Peer leaders in Zambia, particularly those working with Sport in Action and EduSport are far from a homogenous group (Lindsey et al. 2017). Both Sport in Action and EduSport do not have a set age requirement for their peer leaders, with their ages varying from 15-years-old up to mid-20-years-old, with some individuals in their thirties. The route to becoming a peer leader is varied, and in SfD in Zambia, several avenues have been identified. Some peer leaders have progressed from their initial involvement as participants of the sporting activities within the community and have shown an interest in teaching or leading, which has resulted in them becoming peer leaders (Reid and Tattersall, 2017). For the young people who become peer leaders, recruitment is often undertaken in an informal way, with existing peer leaders and community organisers identifying and recommending active participants. To ensure these young people have a sufficient level of sport-specific leadership skills, some degree of involvement in sport is expected (Lindsey et al. 2017).

From their research in the Global South, which included examples from research in Zambia, Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) report that many peer leaders are motivated to become a peer leader by their challenging and difficult upbringings, which stimulate a desire to instigate change within their local community (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013). Others have been inspired to become a peer leader because of the influential

impact an older peer leader has had upon them, where they have found a role model to look up to (Reid and Tattersall, 2017). Due to these various avenues, the past and ongoing experience of peer leaders may allow them to create relational links with their participants, potentially giving them a critical insight into their participants' daily struggles and some understandings of ways to alleviate them (Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes, 2016). Lindsey et al. (2017) also reported similar insights in their research on SfD in Zambia, which highlighted that many peer leaders evidenced volunteering with other organisations alongside their roles with Sport in Action and EduSport, for example with other NGOs or in schools (Lindsey et al. 2017). In line with broader humanitarian and anthropological research (Malkki, 2015), Kaur's (2023) research on SfD programmes in South African townships highlighted how they offer the opportunity for altruistic participation, which offers a sense of purpose, enabling individuals to fulfil a desire to contribute towards something more than themselves (Kaur, 2023). Whilst Kaur's (2023) research was undertaken in South Africa, the findings do highlight how SfD programmes can offer participants the opportunity to partake in something that is for the greater good of other people; insights that were identified in SfD programmes in Zambia (Lindsey et al. 2017).

Lindsey et al.'s (2017) research has highlighted a number of considerations expressed by peer leaders when talking about their involvement in SfD programmes in Zambia. Lindsey et al.'s (2017) research was collected across a number of studies starting in 2006, and focused on SfD in Zambia, including staff and peer leaders at Sport in Action and EduSport as well as a more extensive range of SfD organisations (Lindsey et al. 2017). Lindsey et al.'s (2017) data also, pertinently for this thesis, included approximately 50 young people who had been involved peer leading with EduSport's female focused programme, Go Sisters. Alongside being driven by a community-orientated approach, peer leaders discussed a willingness to help beyond participating, a commitment to attending sessions, an ability to foster relationships with young people, an aptitude to lead discussions on a range of varying life issues, and an understanding that personally they would be viewed as demonstrating 'good' behaviour within the community and therefore need to act in a particular way (ibid). Coalter (2009) found similar considerations amongst peer leaders in a SfD programme in Kenya, where these individuals possessed "a deep sense of responsibility to act as positive role models" (p. 60), with a sense of involvement and values of active citizenship being displayed.

### **2.3.3 Gender and Peer Leaders**

For the young women who become peer leaders, research has emphasised the importance of their involvement, as it has the potential to empower them within their communities and could also contribute to addressing hegemonic ideals about femininity (Saavedra, 2005). For some SfD programmes, the embodiment of African sisterhood is seen to provide a potential means through which collective approaches can be promoted to address gender inequality within the local communities (Mwaanga,

2013). Although a number of the outcomes of SfD programmes are applicable to male peer leaders as well as female peer leaders, involvement in SfD organisations and activities has been suggested to provide specific benefits to young women. For example, EduSport's 'Go Sisters' programme, which was discussed earlier in Chapter 1, and is regularly featured in SfD literature in Zambia, uses a peer leadership approach and focuses on building a sustainable network of female peer leaders who can lead and inspire young generations of female leaders (EduSport, 2018a). This programme, which is centred on gender equality, seeks to empower females, and promote gender empowerment, by raising the status and profile of girls and young women within Zambian communities (United Purpose, 2024). Through doing this, the programme also provides girls and young women with greater equality of opportunities, such as access to education, the development of skills to enable positive life choices and increasing their understanding around HIV and AIDS (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014). The involvement of female peer leaders within programmes such as Go Sisters, has been found to give some young women confidence and the ability to discuss matters relating to sex with their female and male peers, including how to negotiate safer sex, peer pressure around sexual intercourse and the dangers this poses (Lindsey et al. 2017).

In addition to giving young women the opportunity to develop life skills through their role as a peer leader, some NGOs also provide financial support for school fees through a system of scholarships (Kay and Dudfield, 2013). This includes female-specific programmes such as Go Sisters, which provides some opportunities for young women to complete school who would have otherwise been limited or constrained by the costs associated (Lindsey et al. 2017). The apparent benefit of being a peer leader is particularly important for young women, who often fall victim to longstanding traditional attitudes through which schools, families, and communities tend to prioritise boys' education based on assumptions that girls' education is a poor investment and beliefs that women are meant to take care of the home (Akuffo, 2007). The education of women is a prevalent challenge in the Global South, as the "implications go beyond education-specific issues" (Kwesiga, 2002, p.5). This is particularly pertinent for Zambia where, traditionally, low value has been placed on girls' education (Machinyise et al. 2023). Meier and Saavedra (2009) also recognise a similar point, suggesting that a lack of access to education and work is a disadvantage for women and girls in Zambia compared to their male peers. As a result, this could be suggested to highlight the potential importance of peer leaders accessing opportunities for educational scholarships. The awareness of potential scholarship for school fees may also act as a motivation for peer leaders, with broader research on peer education in South Africa recognising that when peer leaders are given small incentives to participate, peer education as a delivery approach can be most effective (Swartz et al. 2016).

### **2.3.4 Research on Peer Leader Experiences**



As discussed above, a number of academics have noted a need to further explore the perspectives of peer leaders from the Global South, given their limited presence in existing literature (Jeanes, 2011; Kay, 2013; Lindsey et al. 2017; Nicholls et al. 2011; Stewart-Withers and Hapeta, 2023). This is particularly pertinent with reference to the contributions of young people in relation to SfD policy, programmes, and academic analysis in the Global South (Nicholls, 2009). Lindsey et al. (2017) have suggested that there is a need to move away from using a Global North lens, which traditionally places peer leaders within a hierarchical structure in SfD NGOs, to a position which captures the complexity and fluidity of the position of a peer leader. This shift can provide SfD participants with a voice, prioritising their perspectives (Jeanes, 2011). These views link to previously cited concerns of power imbalances and neo-colonialism within the SfD field, where those who are in the field are not represented, nor their voices recognised (Coalter, 2013; Nicholls et al. 2011; Nicholls, 2009). It is therefore considered important to include peer leaders as co-creators of knowledge and partners in policy making (Nicholls, 2009), both for the planning phases as well as programming (Nicholls et al. 2011).

It is worth noting that wider SfD research has previously focused heavily on the analysis of programme ‘impacts’ and ‘outcomes’, rather than how these programmes feature in the broader trajectory of individuals’ and peer leaders’ lives (Kay 2009; Schulenkorf, 2010). For YPE programmes, research has tended to focus on the effectiveness of peer leaders in transmitting information to their peers rather than the potential benefits, material or otherwise, that peer leaders obtain (Lindsey and Grattan, 2012). Whilst the role of a peer educator is central to the delivery of SfD programmes, peer education may also benefit the peer leader in a number of ways (Price and Knibbs, 2009). Research has shown that through peer education, peer leaders can acquire and develop their communication and leadership skills, as well as developing an increased sense of responsibility and self-confidence (Ochieng, 2003; Plummer et al. 2007). Findings within SfD programmes by Kay (2009) are in line with the wider peer education literature, recognising that benefits in terms of personal confidence, self-esteem, and an increase in aspirations may be gained by those who work in the SfD programmes. Furthermore, peer education sits within the wider literature of volunteering, and many studies in this area have highlighted the benefits gained by volunteers as part of their volunteering (Moleni and Gallagher, 2007).

Lindsey et al. (2017, p. 130) also suggest that there is a lack of research into the “characteristics, activities and experiences of the peer leader role”. Although there are a growing number of studies that have begun to explore the perspectives of those working in the SfD field, these studies have focused predominantly on practitioners and staff working for the NGOs (see Nicholls et al. 2011; Hayhurst 2013a; 2013b), rather than the perspective of voluntary female peer leaders who operate within SfD. It appears that the voices of subaltern individuals, who are often ‘muted’ through research, can provide valuable accounts of the specificities of SfD programmes in action, contributing towards the way in which ‘development’ may be understood (Briggs and Sharp, 2004). This is particularly true for young

people, and especially young female Africans, whose knowledge “is rarely considered as part of the evidence base of sport for development and is often dismissed” (Nicholls et al. 2011, p. 250). Darnell and Hayhurst (2011) recognised this gap in literature over a decade ago and noted:

*“Despite the focus on young people in much SDP programming, their involvement as leaders and their knowledge and agency, continues to be subjugated amidst dominant development narratives and policy” (p. 190).*

Indigenous voices within SfD theorisation, policy and practice remain largely under-represented, as SfD initiatives tend to overlook community members as sources of knowledge (Stewart-Withers and Hapeta, 2023; Stewart-Withers, Hapeta and Palmer, 2022). Given that peer education capitalises on peer-to-peer influences, utilising a learner-centred approach, and one that is central to the sustainability of many SfD organisations (Coalter, 2010), it could be suggested that research needs to begin to focus on the experiences of peer leaders through YPE, rather than simply evaluating the impact of the programmes they deliver. Guest (2009, p. 1348), for example, indicates that it would “useful to know more about the diversity of actual experience of individuals and communities as related to development through sport programmes”. As such, this thesis is orientated towards giving ‘voice’ to those involved in SfD programmes and initiatives, amplifying young women’s voices, making their stories more accessible, visible, and included (Stewart-Withers et al. 2023).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to outline the SfD field, focusing particularly on its presence within Zambia. Building on Chapter 1, where the case for this research was made, this chapter has examined the significance of sport in Zambia, and how the influence of colonial rule is still visible, resulting in gender norms which impact the way young women engage with sport. This influence is important to understand as it helps with the interpretation of the data from the peer leaders (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8) by framing their experiences within the broader context. Sport within the Zambian context, acts as a form of colonialism, reinforcing dominant ideologies, values, and beliefs in damaging and disempowering ways (Jeanes et al. 2013). This includes ideologies and beliefs around gender, which will subsequently be examined in depth next in Chapter 3. However, it is important to flag as gender, as a concept, is complex but within the field of SfD, it is further complicated by history and culture, where traditional perspectives have placed restrictions on the participation of girls and women (Zipp et al. 2019). To understand how gender influences the experience of female peer leaders in SfD programmes in Zambia, it is crucial to explore how gendered identity is performed and the potential role of empowerment for the reshaping of women’s lives; something that will be covered in the next chapter.

This chapter also discussed the constraints regarding the capacity of the SfD NGOs and how these potentially influence the ways in which they operate. SfD NGOs face ongoing challenges in obtaining sufficient funding for their work, and when this funding is available, it is often externally provided and allocated to a specific programme or focus. As such, this influences the scope of the programmes they are able to deliver, often having to operate to meet the demands of the funding agent (Harris and Adams, 2016). Consideration regarding the constraints on NGOs capabilities and capacity help to contextualise research findings on the delivery of peer education programmes, and specifically the prominent role of the peer leaders within this. Furthermore, it also helps us consider what constraints the SfD NGOs may be facing when seeking to cultivate wider change, where they have to potentially balance the demands of the funder with the needs of the community.

Examining the role of NGOs in SfD in Zambia is key and provides a broader context upon which Sport in Action and EduSport, the two NGOs featured in the research, can be contextualised. Capturing an overview of these NGOs, including the programmes they deliver, and the explicit focus they place on delivering through peer leaders highlighted how pivotal these individuals are in the execution of their sporting, life skills and female-focused programmes. Given the prominence of peer leaders within SfD programmes, this chapter has highlighted how research has tended to focus on the role of these individuals within SfD programmes rather than the experiences of the peer leaders themselves, including the potential benefits they gain (Lindsey et al. 2012). This context helps frame the experience of the participants of this research, by recognising a gap within which this research can sit. By focusing specifically on the lived experiences of young women, this research will provide a broader understanding regarding the ‘impact’ of SfD programmes, seeking to understand how being involved in SfD supports young women, and fosters empowerment.

## **Chapter 3: Gender, Power, and Empowerment**

### **3.1 Introduction**

There are a range of theoretical perspectives that can be used to underpin research considering gender in contexts similar to that of this study, with the identification of specific theoretical frameworks being essential for situating this research. This chapter introduces the reader to the theoretical perspectives that are used to examine the key concepts associated with this study, including feminism, empowerment, and power, and how these relate to gender and SfD.

To achieve this, the chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the historical context of feminism, which helps in exploring and understanding the participation of women and girls in SfD in the Global South. The role of gender within SfD is complex, where historical cultures have placed restrictions of the participation of women and girls in sport (Zipp et al. 2019). Adopting a feminist approach will enable this thesis to capture how feminist assumptions have been embedded within SfD programmes. Next, issues regarding the performativity of gender are examined, drawing on the works of Goffman (1956) and Butler (1990) to look at debates about power and gendered potential for agency, which have particular resonance for this research in investigating how identity is done as a collective endeavour for female peer leaders in SfD programmes in a Zambian context. The next section of the chapter provides an overview of empowerment, and its prominence as a theme in policy and practice, before proceeding to examine how empowerment can build power, focusing on Rowlands' (1995; 1997; 1998) empowerment framework. Here, the discussion focuses on empowerment at an individual and collective level, and how different aspects of the conceptualisation of empowerment may be put into practice.

The final section of the chapter is focused specifically on gender, sport and development, particularly within an African and Zambian context. Through this, a number of key concepts which are prevalent within the SfD field will be highlighted, presenting an understanding of how gender has been conceptualised, understood, and implemented within SfD in the Global South.

### **3.2 Feminism**

Feminist theorising spans different standpoints including liberal, Marxist, radical, black, socialist, postmodernist, postcolonial, and Third World feminisms (Connelly et al. 2000). Feminist research approaches are diverse in their emphasis, yet all include a focus on the need to critically engage with women's lived social realities in an attempt to change them for the better (Kiguwa, 2019). Through giving credence to women and the issues that affect their lives, feminism involves a "broader analysis of gender as an organising structure and lived materiality that affects all gendered subjects in society" (Kiguwa, 2019, p. 223). As feminist theorists sought to understand the complexities of women's subordination, concern with gender burgeoned in the literature, with feminist scholars arguing that the

Western world had systematically ignored the experiences of women in the fields of learning, research, theories, and concepts (Reddock, 2000).

Many feminist scholars have conceptualised gender as a multi-dimensional structure of inequality (Connell, 1987; Lober, 1994). This thesis, through adopting a feminist orientation, emphasises how gender is:

*“... a category that is imbued with historical, cultural, and social meanings of femininity and masculinity.... analysis enables us to engage gendered practices in our everyday contexts as actively political and social in meaning, practice, and outcome. Gender is actively constructed not just through language but also in our lived embodied experiences of what it means to be a man and/or woman, to be identified as embodying particular kinds of gendered bodies” (Kiguwa, 2019, p. 224).*

As such, this thesis will explore the gendered constructs of home, community, and nation, to understand the normative ways that contribute towards and construct everyday meanings (Palmary et al. 2010).

Feminist theory highlights the importance of understanding power imbalances, capturing a recognition that power and privilege are engrained in the social structure of society (Beckman, 2014). This is the approach I took in my research in Zambia, exploring the analytics of power in society in Zambia, and the intersecting effect this has on women. This speaks to ‘the personal is political’ phrase, which is commonly associated with second-wave feminism, and denotes the relationship between the personal and political (Rajah, Palmer, and Duggan, 2022). In seeking to break down the traditional dichotomy between public and private spheres, this approach expands the concept of political to include broad systems of oppression, encompassing power in its various forms (ibid). This highlights the political nature of everyday life, where gender expectations can both reflect and reinforce power imbalances between women and men.

Furthermore, undertaking feminist research encompasses reflexivity, which refers to the process by which individuals use their self-reflections to uncover different types of knowledge (Beckman, 2014). Whilst reflexivity will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3), it is important to recognise the potential risk that Global North feminists conducting research in contexts within the Global South run, “colluding with knowledge production that valorises the status quo of economic, gender, racial and cultural inequalities” (Ferguson, 1998, p. 95). This feature emphasises the impossibility of objectivity and neutrality in the research process, highlighting the need for the researcher to partake in a continuous process of reflexivity to enable biases in the research to be identified (Kiguwa, 2019). As such, reflexivity enables me to undertake a critical self-reflection, reflecting on my thoughts, feelings, values, experiences, and biases to reveal hidden privileges, recognising what I as the researcher brings to the process (Beckman, 2014). This includes gender, which is one of many complex organising tools that is

set in sociopolitical and historical contexts, along with the intricacies of power and relations that exist between the research and participants (Kiguwa, 2019).

### **3.3 The Performativity of Gender: Butler and Goffman**

Debates about power and gendered potential for agency are key to the conceptualisation and framing of my research. Agency and interaction takes place in a wider social order that permits some actions and disallows others. The works of Goffman (1956) and Butler (1990), centring around issues of performativity, have particular resonance for my thesis in investigating how identity is performed as a collective endeavour. In this section, I consider Goffman's (1956) work which focuses on the presentation of gendered self and understands gender as a performance. I also discuss Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which is based on discourses of power, gender, and agency (Butler, 1990). Suggestions that gender can be understood as 'performative', or a 'performance' are prominent features in discussions on gender (Brickell, 2003). From examining both theories, it is apparent that whilst Goffman and Butler's work differs in the ways they account for gendered selves and social action, similarities also emerge regarding the construction of gender (ibid). This thesis will draw on both theories and integrate elements to provide an understanding of how female peer leaders engage with the social order within which they reside, capturing how gender is formed and performed within the context of Zambia.

Literature has focused on framing Goffman as an early precursor of Butler's theories of performance and selfhood, with Butler's work being viewed as a more sophisticated development of Goffman's work (Ylivuori, 2022). Goffman (1979) proposed that daily life can be likened to performances on a stage, with men and women interacting through gender displays which link to idealised behaviour shaped by prevailing social norms. A core theme of Goffman's work is the social nature of the self, which is the result of the negotiating processes unfolding between a performer presenting themselves on stage, and the audience receiving and reacting to this presentation. Through his work, Goffman (1971) argued that fundamentally the self is an outcome of self-impressions displayed by an individual to those in their immediate presence. Through these social interactions, people seek to perform in ways that will gain a favourable impression from others, developing a sense of self through the process (Goffman, 1971). According to Goffman, this is particularly noteworthy when it comes to gender and gender relations, and how people 'do' their gender, with the idea of 'performance' being something women adopt to abide by social norms.

Goffman's concepts of the 'presentation of self', 'front stage', 'back stage', 'frame analysis' and 'definition of the situation' are applicable to the study of gender (Brickell, 2022). Goffman's (1986) frame analysis focused on how people construct, organise, and differentiate the meaning of their experiences in a given situation. Through this concept, Goffman argued that frames are properties of

social order, setting the parameters within which the presentation of self can occur. These frames organise experiences by providing the meanings that govern the interpretation of social events (Goffman, 1986). When applied to gender, Goffman suggests that gender identity is the “schedule for the portrayal of gender” (Goffman, 1979, p.8), which determines an individual’s characterisation as a member of a given gender category through their “competence and willingness to sustain an appropriate schedule of displays” (ibid, p. 8). Goffman (1977) also suggested that men generally benefit at the expense of women through the production of gender, serving to disadvantage women. Goffman’s focus on the presentation of self can contribute towards understanding the way in which girls and young women perceive themselves, their place in the world, and in the SfD field.

Butler (1990) suggests that gender is not something one is, but rather something one does or performs, emphasising how performance is actually inscribed. Challenging the existing sex and gender distinction, and customary ideas of feminists at the time, Butler (1990) disrupted the binary view of sex, gender, and sexuality, by arguing that there is no sex that is not already gender, where all bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence:

*“If sex and gender are radically distinct, then it does not follow that to be a given sex is to become a given gender; in other words, “woman” need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and “man” need not interpret male bodies. This radical formulation of the sex/gender distinction suggests that sexed bodies can be the occasion for a number of different genders, and further, that gender itself need not be restricted to the usual two”*  
(Butler, 1990, p. 152)

The above quotation highlights that, according to Butler (1999), the distinction between sex and gender intended to show that biological sex does not determine gender whilst also indicating that gender is socially constructed. Butler (1990, p.9) noted that “perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all”. Butler (1999) argues that like gender, sex has prescriptive and proscriptive qualities. For example, these qualities act to serve as power structures to repress deviating gender performance (proscriptive), and to generate expected binary gender performance (prescriptive). As such, sex and gender would be the same if they are both culturally constructed (Butler, 1999) rather than something that is determined by the body. Butler (2011) proposed that in a reformulation of the materiality of the bodies, sex should no longer be viewed as a bodily given, upon which the construct of gender is imposed, but as “a cultural norm which governs the materialisation of bodies” (p. xii).

Through the notion ‘gender performativity’, Butler (1990) built on this argument, suggesting that gender is most profitably viewed as performative. Through a repeated performance of gender, this argument suggested that the idea of gender is created alongside the illusion of two natural sexes

(Morgenroth and Ryan, 2018). This argument points towards the conclusion that gender is not something one is but is a sequence of acts and something one does (Salih, 2007). Rather than being produced as a quality of biological sex, Butler (1990) claimed that gender is an act that reinforces, and is reinforced by, societal norms. In her work, Butler (1990) proposed that “gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (p. 33). Within this, it is important to highlight that the set of repeated acts as proposed by Butler (1990), is conducted within a *‘highly rigid regulatory frame’*, suggesting that the individual is not free to choose which gender he or she is going to enact, but that is already scripted, and the subject has a limited number of choices from which to make a constrained gender choice (Salih, 2007). As a result, rather than being a man or a woman, individuals act as men and women, thus creating the two distinct categories (Morgenroth and Ryan, 2018). Butler’s contribution towards reframing social categories is significant, arguing that aspects such as gender identity must be understood as emerging from the lived experience of an individual, and can only be understood through the cultural norms of the environment within which that individual was socialised (Meyerhoff, 2015). By employing Judith Butler’s notion of performativity, this thesis recognises that gender is performative, and through performative actions, gender identities are created and maintained (Butler, 1990). Starting from birth, individuals and society create and re-create the differences through the way they talk and attach words to individuals. Performativity has provided a framework for representing the relationship between language and gender, allowing gender to be theorised in new ways (Meyerhoff, 2015).

It has suggested that each of us do gender every day through the ways we dress, speak and act. In this essence, gender is something we do, not something we have (Brinkerhoff, Ortega and Weitz, 2013). Social occasions provide the stage for evocations of essential male and female natures, where the qualities associated with each gender are expressed. For example, organised sport has been cited as one of these institutional frameworks, through which the qualities associated with masculinity and manliness are expressed and celebrated by those concerned (Goffman, 1977). In this light, West and Zimmerman (1987) emphasise:

*“When we view gender as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas” (p. 126)*

As children grow up, they initially tend to have very rigid perceptions of gender which shape their views of what it means to be a boy or a girl (Shelton, 2016). But these ideas, and the subsequent adopted gender identity is actively re-constructed throughout life, highlighting that much of what individuals experience with regards to gender is socially constructed (Ryle, 2017). As such, individuals operate within this gender binary system, where not only do they reflect gender differences, but the categories



also indicate a hierarchical system whereby ‘male’ and ‘masculine’ are believed to be more superior than ‘female’ and ‘feminine’ (Fisher, Knust and Johnson, 2013). These differences have been constructed across a number of different historical places and time periods, reflecting a social category that defines gender. Therefore, the presence of these gender norms and gender roles are within a socially constructed global, historical, and intersectional context (Ryle, 2017), presenting a multidimensional understanding of gender.

In many societies, gender has often been linked to the assumption of different moral obligations and a different moral status (May, 2016). Through a process of human interaction, and the order of social life, gender is constantly created and re-created (Lorber, 1991). It has been suggested that gender is ‘created’ with gender characteristics passed on from generation to generation as cultural creations of socialisation (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). From the point of infancy, children are taught how to behave by parents and authority figures who encourage appropriate gendered behaviour. These behaviours are reinforced by those in authority, who often interact with children differently depending upon their gender. Secondly, gender is ‘re-created’, a process referred to as ‘doing’ which involves a complex of socially guided, perceptual, micropolitical and interactional activities that characterise different pursuits as expressions of feminine or masculine natures (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Through doing gender, individuals choose to act, perform, and display their gender in any given interaction (Martin, 2004), repeating it over and over again until it becomes a part of who they are and how they present themselves to the world (Tredway, 2017). As a result, gender encourages individuals to conform to shared beliefs, by meeting other people’s expectations and by internalising those expectations as personal standards for behaviour (Wood and Eagly, 2002).

Butler’s theorisation has had a strong influence on the field of sociology of sport, where sociologists have critiqued, reworked, and applied her work to a variety of facets of sport. Butler also added to this application, authoring one specific article on sport focused on ‘Athletic Genders: Hyperbolic Instance and/or the Overcoming of Sexual Binarism’ (Butler, 1998). Butler’s work has most often been applied to sport in relation to the heterosexual matrix, seeking to understand the experiences of female athletes, lesbian athletes, men and masculinity, and transgender and intersex athletes. Outside of this, there is limited application of Butler’s work to SfD and studies in the Global South. However, as Tredway (2017) highlights, Butler’s theorisation provides a useful resource for understanding women more widely, outside of those who are white and middle-class that second wave feminists have been accused of focusing on. By utilising Butler’s work, this thesis recognises that for young women involved in SfD programmes, their sporting gender performativity may contrast with assumed gender roles, where they are stepping into a space which has previously only been reserved for men.

Whilst Butler and Goffman’s theories offer important framing of this research, providing valuable insights into how gender is performed, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of using these

theories for this study, particularly in relation to issues around colonisation, race, and the Global South. Both Goffman and Butler's work has been critiqued for having a Eurocentric lens (Gouldner, 1970), where Goffman's (1959) 'presentation of self' is rooted in a Western concept and Butler's primary focus on gender and sexuality has been drawn from the experiences of white, middle-class Western subjects. Goffman's work on the 'presentation of self', focuses on personal performances, and does not explicitly account for ways in which colonial power relations are deeply embedded in societal hierarchies which impact upon people's experiences. Whilst Goffman does discuss the concept of social roles (Goffman, 1959), his work does not compass colonisation and its significant influence on the roles of those in the Global South which give rise to restrictions that individuals may face when performing an identity that is reflective of their own culture.

Given the context of Butler's empirical work, it may be considered that her work also cannot fully address the historical and political dynamics of race in former colonised countries, including those in the Global South, given the global power structures and colonial histories that have shaped the racial identities of those in these regions. Having said that, it is necessary to note that two leading Africa feminist scholars (Nnaemeka, 2004; Akurugu, 2021) point to the importance of engaging with Butler's work when researching women's lives in Africa contexts. Akurugu (2021), in particular, has drawn extensively on Butler's reflections on performativity in her own work in northern Ghana, highlighting how it can be applied to contexts in the Global South.

To overcome any potential limitations of working with Western feminist theory in Zambia, I incorporated a critical engagement with their theories whilst acknowledging the issues that they do not fully encompass. To do this, I sought to ensure that local knowledge and experiences and indigenous voices were centred through the research process, seeking to capture the ways in which understandings of gender and identity have been developed by my participants first-hand, focusing on the lived experiences of those I was studying. This approach acknowledged the specificities of race for my participants, recognising that it is a social construct based on cultural and historical factors. This approach also enabled me to listen to women's voices, and how their experiences of the culture and context within which they live influence the social roles they assume. Furthermore, I, as the researcher, adopted a more reflexive and critical approach, engaging in a process of self-reflection throughout the study, acknowledging the limitations of both Butler and Goffman and operating in a way that was inclusive and sensitive to the complexities of race and colonialism. This self-reflexive critique, which was a continuous process throughout the research, enabled me to examine my own biases and assumptions as a white, middle-class researcher from the Global North, recognising and acknowledging how this influences the research process (see Section 5.3).

### 3.4 Empowerment in Policy and Practice

This subsection will focus on empowerment. It will begin by exploring the prominence of empowerment in development policy and practice, before progressing to explain the specific academic concepts that are relevant to this study regarding the potential for empowerment to emerge in SfD contexts. The following subsections will theorise Rowlands' (1997) typology of power, which represent power in four different forms: 'power over', 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within'. Along with this, Rowlands' (1995; 1997) dimensions of power at a personal, close relationship and collective level will be explored. This section will culminate in examining empowerment at an individual and collective level.

Beginning with early applications in international development in the 1970s, women's empowerment came to be articulated over time as a "radical approach concerned with transforming power relations in favour of women's right and gender equality between women and men" (Cornwall, 2016, p. 343) as attention to the concept deepened in the 1980s and 1990s. Empowerment became increasingly widely reference referenced in development policy, theory and practice, applied in a broad range of social-change processes, but most commonly utilised with reference to women and gender equality (Batliwala, 2007). Ideas of empowerment, and the centrality of power and control, is complemented by a primary focus on the structural basis of gender inequalities rather than on individual self-assertion (Cornwall, 2016). Within this perspective, empowerment becomes "an unfolding, iterative process that is fundamentally about shifts in power relations" (Cornwall, 2016, p. 344), linking to the notions of collective action and the development of 'power within' and 'power to', which will be discussed later (Rowlands, 1997). Empowerment, as such, has been used as a way for women to "challenge and eliminate their own subordination" (Adjeji, 2015, p. 62), organising and gaining power and control over their lives. A major report on pathways to gender equality discusses empowerment in action:

*"Empowerment is... also about shifting the horizons of possibility. As women come to see themselves differently, they can begin to confront and overcome obstacles in their everyday lives. Working with women's empowerment calls for working with women's imaginations as well as the material aspect of their lives" (Pathways RPC 2011, p. 10).*

In the context of empowerment in action, there is a broad agreement that empowerment is a process that involves a degree of personal development and involves moving from insight to action (Rowlands, 1995).

Once used to describe grassroots struggles to confront unjust and unequal power relations in the international development field, empowerment has become one of the most elastic buzzwords utilised, evolving into a term used by an expansive coalition of corporations, NGOs, philanthropists, and development donors (Cornwall, 2016). The concept has become highly contested, but is embedded in social justice, emancipation of the poor and marginalised and struggles for decolonisation (Batliwala,

2007). Empowerment is a prominent theme in the delivery of SfD programmes, where the focus has commonly been on the enhancement of women and girls' lives through sport. Furthermore, for women in Zambia, empowerment as a conceptual frame can be used to explore how some female adolescent peer leaders exhibit behaviours that differ from their peers. This frame can also be used to consider the lack of or under empowerment of individuals and groups of females, and to help us understand the influence these individuals have on their fellow peers and communities. Given that the concept of empowerment lies at the centre of Sport in Action's Girls in Action programme and EduSport's Go Sisters programme, it is critical to understand how the term has been conceptualised and applied in practice. For Sport in Action, the 'Empowerment and Development of Women and Girls' is one of their strategic areas, where they highlight: "one of our core focusses at Sport in Action is the empowerment and development of women and girls. We strive for an equal society where gender inequality is no more" (Sport in Action, 2024c). Similarly, for EduSport, their approach "aims at empowering girls by training them to become youth peer coaches and leaders" (EduSport, 2021).

Within academic literature, empowerment retains core orientation to encompassing processes and outcomes that are fundamentally about changing power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little or no power over their own lives (Sen, 1997). The emphasis is on 'agency', where individuals can take control of their own circumstances and realise their aspirations (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019), through the ability to define goals and act upon them (Kabeer, 1999). Kabeer (1999) stresses that the ability to exercise individual choice is based on three interrelated elements – resources, agency, and achievements. For example, providing women in Zambia with greater access to, and control over material resources may in and of itself bring about some level of change in their lives, including the ability to better manage their poverty (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). Cornwall and Edwards (2014) further go on to emphasise that to really witness a substantial change, conditions need to be fostered which address the deep structural bases of gender inequality, allowing women to not only understand their own personal situation, but to be able to act to bring about change that benefits them and other women around them. If the status of women in Zambia is to change and the gender inequalities present are to be broken down, empowerment is a conceptual frame that can be used to help understand how this process might be brought about. Understandings of empowerment incorporate process and agency and have previously been applied to the SfD field (Hayhurst, 2013), something that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The concept of empowerment is also a central tenant in the theoretical framework of feminism and development (Zipp, 2017). The use of 'empowerment' has been highly prevalent in the field of education and is increasingly being used "as a tool for understanding what is needed to change the situation of poor and marginalised people" (Rowlands, 1995, p. 103; 1997). Feminist conceptual work relating to empowerment emphasises that it is not something that can be done to or for anyone else but is concerned with the processes that lead individuals to perceive themselves as able (Rowlands, 1997).

From this viewpoint, feminist theorists propose an empowerment framework that views power as a capacity or ability, specifically referring to an ability to transform or empowered the self, or support others to empower themselves, viewing power in a transformative light. This empowerment-based concept of power is alternative to masculine notions of ‘power-over’, stressing that women’s empowerment is not about replacing one form of empowerment with another. Rather, the empowerment of women, a process that has been explored through this research, refers to women’s ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied them (Kabeer, 1999). Cornwall (2016) stresses that empowerment is a socio-political process, encompassing shifts in political, social, and economic power between and across both individuals and social groups. This is a point that Batliwala (1994) also highlights, proposing that empowerment is both a process and a goal:

*“Empowerment is manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, castes, races, genders, or individuals. The goals of women’s empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women’s subordination); to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (the family, caste, class, religion, educational processes and institutions, the media, health practices and systems, laws and civil codes, political processes, development models and government institutions); and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources.” (p. 130).*

The relational nature of empowerment highlights the complex reciprocal relationship between a women’s capacity for self-expression (Sen, 1997), their self-understanding (Kabeer, 1994) as well as their access to, and control over material resources (Cornwall, 2016).

The empowerment framework that will be adopted for this thesis is built on a number of important insights. Firstly, this thesis will take the stance that empowerment is a relational process, concerning the relations of power in which individuals are located (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). As Cornwall and Edwards (2014) stress, reducing empowerment to measurable outcomes will result in the disappearance of the relational dimensions of empowerment, and “with them that which is constitutive of the concept itself” (p. 10). Any account of lived experience must embrace the essential sociality of the concept of empowerment and disempowerment, within which there is an intimate imbrication of the personal and political (Cornwall, 2016). The relational dynamics are important, with aspects such as social relations and group formation crucial to the empowerment of women in low-income contexts, particularly where social norms are a defining feature of everyday life (Doneys, Doane and Norm, 2020); something that is prevalent for the participants of this research. Secondly, this thesis will encompass the concept that empowerment is fundamentally about changing power relations, not only improving a women’s capacity to cope with a situation in which they face injustice or oppression, but

imbuing women with the power to bring into view and question that which that once may have considered normal (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). For empowerment to be effective and sustainable, the reordering of gender power relations is vital (Rowlands, 1997), particularly in favour of those who have previously exercised little power over their own lives (Batliwala, 1993). Thirdly, this thesis will operate on the premise that empowerment is a contextual ongoing process rather than a fixed state or end point (Cornwall and Edwards 2014). Furthermore, it will recognise that there is no one size fits all approach for empowerment, acknowledging that what empowers one woman might not empower another and that empowerment in one area of a women's life does not automatically translate to another area (Cornwall, 2016). As a result, this thesis will explore the ongoing, and sometimes temporary process of empowerment, and how this may contribute towards individual, community, and social outcomes; something that will be explained further in the next section.

### **3.4.1 Different dimensions of power**

The term empowerment is derived from the concept power, and this thesis will utilise a theoretical framework based on Rowlands' (1995; 1997; 1998) empowerment framework. Drawing on Foucault's notion of power, Rowlands' (1997) brings a broader perspective to discussions surrounding power and empowerment, adding a feminist concern encompassing internalised oppressions and their role in maintain gender inequality. Rowlands (1997) typology of power argues that power can be represented in four different forms: 'power over', 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within'. 'Power over' is a coercive form of power whereby an increase in the power of one means a loss of power by another. Within this light, power is subjugated over an individual or group representing a zero-sum scenario (Deere and León, 2001). This form of power is associated with processes of exclusion and marginalisation, relating to dominance and oppression whereby groups as portrayed as 'powerless' (Willis, 2011). From a feminist perspective, 'power over' requires a need to understand the dynamics of oppression and internalised oppression, given these elements affect the ability of disadvantaged groups to exert influence and participate in decision making (Rowlands, 1995). Whereas power within, power to, and power with, can be seen as manifestations of a more empowering process (Monkman, 2011). In the process of empowerment, the 'power with' interpretation of power is concerned with people's capability to achieve with others what they could not achieve alone, with a sense that the sum of the whole is greater than the individual (Rowlands, 1997). The 'power to' dimension refers to generative or productive power which creates new possibilities and actions but without domination (ibid) and is built on the unique potential of each individual to shape his or her world (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2007). 'Power within' is related to a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge, including the ability to recognise and respect individual differences (ibid), and involves people having a sense of their own capacity and self-worth (Mathie, Cameron and Gibson, 2017). These four forms of power are

reflected in empowerment as a concept and become visible through the enactment of agency in different ways (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019).

Rowlands (1995, 1997) built on this work, and differentiated a further three dimensions of power through which empowerment operates, and these should be considered within the development process, contrasting to the oppressive view of ‘power over’. These dimensions highlight how empowerment is experienced and demonstrated. Rowlands’ (1997) three-layered model explores the personal, relational, and collective empowerment dimensions, and focuses our attention on varying kinds of spaces and actions that contribute to empowerment (Monkman, 2011). These three dimensions of empowerment are:

- “Personal: where empowerment is about developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity and undoing the effects of internalised oppression.
- Close relationships: where empowerment is about developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions made within it.
- Collective: where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone. This includes involvement in political structures but might also cover collective action based on cooperation rather than competition. Collective action may be locally focused for example, at village or neighbourhood level - or institutional, such as national networks or the United Nations” (Rowlands, 1995, p. 103; 1997, p. 15).

Each of these dimensions of power are “generative rather than controlling” (Rowlands 1998, p. 15) and one person’s gain of power does not diminish another person’s power.

To understand, and investigate empowerment, all three dimensions need to be considered simultaneously, recognising that whilst they are distinct in nature, each form supports the others (Rowlands, 1997). Firstly, the ‘personal’ dimension of empowerment is central to the core of the empowerment process and entails psychological and psycho-social processes and changes. This dimension relates to empowerment on an individual level, recognising that the experience of empowerment is a personal and unique experience, shaped by the personal history of the individual concerned, their conditions and actions. Although women may go through similar experiences to other individuals, their own experience is distinctive to them (Rowlands, 1998), being experienced as a feeling of development and a change of behaviour (Rowlands, 1997). Personal empowerment is more than women simply increasing in confidence and self-esteem, but developing agency, and the capacity to think and analyse one’s own opinions, growing in their sense of worth, individually, and as members of their community (ibid).

Secondly, the ‘relational’ dimension of empowerment refers to the ability of someone to get support, communicate, negotiate, defend themselves and their rights and find a sense of ‘self’ in the relationship

as well as dignity; all core elements within this dimension (Rowlands, 1998). Empowerment within relationships can occur between different individuals and contain changes of expectations and behaviours which impacts the lives of women (Rowlands, 1997). For women to be able to empower themselves in relationships, Rowland's (1997) argues that they need to have a clear sense of personal empowerment, and an understanding that the situation they are in, is one they wish to change. For change to occur, the power dynamics of the relationship need to be address, where women must change themselves as well as the other person. Thirdly, the 'collective' dimension of empowerment is about group identity, group dignity, a collective sense of agency and self-organisation and management (Rowlands, 1998), which builds the capacity of a group of people to work together to achieve a common goal (Tandon, 2016). Furthermore, 'collective' agency contributes towards individual empowerment of each group member by building confidence (Tandon, 2016), with the correct elements of this dimension include a sense of identity, sense of collective agency, and the ability to self-organise and manage (Rowlands, 1997). This last dimension is also closely linked to the personal element, where for a group to achieve collective progress there is a certain degree of personal empowerment required (ibid).

### **3.4.2 Levels of Empowerment: Individual vs Collective**

There is a broad agreement in literature that empowerment is a process, and this next section will focus on empowerment in practice. The different levels of empowerment, as conceptualised by Rowlands (1997), are closely related to Rowlands' (1995) work on the three dimensions of power. This section focuses on how the different aspects of the conceptualisation of empowerment may be put into practice. Literature has drawn a distinction between individual empowerment and community or collective empowerment (Spencer, 2014), with the differences between these levels relating to how power is conceived (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). The individual perspective of empowerment views power in a more fluid and multi-dimensional way, arguing that "empowerment strategies for women must build on 'the power within' as a necessary adjunct to improving their ability to control resources, to determine agendas and make decisions" (Kabeer, 1994, p. 229). Empowerment on an individual level, which was distinguished by Rowlands (1997) in her work, recognises the personal experience an individual goes through. This level of empowerment prioritises the process, highlighting a number of personal attributes individuals can develop in order to enhance their sense of empowerment (Spencer, 2014), or 'power within' as detailed by Rowlands (1997). For Rowlands (1997), 'power within' reflected empowerment at an individual level, built upon self-acceptance and self-respect as well as the strength and uniqueness that resides in each individual that makes them human. For those involved in supporting empowerment in women's communities, this form of empowerment has been suggested to be the most important and is the process through which self-perceptions and understandings are challenged (Sharp et al. 2003). Through this process, women are engaged to make sense of their world, their beliefs, assumptions,



practices and values and their relationships (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). Furthermore, women are able to question that which they have assumed and taken for granted, leading to potentially transformational effects (ibid). One of the processes of empowerment, at an individual level, is that women are able to generate a belief in their abilities, exploring alternative ways of existing and playing a role in the enactment of change (Sharp et al. 2003). As Batliwala (1993) notes:

*“One unique feature of this approach is the stress placed upon changing women’s self-image: the argument is that unless women are liberated from their existing perception of themselves as weak, inferior and limited beings, no amount of external interventions – whether in the form of resource access or economic power – will enable them to challenge existing power equations in society, the community or the family” (p. 31).*

Empowering women from within gives them an alternative perspective where they reflect, analyse, and assess what has previously been assumed as a given. This transformation of consciousness is intended to lead and contribute to individuals gaining self-confidence and also an ability to act (Rowlands, 1997).

In the context of development, Rowlands (1995) points out that that whilst individual empowerment is one aspect in achieving empowerment at a collective and institutional levels, focusing solely upon individuals alone is not enough. Rowlands (1995) continues to highlight that changes are needed as a collective, from households to communities, organisations, institutions, and societies, with those forming these groups required to use their abilities to take charge of identifying and meeting their own needs. Community, or collective forms of empowerment involve the mobilisation of individuals in communities to take action (Spencer, 2014). The narrative of empowerment as collection action, links to Rowlands’ (1997) dimension of ‘power with’ and works alongside the individual ‘power within’ notion and is represented through literature as aligning and overlapping (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). Collective empowerment, as a dimension of power, is where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than that which they could have achieved alone (Rowlands, 1995). Within development, some organisations view individual empowerment as a prerequisite for collective empowerment whereas others place a greater importance on collective empowerment, given its perceived potential to result in the transformation of the structures that subjugate women (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). Community forms of empowerment can also draw on community development perspectives and seek to address and tackle the dynamic relationship between social structure and individual agency (Spencer, 2014).

For a change to occur in women’s power in society, there cannot be a sole focus on individual empowerment, rather it requires a collective undertaking involving individual change and group action (Young, 1993). Cornwall (2016) coins the terms ‘sociality’ or ‘solidarity’ to reflect the processes of collective empowerment, highlighting that any account of the lived experience of empowerment must

embrace the imbrication of the personal and political. For women's empowerment to be achieved, Young (1993) argues that an empowerment approach to development must enable women:

*"... to take control of their own lives to set their own agendas, to organise to help each other and make demands on the state for support and on society itself for change. With the collective empowerment of women, the direction and processes of development would also be shifted to respond to women's needs and their vision. The collective empowerment of women of course, would bring with it the individual empowerment of women, but not only for individual advancement" (p.159)*

The development agenda and global policy initiatives have increasingly become dominated by a focus on 'empowering' people, particularly women, given the presumed link to positive development outcomes and poverty alleviation (Anderson, 2022). As the section above has highlighted, discussions regarding empowerment have been concerned with changing power relations, where the concept of empowerment can be used to plan development interventions that ensures the needs of women are met (Rowlands, 1997). As the earlier mentioned feminist slogan 'the personal is the political' indicated, the process of empowerment is rooted in an expansion of women's consciousness alongside capacity to enable them to act to transform their worlds (Cornwall, 2016). Fundamental to this process is engaging women to think differently about themselves, the situation they are in, their social world, relationships and beyond (ibid).

The concepts of empowerment and power can be applied to the context of SfD programmes in Zambia, to help understand the processes young women go through when a part of these programmes. The focus of empowerment in SfD has predominantly been centred around rebalancing gender relations by creating spaces in which girls and women can operate, equally, alongside boys and men. In this sense, SfD programmes can be viewed as sites to empower women and girls to take control of their lives (Hylton and Totten, 2013), individually and collectively. The broader focus on empowerment and gender within development has translated into SfD, and the next section will explore key themes of gender and SfD, including sport empowerment and girls as 'agents of change'.

### **3.5 Sport, Gender, and Development**

The following section will outline the way sport on the African continent is gendered, discussing the historical interactions between sport, and gender. It will subsequently review literature conducted within the SfD context. Through doing this, this chapter will identify a number of key concepts which are prevalent within the SfD field, including empowerment and girls as 'agents of change', presenting an understanding of how gender has been conceptualised, understood, and implemented within SfD in the Global South.

Acknowledgment that sport has gendered dimensions is commonly reflected throughout literature situated in Africa. For example, Pelak's (2005) study in South Africa, explored how South African women negotiated their gender, race and class to participate in the historically masculine sport of football. Her study highlighted how football in South Africa serves as an ideological cornerstone for the maintenance of male dominance which has resulted in the historical exclusion of women (Pelak, 2005). This reflects wider societal gendered divisions regarding household labour, which limits women's access to sports by burdening them and privileging men (Roberts, 1992). The apparent strict boundaries between 'male' and 'female' sports in South Africa, with women being encouraged into quintessential feminine sports such as netball, demonstrates how the dominant group constructs cultural, physical, and social boundaries to build collective identities around gender (Pelak, 2005). Whilst South Africa have progressed in the development of sport more recently, research has highlighted that it is still plagued by issues across gender (Swart and Martín-González, 2021).

In another study, which explored women's participation in sport in Zimbabwe, Manyonganise (2010) found that girls are discouraged from a young age from taking part in sports and activities which demand physical exertion, reflecting the wider social construction of spaces which are specifically earmarked for men and women respectively. As in Zambia (Evans, 2014), the patriarchal nature of society is deeply entrenched in Zimbabwe and fosters gender-stereotyping, with girls and women being socialised to take a subordinate position in society (Manyonganise, 2010). This culture is reflected in sport, thus encouraging its positioning as a male enterprise. Ramtohul's (2010) research looked at the gendered dimension of competitive sport in Mauritius, highlighted that a "pertinent factor affecting women's participation in sport in Mauritius is the conservative culture which forges dominant notions of respective femininity and women's and girls' restricted access to public spaces where sports activities most often take place" (p. 103). This research highlighted the major gender dimensions of sport, where there is a need for greater consideration of cultural norms and values to understand why women's presence in sport has remained marginal (Ramtohul, 2010). Although, in principle, both girls and boys participate in sport in Zambia, their experiences differ, with many girls and young women engaging in traditional dance whilst young men most commonly engage in sports, such as football, that are conceived as masculine (Meier and Saavedra, 2009). In West Africa, Charway and Houlihan's (2020) research in Ghana has highlighted that despite the country's constitution explicitly rejecting all forms of gender disparity and discrimination in sport, the recognition and representation of women's sport has garnered less government attention. Furthermore, women's sport has largely been marginalised in comparison to men's sport, the latter of which has dominated the public's attention, the media, and the Ghanaian government's priorities. More recently Charway and Strandbu's (2024) further research in Ghana evidenced how cultural and structural constraints prevent the participation of girls and women in community sport, where girls and women do not have equal access due to the patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society.

The examples above link to the overarching dilemma, that even when African girls and young women engage in sport, they are still marginalised, and risk serious consequences arising as a result of their deviance from socially and culturally expected norms (Saavedra, 2005). The world of sport has been highlighted as being profoundly gendered, carrying many gendered connotations (Saavedra, 2009; Ogunniyi, 2015). Over the past four decades, the association of sport and masculinity has been discussed in literature, where it has been shown to be dominated by masculine values and ideas (Dunning, 1986). Sport and sport-related contexts have developed as sites through which masculine habitus, identities and behaviours are produced and reproduced (Dunning, 2013), with many considering it a bastion of male hegemony (Bryson, 1987; Hardin, 2005; Messner, 1992; Ogunniyi, 2015). The perceptions of masculinity and femininity within sport often reflect the dominant perception within the rest of society, where masculinities reflect cultural values and ideologies (Grindstaff and West, 2011). The gendering of sport, where experiences and practices often categorised as female or male and feminine or masculine, can be understood through exploring and analysing the multi-layered aspects of its nature, which are psychological, cultural, and social (Saavedra, 2009). Not only does sport reflect dominant perspectives, but it also acts as a potent tool in the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity (Fink, 2012). Typically, men are expected to be masculine, and women are expected to be feminine, which becomes a problem within the sporting field. Female athletes who exhibit strength, power, and superior athletic ability – assumed masculine traits - threaten the nature of male hegemony (Fink, 2012), with their entrance into the masculine domain of sport being counteracted with claims that their athletic bodies are gender-deviant (Ramtohul, 2010). As such, “in a masculine culture, most people believe that men should be the bread winners and should study and work; whereas women should be house holders and should not have to work or study if they don’t want” (Lopez-Zafra and Rodriguez-Espartal 2014, p. 146).

Despite and in response to the wider trends within sport, gender-based and gender-sensitive SfD programmes have been instigated to challenge traditional thinking, linking to a belief that sport also has “power to upend what is seen/presented as ‘normal’ and [to] become a major force to social change beyond sport by challenging gender norms” (Saavedra, 2009, p.127). NGOs and SfD programmes, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, have tended to adopt the broad categories of ‘women’ and ‘girls’ when developing their programmes, where “gender is usually only invoked when referring to the involvement of girls and women” (Saavedra, 2009, p. 128), placing a particular focus on a gender-orientated goal as their outcome. However, what these NGOs have failed to do, is account for intersectionality, recognising that individuals hold different identities, and that, for example, the race, social class, and religion of groups will shape their interaction with, and experiences of, SfD programmes. Intersectionality recognises that human experiences are influenced by the intersection of these various identities enabling an analytical lens to be applied to research (McHugh, 2014).

In terms of SfD research, an early focus of attention was on the tangible barriers that prohibited women and girls from being involved in SfD programmes (Chawansky, 2011). This attention acknowledged the reality of girls' lives across various cultural, geographical, and religious contexts, highlighting how planning was required to address these barriers, so women and girls could engage in SfD programmes and initiatives (ibid). Brady and Khan's (2002) report on the Mathare Youth Sports Association in Kenya laid an early foundation to explore the relationship between SfD and gender. Through their report, Brady and Khan's (2002) documented the process of integrating girls into a community-based youth sports programme, highlighting, for the first time, an example of the role sport can play in development, particularly around transforming gender norms. The inclusion of girls in sport led to the recognition that it could be used as a tool to break down gender stereotypes as well as sensitising communities to the capabilities of women and girls (Oxford and McLachlan, 2018; Oxford and Spaaij, 2019). SfD has followed this trend from wider international development, with the development of women and girls growing in prominence, with scholars referring to this attention as the 'girling of development' (Hayhurst, 2013a). This emerging phenomenon in SfD positions the empowerment of women and girls as a key to improving communities and societies (Zipp et al. 2019). Sport, gender, and empowerment will be addressed specifically in Chapter 4, but it is particularly noteworthy, given that 'empowerment' is a central component of SfD programmes.

### **3.5.1 Gender and Sport for Development Key Themes**

The 'girling of development', which refers to an emerging pattern for organisations in development to invest in adolescent girls, highlights this increased focus in an attempt to achievement development goals (Hayhurst, 2011). Chawansky (2011) suggests that SfD work in the 'realm of gender' is influenced by post-colonial donor-recipient relationships that shape the wider field. For example, Giulianotti's (2011) research with SfD officials operating in various contexts highlighted that gender was a recurring theme which they had to navigate, where a challenge arose when managing dual commitments between local cultural values and broad transnational developmental objectives. As such, it was noted that local ownership is vital in ensuring SfD programmes are shaped to meet macro-cultural issues relative to the environment within which it is implemented, accommodating local perspectives and value systems (Giulianotti, 2011). Saavedra (2009) suggests caution should be taken when embracing the emancipatory power of sport programmes for women and girls, with a need to acknowledge the gendered forms of the western sporting trajectory and the varying relationship between gender and sport across time and space. What may work and be effective in one area of the world or with one group of society may not necessarily reflect the same result in another place or time, and as such the way in which gender operates in a specific community needs to be encompassed (Saavedra, 2009). A number of academics have documented the empowering nature of SfD programmes, with empowerment a

prominent concept within SfD policy and practice (Lindsey and Banda 2010; Lindsey and Gratton, 2012). Furthermore, the ideals of gender equity and empowerment are inextricably linked and feature heavily in the objectives of SfD (Trimble, 2012). Through the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the perceived ability of sport to contribute towards development efforts centred on gender has been explicitly championed (UNGA, 2015). With MDG 3, and more recently SDG 5, focused on promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls (UN, 2023). Sport has been promoted as a tool to ameliorate gender inequalities whilst promoting the empowerment of girls and women (Meier and Saavedra, 2009). SfD has also been advocated as an effective means through international development agendas can be achieved, particularly those relating to the empowerment of women and girls:

*“There is evidence that sport can help to enhance girls’ and women’s health and well-being, foster self-esteem and empowerment, facilitate social inclusion and integration, challenge gender norms, and provide opportunities for leadership and achievement” – (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2015, p. 8)*

In many countries in the Global South, women and girls experience a reduced access to education compared to their male counterparts (Sherry and Schulenkorf, 2016). SfD programmes have often been adopted as a culturally appropriate method to engage women and girls in education (Sherry, 2017). Furthermore, sport programmes, due to their physical nature, can provide a safe space to discuss gender-sensitive issues such as sexual health (Petry and Kroner, 2019). This safe space, referring to a space which promotes environments of cultural safety and inclusivity, whilst facilitating meaningful interactions through shared respect (Spaaij and Schulenkorf, 2014), can impart knowledge which enables girls and women to take more control over their body and lives (Petry and Kroner, 2019). Additionally, involvement in sport programmes can promote the physical health and emotional wellbeing of participants, including women and girls (Caperchione et al. 2011).

Organisations that deliver sporting programmes facilitate the participation of women and girls within civil society (Petry and Kroner, 2019). Saavedra (2009) has highlighted that the sporting achievements of women and girls give rise to a sense of unease in some groups in society, due to this success being viewed as a sign of power and presence, bringing a sense that powerful women can be threatening to the stable order of society. Female participation in SfD programmes may thus function as a transformative process, liberating women and girls from the constraining hegemonic ideals that have shaped their normality leading to a more egalitarian world (Saavedra, 2005). The promotion of female participation in sport creates positive female role models, calling traditional views into question whilst deconstructing gender norms (Meier, 2005; Beutler, 2008). However, Trimble (2012) argues that the promotion of gender equity through sport needs to embrace a holistic approach to empowerment, encompassing the needs of individuals, both male and female.

### 3.5.2 Gender and SfD Key Themes: Empowerment

Within a post-colonial context, SfD programmes in the Global South continue to bear the mark of history, one which is heavily shaped and influenced by the Global North, defining what development looks like, which goals should be targeted and how the programmes should be implemented (Crew and Harrison, 1998). Hayhurst (2014a) indicates that the majority of research regarding sport, gender and development has so far centred on the empowerment or enhancement of girls and women's lives through their involvement in sport. Sport has been positioned as a key space for girl's and women's empowerment, with empowerment and gender equality featuring regularly as a target for many SfD organisations (Kwauk, 2022).

A critical gap in current literature is the lack of definition of empowerment, where there is an absence of a clear and commonly accepted understanding of the term itself (Hennick et al. 2012). The process for measuring empowerment is also limited (Richardson, 2018). Despite the growing popularity of the concept, there is the potential for the concept of empowerment to be misused or neutralised given the lack of clarity across the board (Lindsey and O'Gorman, 2015). As a result of the varying definitions of empowerment, trying to understand girls and women's empowerment through sport is a challenge (Streetman and Heinrich, 2024). With the lack of clarity of an operational definition of empowerment, different studies have been grounded by a variety of feminist theories. Whilst this research adopted a feminist framework to shape its processes, it was not constrained by the adoption of a single definition of empowerment, nor measured by a single model of empowerment. Rather, the literature available on empowerment in SfD is used to support the analysis of the young women's experiences of SfD programmes, and their role as a peer leader, and the extent to which these were relatively empowering or disempowering.

With the expanded engagement with concepts of empowerment amongst SfD researchers, Streetman and Heinrich (2024) have specifically introduced the idea of 'sports empowerment' which they argue should be considered a separate term from women's empowerment or empowerment. Lindsey and O'Gorman (2015) offer one of the earliest accounts in SfD literature that specifically highlighted empowerment through sport, recognising that for an individual to be empowered, their involvement had to expand beyond simply taking part in competitive sporting activities. This alternative type of engagement with sport in the international development domain has become known as 'sports empowerment'. According to Streetman and Heinrich (2024) "*sports empowerment explicitly relies on sports participation to facilitate empowerment*" (p. 815). Sports empowerment can help promote leadership among women and girls, boost self-esteem, encourage inclusion and defy gender stereotypes as a result of participation in sport (Streetman and Heinrich, 2024). Through sport-based processes, individuals and communities are given the opportunity to challenge social and cultural norms outside the sporting world (Seal and Sherry, 2018). This indicates that sports empowerment may have a wider

impact than that which happens within the sporting domain, through spillover into everyday life (Streetman and Heinrich, 2024). In light of this, this thesis seeks to capture a greater understanding of this ‘spillover effect’, looking to capture and understand how young women’s participation through SfD programmes may affect and impact their wider life.

### **3.5.3 Gender and SfD Key Themes: Girls as ‘agents of change’**

This subsection looks specifically at girls within SfD, moving away from a broader view of women, to focus specifically on girls. Currently, SfD discourses focus on the ‘girl as the new agent of social change’ (Hayhurst, 2013) and the ‘girling of SDP’ (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016), where girls are frequently becoming the focus of sport, gender, and development agendas. As a result, more research is being produced which addresses the complexities of gender relations and gender norms within sport and SfD as a global industry (Chawansky and Hayhurst, 2015). Early work in this area was dominated by literature providing an overview and mapping the field, which was necessary to explore the presence of gender within SfD (Hillyer et al. 2011; Hancock et al. 2013). This research aligns with the broader discussion on girls in international development, with the ‘girling of development’ referring to a trend in the development field to invest in adolescent girls, typically those aged 8 to 18, given the broader societal benefits this can produce (Hayhurst, 2011). To understand the argument for girl-centred programming within the SfD field, it is imperative to explore how girls are discussed within the broader international development context and how these align (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016).

Girls as ‘agents of change’ and the ‘girling of development’, are viewpoints that are visible in initiatives within the SfD field. The Girl Effect campaign, which was officially launched by the Nike Foundation in partnership with the NoVo Foundation in 2005, was positioned as enabling young women to reach their ‘unique’ potential and focused on their role in ending poverty for themselves and the world around them (Girl Effect, 2019). Through investing in girls and young women, the Girl Effect claims that when given an opportunity, “women and girls are more effective at lifting themselves and their families out of poverty, therefore having a multiplier effect within their villages, cities, and nations” (Shain, 2013, p.2) However, it is worth noting that conceptualising a programme in this way is potentially problematic, as it places the onus solely on girls, suggesting that through being given an opportunity to participate, they must make the ‘right choice’ to take part and as a result, they are more effective in lifting themselves out of poverty. This claim does not acknowledge, or account for, the constraints of neo-liberal development systems, ignoring the myriad of structural constraints that operate in the lives of young women which actually prevent them from taking part in the first place (Hayhurst, 2013b). As such, SfD programmes cannot operate in isolation, but girls must be supported structurally if they are to become the ‘agents of change’ that the interventions are seeking to produce.



The Girl Effect campaign emerged as a significant moment in the gender and development landscape (Hayhurst, 2014) and has since gathered the most attention within SfD literature on girls and women (Hayhurst 2011, 2013, 2014). Whilst originally coined by Nike for their campaign, ‘Girl Effect’ has been adopted by a range of stakeholders working in the Global South with girl-focused programmes (Thorpe, Hayhurst and Chawansky, 2018). However, it should be noted that the Girl Effect is about reaching girls through various types of programming, rather than being simply exclusive to SfD, with the aim of improving both their lives and the lives of those in the community around them (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016). Such initiatives are built upon an aspiration to empower girls economically and this is visible in other girl-focused initiatives in both SfD and mainstream development, including Plan International’s ‘Because I am a Girl’ (Caron and Margolin, 2015) and the GOAL programme (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016).

### **3.5.4 Gender and SfD Key Themes: Single Sex vs Mixed Gender Programmes**

The place assigned to adolescent girls in development initiatives has usually been in relation to addressing factors such as the reduction of teenage pregnancies and elimination of child marriage, with this history highlighting the need to invest in girls and women as a distinct target segment, separate from the provision given to other adolescent groups (Sewall-Menon et al. 2012). The “discourse about women and sport, on a practical level, is now about integration versus separation” (Hall, 1988, p. 338), a view which according to Chawansky (2011) is now reflected within SfD programmes. Providing a critical review of SfD literature, Chawansky (2011) exposes how SfD programming falls into two categories, whereby an organisation either ‘empower’ girls in a single sex programme or they ‘allow’ girls to play in a co-ed, mixed-gender environment, both of which will be explored below.

With many in the international development field now viewing ‘the girl’ as a key solution to alleviate poverty (Hayhurst et al. 2014), women and girls have been positioned as “catalysts for local, community, and global change” (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016, p. 95). Within this, programmes and initiatives are built upon the understanding that sport can empower girls to better the world in which they live, holding the answer to many development problems (Chawansky and Schlenker, 2016). Promotion of girls via this lens has stimulated organisations within SfD to focus on the delivery of ‘girl only’ programmes, which are centred on empowering women and girls to make the ‘right choices’ to improve their communities and countries (Hayhurst et al, 2014). Whilst this approach may be beneficial, it also has its downfalls, with segregation recreating, if not escalating, social divisions between men and women (Hancock et al. 2013). Many SfD organisations have adopted a single sex approach to the delivery of initiatives. For example, the EduSport Foundation’s Go Sisters programme is a programme that uses sport and other SfD interventions specifically for girls and women’s empowerment (Mwaanga, 2010), whilst aiming to provide an education alongside dealing with a range of issues such as economic

empowerment and HIV/AIDS in Zambia (Levermore, 2008). A major goal of this programme is to provide a safe space for women and girls, in an arena which is traditionally male dominated, striving to confront the gendered nature of public spaces (Coalter, 2007). Through encouraging girls into leadership roles, Go Sisters attempts to help girls and women achieve equality through a female-focused programme (Kay et al. 2016). The emergence of female-focused programmes, such as Go Sisters and Girls in Action, and the structural changes that have been shaped and reserved for women and girls only reflect third wave feminist orientations (Chawansky, 2011).

For many organisations, their SfD work integrates girls and women in mixed gender programmes as a way of addressing development agendas. It has been suggested that an inclusive educational sport setting should be the framework adopted to enable organisations to achieve greater social change through cross-group contact, creating an inclusive mindset and embrace diversity, with organisations providing the impetus for social change (Lyras and Hums, 2009). Mixed-gender programmes have been suggested to create a space where girls are not only empowered, but boys are ‘enlightened’, highlighting that SfD programmes are extending their concept of gender equality beyond simply access issues for women and girls (Willis, 2000). Mixed-gender SfD activities can contribute towards promoting gender equality and empowering women by providing a safe space for women and girls to gather and network alongside men and boys, creating local, community-based role models for their peers (Read and Bingham, 2009). Beyond the educational outcomes, this approach has produced a range of benefits including tolerance, communication and understanding amongst different groups, having a significant effect on gender groups (Sugden, 2006; Lyras and Hums, 2009; Lyras, 2007).

Despite this evidence, which can have significant practical implications, Zipp and Nauright (2018) argue that integrating participants into heteronormative and masculine forms of sport through SfD programmes may inadvertently reinforce gender norms for both female and male participants. The involvement of women and girls within the patriarchal nature of sport structures can weaken the benefits sport produces, forcing to women to adapt to programmes traditionally designed for males (Saavdera, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial that SfD organisations understand the culture, and the needs of women and girls in a particular context before the development and implementing of programmes within that space (Hancock et al. 2013).

Over the past 50 years an argument has emerged within the wider field of development studies, where feminist theorists have suggested that development efforts have focused on the expansion of opportunities for females by including them within male-dominated programmes and structures (Boserup, 1989). This apparent ‘integrative’ approach, which is sometimes provided through co-educational programmes, suggests that when development is based on existing cultural, economic, and political structures, they are unable to provide individual equality for women as well as collective benefits for their families and communities (Kay, 2011). Therefore, mixed-gender SfD programmes

and interventions appear to only address gender to a certain extent, attending to the expected issues of access and inclusion (Chawansky, 2011). Too often SfD programmes see ‘gender equality’ as a topic that is only important to women and girls, yet Zipp et al. (2023) argues that to empower girls, SfD programmes need to actively engage men and boys in the process to confront and challenge existing gender order.

### **3.5.5 Gender and SfD Key themes: The role of the family**

The central role of the family as a social institution has been highlighted in the SfD literature, demonstrating the effect they can have on the participation of girls in SfD programming (Kay and Spaaij, 2012). Kay and Spaaij (2012) utilised evidence from three SfD programmes, indicating three ways in which families directly influence responses to sport internationally: Families as the source of problems, families as obstacles and families as contributors. Firstly, Kay & Spaaij (2012) highlighted that families are either, deliberately, or inadvertently, contributing to the problems that SfD programmes are trying to alleviate, through a lack of parenting, poverty and violence against children. Secondly, they highlighted that families also act as obstacles to development, being resistant to their children partaking in sports programmes. This is due to precarious living conditions which have created a situation in which children are pressured to fulfil domestic duties and raise an income, and where every day needs take priority over access to education. Thirdly, they indicated that families can also act as contributors to SfD initiatives, providing the context within which the essential elements of culture life are learnt. When families are supportive, Kay and Spaaij (2012) highlighted that progress towards development objectives may occur, with young women occupying more influential positions within the family and disseminating the knowledge gained to their wider family members. The findings, which included research with Sport in Action and EduSport, highlighted that in Zambia families have a significant impact on young people’s experiences of SfD programmes (Kay and Spaaij, 2012).

In their research which sought to build upon some of these earlier understandings of the role of families within SfD programmes, Chawansky and Mitra (2015) elaborated on the significance of the ‘family factor’ in facilitating SfD opportunities which seek to empower adolescent girls in Delhi, India. The role of the family is often referenced when discussing the role of girls’ empowerment in international development contexts, but it is rarely researched, particularly relating to programmes that use sport for empowerment of adolescent girls (ibid). Through their research, Chawansky and Mitra (2015) highlighted that the level of support afforded by an adolescent girl’s family impacts the access that individual may have to SfD activities. Furthermore, they emphasised the cultural significance of a family, and how it is linked to social contexts, playing ‘multiple and contradictory roles’ in the lives of girls (p. 985). This significance was also highlighted by Mwaanga and Prince (2016), whose research with former Go Sisters programme participants highlighted the importance of family support. The

participants of this study alluded to the support they had received but also the resistance they had faced from their families, which was linked to their involvement in SfD programmes not conforming to the status quo (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016). The participants of this study questioned the idea that they had to choose between wanting to partake in football, as well as also wanting to conform to traditional gender roles, such as tending the home. More recently, Jeanes et al.'s (2018) research identified the importance of familial support for young women in a SfD programme in Zambia, particularly that of elder female relatives. The participants within this research noted how it was their family support that prompted them to take part in SfD and, on the occasions where the young women faced resistance, they were able to successfully negotiate their access. Through their research, Jeanes et al. (2018) emphasised how often it was senior male members in the family who resisted the young women's participation in sport due to a belief that "it was not appropriate for females to participate in sport in public settings" (p. 157).

As highlighted through these four previous studies, the family is one example of a social structure that has significance for girls and young women within SfD programmes, affecting the way in which they experience sport. Therefore, with these examples in mind, this thesis will acknowledge the cultural, social, political, and historical factors that occur in a Zambian setting, and how, in turn, these affect the way female peer leaders engage in SfD programmes.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Building upon the first two chapters in this thesis, in which the context of SfD in Zambia was introduced and outlined, this chapter began to examine the relationship between sport, gender, and development. The chapter has explained the conceptual framework of empowerment, and how this applies to this thesis. This thesis seeks to critically explore the experiences of female peer leaders in Lusaka, Zambia by addressing gender relations through sport for development programmes. To explore the socialisation of gender relations and the contextual realities of female peer leaders, this research needs to build from the empowerment framework developed by Rowlands (and built on subsequently by other researchers in this field), to capture the informal and informal aspects of empowerment in SfD programmes. Furthermore, as explored above, this empowerment framework has links to both the social work and education field, which will all contribute towards the applicability of this framework to this research (Rowlands, 1998). The work of Goffman (1956) and Butler (1990) and the concept of performativity will also be utilised in this study, to help understand how and why the female peer leaders behave in the way they do. Through the utilisation of Goffman and Butler's work, this thesis seeks to capture how gender is formed, and performed within the context of SfD, which is heavily influenced by the historical and social formulations of traditional masculinities within a Zambia context.

The historical exclusion of women and girls from the sporting space is widely documented in literature, where sport operates as a form of cultural and social practice that has discursively been constructed as

a masculinising practice, prioritising men, and marginalising women (Markula and Pringle, 2006). SfD programmes have been developed and delivered in these circumstances, and despite their intentions, some individuals have still been excluded based on characteristics such as gender (Giulianotti, 2004). As such, SfD programmes can be viewed as sites where ideologies and beliefs are challenged but also produced and reproduced, serving to support the interests of a particular group (Njelesani et al. 2015). With this in mind, SfD programmes need to be developed with an awareness and understanding of sport within the broader social and historical context, recognising that for female participants their involvement may not be so straight forward. Factors such as the sporting activity chosen, the rules applied and the expectations that come with each specific sporting programme need to be more flexible and inclusive to create a space that is open and inviting for young women (Njelesani et al. 2015).

The impact of the presence of these factors, alongside the perceptions of gender by Zambian young women, needs to be captured to truly understand how their experiences are shaped by the way they not only perceive themselves but those around them. The role of gender will have a strong influence in this thesis and feminism can be used as an appropriate theoretical framework to explore this further. Before engaging in this analysis, the focus will now turn to Chapter 4, where the context within which young people and women in Zambia live their everyday lives will be explored. Through doing this, the next chapter will consider further, the environments which shape the lives of young people and women in Zambia.

## **Chapter 4: Young People and Women in Africa**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this ‘people-focused’ chapter is to develop an understanding of the social and development contexts within which young people and women in Zambia lead their everyday lives. Specifically focusing on the Zambian context, this chapter will consider the physical and institutional environments that shape the context within which young people and women live. The position of women in a particular country can only be understood against the backdrop of the economic, political, and sociocultural environment in which they live (Abdi, Shizha and Ellis, 2010). Young women in Zambia face numerous gender issues that continue to play out in all areas of their lives, ranging from inadequate female capacity building and empowerment to lack of access to cultural, economic, and political leadership positions (Dibie, 2018). Traditional gender hierarchies that are prevalent in Zambian society position women as subordinate to men and operate to exclude women from public space (Evans, 2014; Schlyter, 1999). Research to date suggests that life in Zambia, including family, social, economic, and legal aspects, is simply harder for women than for men (Taylor 2006). Women generally have a lower status in both contemporary urban contexts and traditional rural environments (*ibid*), and the extent to which they fulfil these roles is likely to be linked to either internalised gender beliefs or cultural expectations or, for some, both.

This chapter will be split into two broad sections: (1) Exploring the concept of ‘youth’ in sub-Saharan Africa more broadly, and (2) will look specifically at young people and women in Zambia, and the aspects which shape their everyday lives. It is important to understand this broader context, as it is against this landscape that young people and women engage with, partake in, and are affected by the SfD opportunities available to them.

### **4.2 Youth Studies and Conceptualising ‘Youth’**

Discussing the lives of young people requires an understanding of the term ‘youth’, yet defining this term is far from simple with debates existing around the notion of young people as a homogenous category (Kurebwa, 2019). Throughout this chapter, the term young people will be used interchangeably with youth. Where a piece of literature is referenced, this chapter will follow the terms used in that specific piece of literature but, outside of this, ‘youth’ will be used when referring to the quality or state of being young whilst ‘young people’ will acknowledge those individuals within this state. There are various arguments regarding what constitutes young people and youth, with the term youth being both “contested and rapidly changing” (Durham, 2004, p. 592). Throughout wider literature, which focuses on youth studies globally, as well as in sub-Saharan Africa, the term has been conceptualised using a number of different lenses: as an age category; as a social category; based on consumption patterns that distinguish older groups from younger groups; and as a period of transition to adulthood (Ansell, 2005;

Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019). Literature on sub-Saharan Africa specifically echoes a similar essence, viewing ‘youth’ as constituted and configured differently based on the time and place (Christiansen, Utas and Vigh, 2006), with definitions becoming contextually specific (Kurebwa, 2019).

Youth has been understood in terms of the chronological age of an individual. In an attempt to standardise programme delivery, many organisations have begun to define the concept of ‘youth’ through the production of specific age categories, with the United Nations defining ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years (United Nations, 2020). Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted either the United Nations or Commonwealth definition, with the age range of 15 to 30 years generally taken as representation of youth in Africa (Dugbazah, 2016). Whilst much of African law defines ‘adulthood’ as a stage which commences from the age of 21 (Curtain, 2000), sociologically, the concept of ‘youth’ holds a different meaning, denoting the interface between childhood and adulthood (Altman, 2007). In recognition of the age range where life transitions occur, the Africa Union has adopted a broader perspective of youth, encompassing individuals on a spectrum from the age of 10 up to 35 years old (UNECA, 2009). Despite this approach being prominent in both academic and policy realms, it has been contested due to its lack of context, and consequent lack of consistency (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019).

Secondly, the notion of ‘youth’ has been understood as a social category, where ‘youth’ are often viewed from a risk perspective, with a specific focus on their problems (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019). Through this lens, youth are essentially grouped together as a homogenous group, becoming a “parallel stratum that is somehow unattached from the general societal fabric and generational dynamics” (Christiansen et al. 2006, p. 18).

Thirdly, youth has been viewed based on generational differences, understood through the consumption patterns that distinguish older groups from younger groups (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019). Emerging in the post-World War II era, youth culture as a notion came into light when young people with access to goods and markets were distinguished based on their patterns of consumption, lifestyle choices and tastes (Herrera, 2006). Through this lens, young people began to recontextualise mass-markets, transforming the meaning of bought goods through their consumption patterns (Willis et al. 1990), with the way someone is viewed, including their age, being defined by what they consume (Herrera, 2006). This notion of youth as a cultural construct built around consumption has become more prevalent over time, with consumption patterns dominating the global market and age becoming less important (ibid). However, it is important to note that this connotation of youth is now becoming out of date, due to the shifting patterns of consumptions between different generations (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019).

A final perspective is the notion of ‘youth’ as specifically situated within a period of transition (Ansell, 2005); this being understood as the time in which an individual moves from dependence to independence (Kurebwa, 2019). The concept of transition will be explored further in the next subsection

(see section 4.2.1), which focuses on youth as the stage through which individuals pass in order to become independent, mature adults (Skelton, 2002).

Traditionally, youth studies have been understood in respect of two dominant stances, the ‘youth transitions’ and ‘youth cultural studies’ approaches (Woodman and Bennett, 2015). These two stances have been referred to in literature as the ‘twin tracks’ of youth research and have often operated separately from one another (Cohen, 2003). The ‘cultural’ approach has focused on the nuances and complexities of cultural representations, focusing on local expressions over a shorter period of time, compared to the ‘transitions’ perspective, which is interested in the relationship between education and work, exploring the lives of young people in different locations over a longer time frame (Furlong et al. 2011). However, during the last couple of decades “differences in perspectives and conceptual tools have gradually been reduced, and there are strong tendencies of convergence between the two traditions” (Johansson, 2017, p. 512). Similarly, this thesis will focus on an intersection of both approaches, utilising youth transitions, as well as incorporating an analysis of youth culture, given the interest in the way individual biographies are created over time (MacDonald et al. 2001). Through utilising ethnographic methods, the cultural approach to youth focuses on the here-and-now lived experiences of young people, in particular their sub-cultures and styles (Gough and Langevang, 2016; Woodman and Bennett, 2015). These methods allow the meaning that young people attach to experiences and events to become visible, often highlighting the way young people resist the status quo (Bennett, 2002).

Broadly, ‘youth culture’ refers to the meanings, values, practices, and identities that are shared by different groups of young people (MacDonald et al. 2001), and through the process of analysing transitions, an exploration of youth culture will also occur. To understand the lives of young people, Christiansen et al. (2006) argues that an understanding of the constitution and dynamics of youth needs to be achieved by positioning them within the social and situational contexts in which it is actualised. Through analysing how young people see and interpret the world, this thesis will also investigate how young people are positioned within it through their families and societies, to show how “youth are able to move, what they seek to move towards, and the ways external forces seek to shape their movements” (Christiansen et al, 2006, p. 16).

The transitional notion of ‘youth’ has been the basis for a significant amount of research on youth in Africa (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019) and is a further lens through which this thesis will view youth. Focusing specifically on sub-Saharan Africa, the concept of youth as a transitional process focuses on the stages a young person moves through from childhood to adulthood. Throughout this period, individuals experience significant social, physical, and psychological changes, and for youth in Africa these changes have important consequences (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019). In this regard, the time spent by many young people as youth in sub-Saharan is fluid, during which they move back and forth between



boundaries of time (Gough and Langevang, 2016). More so, the body of work on youth transitions through poverty only emerged over the last decade or so and highlighted the failure of preceding literature to explore the unconventional routes that marginalised groups take to adulthood (Van Blerk, 2008). These routes are often shaped by place-specific notions of childhood, youth, and adulthood (Gough and Langevang, 2016).

There is a recognition that the experiences of young people transitioning into adulthood in sub-Saharan Africa differs greatly from those in the Global North (Ansell, 2004). These transitions have changed, with urbanisation, westernised influence, religion, and education dramatically altering attitudes surrounding the process of transitions (Chigunta et al. 2005). Youth, as a period of transition, draws meaning from the specific social, political, and economic conditions within which it takes place. Once these conditions are understood, they provide the context to explain the significant differences between groups of young people as they transition into adulthood, and the subsequent processes they engage with on this transition (Wyn and White, 1997). For young people in Africa, the transition from childhood to adulthood represents a movement between positions that may hold or lack authority, social worth, and power, as they navigate their social becoming (Christiansen et al. 2006). The idea of transition is built on the notion that young people will achieve adulthood, yet as Hansen (2005) highlights, a considerable proportion of young people in Africa remain ‘youth forever’, with the scale of social crisis preventing many of them acquiring the social status of adulthood. With the possibility that many young people in Africa could become stuck in ‘youth-hood’ (Utas, 2012), young people risk never becoming an “adult in a normative social and cultural sense” (Hansen, 2005, p. 4).

#### **4.2.1 The Concept of Transition**

Youth, as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, highlights the period when an individual is no longer a child but has yet to reach adulthood. Within this transition, an individual has yet to adopt the roles and responsibilities that being an adult may entail, and as such find themselves in the space between childhood and adulthood. This thesis recognises this perspective of youth, encompassing the concept of transition, recognising that for many young people in Zambia they are “caught in a liminal position between discourses of childhood and adulthood, unable to make socially expected transitions linked to their age and life course stage” (Evans, 2012, p. 834). Literature on transition as part of the life course had primarily been focused on countries in the Global North. However, there has been a growing interest in transition to adulthood in sub-Saharan Africa, and more broadly in the Global South (Goldberg, 2013; Juárez and Gayet 2014), although the literature is still in its infancy (Pesando et al. 2021).

The important aspects within theorisations of transitions are widely discussed in literature, being referred to as ‘thresholds’ (Stoke and Wyn, 2007), ‘pivotal events’, ‘rites of passage’ (Day, 2015),

‘fateful moments’ (Giddens, 1991), and ‘vital conjunctures’ (Johnson-Hanks, 2002). A young person’s ability to “negotiate this critical period can have a long-term impact with the potential to govern the nature and quality of their future lives” (Day, 2015, p. 4). Research within the Global North has explored the transitions of young people across four key elements: education, employment, leaving home, and setting up an independent home (ibid). Similarly, Lee’s (2001) ‘standard model of adulthood’ suggested that the path of transition to adulthood was defined by five key stages: Completion of studies, stable employment, independent living, cohabitation, and parenthood. The process of conceptualising key life transitions for young people originates from the Global North and has previously accounted for the most predictable transitions that can occur (Daly, 2015). Within this viewpoint, an element of predictability is implied with an emphasis on ‘normal’ development, with young people expected to undertake a normalised process from childhood to adulthood (ibid). These models provide an ordered and clear sequence of events that define the path of transition, providing a generalised normative ideal that young people are expected to attain to reach adulthood (Pitti, 2021).

These notions fail to account for the influence of differences in individuals, such as gender, ethnicity, class background, and geographical locality, all of which intersect and influence trajectories to adulthood (Berrington, 2020). For young people, these differences have the ability to release them but also constrain them (Thomson and Holland, 2004). The view of youth as a time-period is shifting, being recognised as a transition that is increasingly diverse, unpredictable, and complex (Worth, 2009), whilst also being psychologically, emotionally, economically, socially, and biologically challenging (Lloyd, 2005).

Young people experience ‘critical moments’ in the process of transition, with Thomson et al. (2002) acknowledging the “subjective experience of personal change” (p. 337). These critical moments are a useful tool for exploring Zambian young people’s understanding of the expected, and unexpected events that occur in their lives, and include events such as family illness and bereavement which can disrupt, interrupt, and shape the pathway to adulthood (Day, 2015). Broader research on young people across the globe has revealed that there are multiple dimensions to the transitional process of moving into adulthood, with the meanings for each dimension differing dependent upon where a young person is located, both geographically and socially (Wyn and White, 1997). Locke and Lintelo’s (2012) research on youth in Zambia specifically conceptualised three approaches to youth transitions: (i) transition from school to work; (ii) transitions from youth to adulthood; and (iii) the vital conjunctures approach. The vital conjunctures approach looks beyond vital life events and discrete rites of passage and demonstrates the importance of self-evaluation and aspiration in the way in which young Zambian make sense of, and act on their unfolding lives (ibid). It is important to note the apparent ‘markers’ of these transitions, such as moving home or getting married are “transitory, reversible, and impermanent” (Wyn and White, 1997, p. 96) and as such adulthood is not simply a place that one arrives at.

The boundaries between childhood and youth, and youth and adulthood, are therefore blurred (Orman, 2020), and instead of following a single, uniformed passage, young people take many different routes, routes which are unique to them as an individual and reflective of their circumstances (Žukauskienė, 2016). As a result, the pathway of youth as a transition has become “de-standardised, more flexible, heterogeneous, and differentiated” (ibid, p. 4). Youth transitions in rural Zambia have been recognised to be closely linked to the social structures which surround a young person, with young people acting within a set of institutions that are dependent upon their individual social, economic, and cultural capital (Girard, 2023). Not all young people will experience the same transitions in Zambia, with those transitions an individual young person experiences, being constructed, and understood differentially from individual to individual, with space, culture, and place all playing a role in dictating when each young person experiences different transition and over what timescales (Day, 2015).

#### **4.2.2 ‘Youth’ Transition as a Gendered Process**

Youth transitions have been recognised to be a highly gendered process (Ansell, 2017), with gender having important implications for how the process of transition is constructed and lived in different socio-cultural contexts (Grabska, de Regt and Del Franco, 2019). Literature has highlighted the gendered nature of youth transitions in varying African contexts (Chant and Jones, 2005; Evans, 2011; Evans, 2015; Sennott and Mojola, 2017). For young women in Africa their transition into adulthood entails additional challenges, with their opportunities circumscribed by social norms (Filmer and Fox, 2014). As de Waal, (2002) accounts:

*“... Girls would usually be married shortly after achieving sexual maturity, and consolidate their adult status when they became mothers, while boys would achieve ‘adult’ status by degrees, through initiation, eligibility to fight, marriage, acquisition of land, and elevation to the position of elder” (p. 14).*

For some young women, the tendency to marry younger accelerates their transition into adulthood without necessarily being ‘youth’, whereas even when married, it is possible for young men to remain ‘youth’ (de Waal, 2002). Marriage is often viewed as the most crucial landmark for young people when transitioning to adulthood (Ansell, 2017), with the influence of various cultural factors traditionally resulting in African parents marrying off their daughters during adolescence (Nsamenang, 2002). According to African customary law, an individual must be married before being permitted to adopt a full adult role in the community, or before they are allocated farmland, with girls in particular marrying younger compared to their male peers (Ansell, 2017). According to Locke and Lintelo (2012), the transition to adulthood in Zambia is “centrally about being able to access productive activities and having the resources for family formation” (p. 783), although the actual reality is that young people experience many disruptions and disjunctures across the multiple trajectories of their life. The growing

involvement of young women in education and employment across Africa has increased their mobility but at the same time delayed their movement into marriage and childbearing (Day, 2015). In comparison, for young men the transition into adulthood, moving from education into employment has increased in uncertainty as the opportunities presented have shifted to become often temporary and more insecure (ibid).

In some societies in Africa, a ‘rite de passage’ exists which marks a formal end to childhood (Ansell, 2017), indicating the point at which “adolescent boys and girls begin to take their place in the jural, cultural, and ritual affairs of the society” (Nsamenang, 2002, p. 70). Many of these initiation rites are strongly gendered, in practice as well as significance, although for some African societies they are becoming less common whereas in others they are entrenched (Ansell, 2017). For girls in Zambia, initiation ceremonies have been highlighted to be an important aspect of Zambian culture and tradition, forming a powerful symbol of human identity (Fumpa-Makano, 2019). These initiation ceremonies vary in name based on ethnic group and geographical location, but the central principles of these ceremonies is to shape young girls in the cultural doctrines of their people, guiding their beliefs, norms, values, and customs, where there is an expectation that they are to adhere to, and abide by these traditions (Fumpa-Makano, 2019). These ceremonies also act to reinforce gender and sexual identity in young girls (Daka, Kalinda and Thankain, 2023), socialising them into specific gender roles (Talakinu, 2023), and have a strong influence on child marriages, particularly in a Zambian context, due to the sexually oriented teachings girls are exposed to (Nangoma, 2023). These ceremonies feed into larger significant processes within a “cultural and social order in a way that will uphold that order” (Ruel, 1997, p. 84).

#### **4.2.3 Waithood**

The transitional period between childhood and adulthood in African settings has been conceptualised in the literature by the notion of ‘waithood’ (Honwana, 2014). This period of ‘suspension’, which marks the prolonged period between childhood and adulthood, reflects the stalemate that African young people have to go through as they move into adulthood (ibid). Waithood as a concept was first introduced by Singerman (2007) in her work on youth in Middle East, exploring delayed family formation and the liminal position between childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. In her work, Singerman (2013) recognised that many young people experience waithood, which she highlighted was socially equated with marriage, and for young Egyptians, adolescence can extend into the thirties for young men, and mid-twenties for educated, urban women. As a phenomenon, Singerman (2013) highlighted that waithood is fuelled by four factors: the youth bulge, youth unemployment, delayed marriage, and the high costs of marriage. The youth bulge, a feature that is also prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, reflects a period where the share of youth in the working age population is at its highest (Mueller et al. 2019).

The period of 'waithood' has resulted in young people becoming aggrieved with society, with local, global, political, economic, gender and social dimensions feeding into this space (Singerman, 2013).

Waithood as a concept was adopted by Honwana (2012; 2014; 2019), who applied it to the multifaceted realities young Africans face in their difficult transition to adulthood. This period of suspension:

*"... constitutes a twilight zone, or an interstitial space, where the boundaries between legal and illegal, proper, and improper, and right and wrong are often blurred. It is precisely at this juncture that young people are forced to make choices. Their decisions help to define their relationships towards work, family, and intimacy, as well as the type of citizens they will become. Rather than being a short interruption in their transition to adulthood, waithood is gradually replacing conventional adulthood itself." (Honwana, 2012, p. 2438)*

There has been a growing interest in the transition from childhood to adulthood in sub-Saharan African contexts, with literature highlighting that the traditional ritualised period between these two states has become more complex, whilst also lengthening in duration (Hertrich and Lesclingand, 2013). For youth within the African context, the nature and length of waithood varies from one individual to another, being affected by class, gender, and level of education (Honwana, 2019). This difficult transition results in young people being consigned to a space in which they are neither dependent children nor autonomous adults, unable to attain the social markers of adulthood (Honwana, 2014). This period is a space in time through which young people must "negotiate a complex interplay of both personal and socio-economic changes in the transition from dependent childhood to independent adulthood" (Kurebwa and Dodo, 2019, p. xvi).

This notion of 'waithood' also represents a prolonged period where young people are affected by problems of exclusion and restricted futures (Honwana, 2014). Honwana (2012) suggests that on leaving school, the majority of African youth grapple with a deficient education and a lack of jobs, unable to gain employment and become independent. The challenges facing young Africans extend beyond class and background, as many constitute a disenfranchised majority, excluded from the bulk of political processes and socioeconomic institutions (Honwana, 2014; 2019). Within this space, young people in Africa become "trapped in a failed liminality" (Finn and Oldfield, 2015, p. 33), a period in which they unsuccessfully attempt to achieve meaningful and stable lives. Regardless of their background, young people in Africa are facing a growing level of uncertainty, which has led to many of them improvising their livelihoods, as they cannot afford to form families and households, and therefore are unable to move to become fully independent (Honwana, 2014). Whilst this predicament may produce some creative solutions, as young people begin to "conduct their personal relations outside of dominant economic and familial frameworks" (Honwana, 2014, p. 2429), it also prevents young people moving into, and partaking in, the responsibilities and privileges of social adulthood. For many of these young people, this period is a time of work whilst they await the next dream (Mbatha and

Kosimaki, 2021). The attributes of adulthood, as a result, are becoming increasingly unattainable for the majority of African youth (Honwana, 2012). Honwana (2012, p. 165) argues that waithood, and the challenges it presents to young people in Africa, is the result of “endemic poverty and chronic unemployment resulting from failed neoliberal economic policies, bad governance, and political crises”.

An element that is problematic about the concept of waithood, is that the term implies a sense of inactivity, whereby young people are simply ‘waiting’ for adulthood to occur (Oosterom, 2021). This is particularly important to highlight, as research has evidenced that young people are not displaying a sense of passivity, hoping their situation will change through waithood but are proactively engaged in efforts to create new forms of being (Honwana, 2014). For young people in Zambia, ‘waithood’ or ‘waiting’ has been expressed in terms of working towards the future, where Zambian youth maintain their aspirations to progress in contradiction to ‘just sitting’ (Locke and Lintelo, 2012). Young people are often simultaneously engaging in multiple activities (Oosterom, 2021), with waithood accounting for the diversity of experiences a young person goes through (Honwana, 2012). From seeking to generate streams of informal income, to informal employment or ad hoc work, young people in Zambia temporarily undertake what some consider to be stigmatised activities to help them go on living (Locke and Lintelo, 2012). For young people in Africa, the severity of waithood differs from individual to individual, and does not affect every man and women in the same way. Factors such as life skills, individual character, and ability can have an impact, alongside aspects such as level of education, access to resources and their family background (Honwana, 2012).

Experiences of waithood also differ by gender, with young men and young women facing different pressures as they navigate this space (Calvès, Kobiané and Martel, 2007). The acceptability of ‘waithood’ as a gendered process is widespread, with expectations of marriage and gender roles associated with marriage being determining factors in the life course events that occur during this transitional period (Bullock and Miriti, 2022). Although some young women are being afforded the opportunity to access a better education and are becoming involved in the labour market alongside household chores, the transition to adulthood is still more closely aligned and associated with maternity and marriage than employment (Honwana, 2019). For young men, factors such as the pressures of covering the costs of marriage and parenthood, finding a home, and gaining a steady job are all prevalent during waithood (Honwana, 2019). In comparison, for young women, marriage, childbearing and forming a family starts earlier (Tabutin, Schoumaker and Rabenoro, 2004). As a result, despite a young woman giving birth, her ability to attain full adult status can often be dependent upon their spouse, with their spouses’ status playing a role in their ability to move beyond waithood (Calvès et al. 2007; Honwana, 2019). Therefore, the transition to adulthood needs to be explored within the wider context of the country’s social and economic environments, as these are all elements that shape the experiences a young person goes through during waithood (Russel et al. 2005).

### **4.3 Young People in sub-Saharan Africa: The Wider Socio-Cultural, Economic and Institutional Contexts**

The next section will consider the physical and institutional environments that shape the context within which young people in Africa, and more specifically young women in Zambia live. Through exploring these different facets, this section will provide an understanding about the social context within which young people live, and the impact this has upon their lived experiences.

According to the United Nations, as of 2024, there are 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 globally, the largest generation in history, with 90% of these living in developing countries (United Nations, 2024). This is an increase from a decade ago, where there were 1.2 billion youth aged between 15 and 24 years globally, accounting for one in every six people (United Nations, 2020). This global trend has a particular pertinence to Africa, as the largest and rapidly expanding concentration of young people in the world live in this region. In 2015, 19% of the global youth population lived in Africa, an estimated 226 million young people aged between 15 and 24 years old (UN, 2015). By 2075, it is projected that one-third of the world's population will be African, with this number continuing to increase throughout the remainder of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The forecasted share of Africa's youth is expected to grow, with an estimated 500 million young people aged 15 to 24 years old being in Africa by 2080 (World Bank, 2023). When the figures are revised to include all individuals categorised as youth under the African Youth Charter, which refers to young people as aged between 15 and 35 years, the proportion of 'youth' in Africa increases to a staggering three quarters of the total population (United Nations, 2020a). Within Zambia specifically this is a key feature of the demographic, where the population is predominantly youthful, with 65% of the population under the age of 25, and 52% under the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2018).

During the past two decades, there has been an increase in the amount of research exploring and highlighting the diversity of young people's lived experiences across a range of settings in sub-Saharan Africa (see amongst others: Camfield, 2011; Christiansen et al., 2006; Day and Evans, 2015; Hajdu et al. 2013; Porter et al. 2010; Porter et al. 2017). Through these studies, the multiple trajectories of the lives of young people have been evidenced, detailing that these experiences vary greatly according to the contexts within which they occur (Gough and Langevang, 2016). For example, different economic trends, along with varied social and political realities have been recognised to shape the experiences of youth in sub-Saharan Africa (Mac-Ikemenjima, 2019). As a demographic, young people in Africa have been viewed as a "generation of people who have been born into social environments in which their possibilities of living decent lives are negligible" (Christiansen et al. 2006, p. 9).

### 4.3.1 The Context of Zambia

The majority of Zambia's youthful population live in informal settlements (Harris, 2018). Like the global average, Zambia has over half of its population in cities (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022), with the number of Lusaka residents living in informal settlements tripling to just over 1.4 million people as of 2020, with these residents spread across the city's 94 compounds (Chiwele, Lamson-Hall and Wani, 2022). These compounds are low-income areas that tend to exist on the outskirts of the city of Lusaka itself (Lindsey et al. 2017), and are characterised by limited urban services, substandard overcrowded housing, environmental degradation, inadequate and shared services, and poor-quality conditions (Schlyter, 1999; Gough, 2008). As a result, approximately 80% of the population of Lusaka live in an area which constitutes only 20% of the city's residential land (Tembo et al. 2018). Lack of urban services places a heavy burden on all inhabitants, but particularly young women and girls who must provide the extra unpaid work that is required, shouldering the additional responsibility for their families (Schlyter, 1999). These conditions have been influenced by a number of factors, including rapid population growth, socioeconomic dynamics, political and biophysical pressures (Simwanda, Murayama, and Ranagalage, 2020). The current built environment across Lusaka, and its ongoing development, "reflects and reinforces inequalities in Zambia" (Lindsey et al. 2017, p. 99), and creates a place where women are often excluded from public space (Schlyter, 1999).

As of the most recent census, which took place in 2022, the Lusaka province has a population of just over three million people, a growth from just over two million in 2010. This makes Lusaka the most urbanised province in Zambia, with 70 percent of its population living in peri-urban areas (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022). Located in central Zambia, the Lusaka Province is home of the city of Lusaka, which is the "administrative, financial, and commercial centre" of the country (Chigunta, Gough and Langevang, 2016, p. 68). Zambia has been highlighted as one of the most urbanised countries in southern Africa and it is anticipated that this will remain the case (United Nations, 2014). The city is the provincial headquarters as well as the country's capital city, and is home to many institutional, commercial, and industrial activities (Simwanda and Murayama, 2018).

Despite economic development occurring across Lusaka in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with significant changes taking place to the physical infrastructure of the city, particularly commercial developments resulting from foreign investments, this economic development has not significantly benefited the poorest members of the Zambian society (Lindsey et al. 2017). For young people in particular, there is a growing divide between their aspirations and the actual reality of their socioeconomic opportunity and physical surroundings (Harris, 2018). Women are also still significantly disadvantaged, facing barriers to economic empowerment, which limit their choices and mobility (Nanziri, 2020), where they are often confined to roles within the home (Hansen, 1997). Here, poverty intersects with



gender-based norms to create conditions which limit the ability of women to participate in social life (Jeanes et al. 2018). The actual physical layout of Lusaka is now differentiated by income, with the level of service provision and infrastructure accessible to residents being determined by the wealth of an area (Hansen, 2005). Many young people in Lusaka find themselves constrained within their compounds, with the likeliness of them transcending their socioeconomic backgrounds very limited (Hansen, 2005). The infrastructure supporting the growing population throughout the different compounds is often unable to cope, with the electricity supply intermittent at best, and water primarily provided via a shared standpipe (Lindsey et al. 2017). As a result, the parameters of everyday life for young people in Zambia is difficult, with many facing challenges around accessing education, gaining employment, and overall difficult futures (Hansen et al. 2008; Gough, Chigunta and Langevang, 2016).

#### **4.3.2 Young People and Social Relations in Zambia**

This first sub-section focuses on the dynamic aspects of how young people live their everyday lives, exploring the influences key social relationships and relations have on young Zambians, including those with family and peer groups. Exploring the role of social relations in the lives of young people in Zambia is key to understanding their behaviour, with a recognition that the period of youth is both a culturally constructed, and context dependent experience (Hansen, 2015). Young people's experience of 'where they are' and 'how they live' mediates their understanding of what they might become (ibid). This is also dependent upon the people they interact with, and more so where these interactions take place, with the balance of power shifting during young people's day to day lives. These social relationships are not only gendered but also intergenerational and intra-generational, with young people's actions continually influenced by these relationships (Bell and Payne, 2009).

The transitions that young people experience throughout their youth are "embedded in their social relations with siblings and other household members, relatives, peers and other adults in the community" (Evans, 2011, p. 385). For many young people in Zambia, their 'family' is the most immediate and widespread social network they have, with "family composition, practices and ideologies all significantly affecting young people's lives" (Lindsey et al. 2017, p. 108). Family units in Zambia as well as across sub-Saharan Africa traditionally include the extended family as well as the immediate family (Akuffo and Akuffo, 1989). These extended families involve a large network of connections, including varying degrees of relationships through multiple generations, sometimes over a wide geographical area (Foster and Williamson, 2000). Often this can be said to comprise of the "natural parents, children, paternal and maternal grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, sons- and daughters-in-law" (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2005, p. 2158). Within this broad extended family structure, the upbringing and care of children is not only the concern of biological parents but

also an extensive network of relatives (ibid), whereby individuals adopt reciprocal obligations (Foster and Williamson, 2000).

The family as a social structure has undergone considerable change in Zambia (Lindsey et al. 2017), with Nsamenang (2002) suggesting that the continuities and discontinuities in family structure and function has left the African concept of family in a “state of flux” (p. 74). As a result, the constitution of households has increased in flexibility, constantly expanding, and contracting as a dynamic social unit (Gough, 2008). Furthermore, as discussed later, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed towards the extended family structures breaking down, particularly in urban areas as those who would normally head the household are succumbing to the disease (Gough, 2008). This can be seen through Hansen’s (2005) research in Lusaka, Zambia, which identified a growing presence in urban compounds of:

*“... unconventional household arrangements, including domestic groups of youth with no adult head as provider—households consisting entirely of young men, or of young women, or of siblings, and child-headed households, or households of children with a granny caretaker, for whom the children may actually be providing” (p. 14).*

An increase in youth-headed and child-headed households in urban areas of Zambia, in particular, has challenged young people’s identity, as they navigate their role as both ‘child’ and ‘adult’, recasting traditional roles whilst creating their existence as social actors within a household (Bell and Payne, 2009). Young people’s ability to act within this setting is linked to where they perceive themselves to be located in the web of familial social relations (ibid). The ability to act is particularly prevalent in cases where adults are either absent, or not fully present, with a large proportion of children being raised not by their parents but other relatives (Gough, 2008).

Robson, Bell, and Klocker (2007) also highlight wider influences how the agency of young people is further influenced by the societal structures within which they live, and the social networks within which partake:.

*“... agency appears to be inhibited or encouraged by young people’s (constrained/opportunistic) locational contexts; identities they are expected to fulfil, and alternative identities they choose to portray; their position of power/lessness; their state of emotions and well-being at a particular time; their stage in the lifecourse and other factors” (p. 142).*

Although this observation is drawn from a rural context, it generally indicates that there are shifts in the balance of power throughout a young person’s daily life, and during their life course, dependent upon the people they interact with and where these interactions take place (Bell and Payne, 2009). Child-headed households disrupt normative ideas about intra- and inter-generational relationships, with young

people in these households acting as agents of support, carefully constructing, and maintaining networks of support within and beyond the family (Payne, 2014). These households present challenges to the conceptualisation of childhood and adulthood, as there is a tendency for those within the household to fluidly perform a range of roles and responsibilities at different times (Bell and Payne, 2009). These roles and responsibilities vary, but include securing and managing financial resources, caring for young children, providing advice, making key decisions, and adopting the role as head of the household. This is in the absence of fully functioning adults who would traditionally provide material, emotional and practical support for children and young people and are key indicators of child and youth-headedness (Bell and Payne, 2009; Payne, 2014).

Changes in household composition and family structures due to worsening economic and social situations has also resulted in some young people's social mobility trajectory being downwards, with these changes inevitably holding more severe consequences for those towards the bottom of the hierarchy (Gough, 2008). Shifts in the economic and social situations can result in families being forced to move out of their homes, having to rent or even sell due to senior members of the household passing away (Lindsey et al. 2017). As such, there is a strong link between young people's mobility and their livelihood; a situation which is amplified for those already facing hardship. Whilst literature addressing the properties of social mobility remains underdeveloped (Iversen, 2021), some research has illustrated how the different types of mobility are interrelated, including daily, residential, economic, and social (Gough, 2008).

The experience of young people in Zambia is also significantly gendered, with youth everywhere "enmeshed in unequal power relationships related to age and gender" (Hansen, 2015, p. 68). The gendered norms that characterise Zambian society are deeply embedded across different aspects of Zambian culture, through private and public spheres (Lindsey et al. 2017). Families have been recognised as one influential source of these norms, with boys and girls socialised to perform different household tasks according to traditional gendered division of labour (Day, 2015). Within the household, young women are commonly tasked with caring for their siblings, whilst learning how to run the household, meaning they often hold far greater responsibility compared to their male family members (Lindsey et al. 2017). On the other hand, Evans and Becker (2009) found that young men who transgressed gender norms in relation to domestic work faced ridicule and stigmatisation from their relatives and peers (Evans and Becker, 2009). Therefore, even though families are viewed as conduits for potentially promoting social change, they can also conversely act as a potential barrier to it (Lindsey et al. 2017), reinforcing long standing gendered norms for young men and women.

Young people have identified that their friendships and networks with peers from their communities are important influential factors in their lives (Lindsey et al. 2017). The concept of connectedness, such as through friendships and other networks, has been highlighted as an important determinant of healthy

adolescents' experiences (Mburu et al. 2014). These networks can operate in both negative and positive ways, with peer pressure forming a major barrier to changing behaviour in young people (Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008). The negative influences that 'immoral' friends can have on young people's behaviour can lead to individuals feeling a sense of powerless, for example in relation to peer pressure around sexual behaviours (Joffe and Bettega, 2003). Svanemyr's (2020) research on adolescent pregnancy and social norms in Zambia highlighted that the pressure of peers was an influential factor in why young girls became pregnant, with many young people feeling pressured from their peers to find a boyfriend to access the commodities they may be able to provide. Furthermore, peer pressure is particularly pertinent in relation to HIV, where it can act in supporting harmful social norms and strengthening a peer culture that promotes high risk sexual behaviour (Selikow et al. 2009). Similarly, Shibalika and Chileshe (2022) also highlighted the impact that peer pressure may have on young people in Zambia experimenting with alcohol, drugs, sexual activity, and other risky behaviours (Shibalika and Chileshe, 2022).

In contrast to negative impacts of peer pressure, it is important to note that Lindsey et al. (2017) also give accounts from young people in Zambia highlighting the benefits of associating with 'good' friends, with these friendships becoming an important means through which problems and challenges can be discussed, advice can be given, and social support provided. Such friendships can help form a network of support for young people, built on individual trust (particularly within their own neighbourhoods) (Schlyter, 1999), thus promoting hope and optimism (Lindsey et al. 2017).

#### **4.3.3 Young People and HIV/AIDS in Zambia**

In 2022, there were 39 million people globally living with HIV, with sub-Saharan Africa remaining the region that is most severely affected by HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2022). In 2021, sub-Saharan Africa was responsible for over a third of the new infections as well as over 40% of the AIDS-related deaths at the same time (Moyo et al. 2023). Out of those infected, women and girls were most affected, accounting for 77% of the new infections amongst young people aged 15 to 24 years old (UNAIDS, 2022). Furthermore, in sub-Saharan Africa, females were three times more likely to acquire HIV than their male peers, with 3,100 out of the 4,000 weekly cases of adolescent girls and young women occurring in the region (ibid). UNICEF has projected that without corrective action and accounting for the 'youth bulge' in Africa, an estimated 3.5 million adolescents will be infected by 2030, steadily increasing across the decade. Furthermore, AIDS-related illnesses remain the leading cause of death amongst women of reproductive age globally, and for young women aged 15-24 years in Africa, it is the second leading cause of death (World Health Organisation, 2016).

The burden of the epidemic continues to vary considerably between regions and countries, with HIV/AIDS remaining a major developmental challenge for Zambia, which has the seventh highest

prevalence rate of HIV in the world (Nesamoney et al. 2022). When first formally measured, almost a quarter of the adult population in Zambia were infected with the virus in 1991-92 (UNDP, 2011). Since then, the overall levels of infection in Zambia have been in decline in the recent years (UNICEF, 2024). The prevalence is estimated to be twice as high in urban areas compared to rural areas, mainly transmitted through mother to child transmission and heterosexually (Malambo, 2012). As such, the impact of the disease remains hugely significant for Zambia, with the HIV prevalence rate at 11.1%, with an estimated 1.4 million people living with the disease, and adolescents and young people accounting for 50% of the annual new infections recorded in Zambia (CIDRZ, 2023).

The disease has had an impact across Zambian society, with few remaining unaffected, especially young people. For example, as of 2021, 620,000 Zambian children had been orphaned because of the pandemic (World Bank, 2024). As a result, many young people are growing up without one or both parents due to the disease, whilst also bearing the associated economic and social consequences (Day and Evans, 2015). This is highlighted by Gough (2008), who observes:

*“Few families [in Lusaka] have been unaffected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Those who would normally be the breadwinners are succumbing to HIV/AIDS resulting in the elderly looking after the young, orphans being catered for by other family members, and youth headed households” (p. 246).*

The epidemic also disproportionately affects women, with female adolescents six times more likely to get HIV than their male peers (UNICEF, 2021), with the prevalence of HIV in Zambia at 14.2% for females aged 15 to 49 years olds compared to 7.5% of males of the same age (UNICEF, 2024). HIV cases are markedly higher among women compared to men in each age group from ages 20-24 years through to 45-49 years (ZAMPHIA, 2022). Research highlights that the HIV prevalence trends in Zambia have geographical differences, with the highest spatial pattern of the risk of infection found in central and southern parts of the country, where socio-economic factors are potentially contributing towards this.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, with their age, experience, biological development, psychosocial development, and financial dependence all playing an influential role. During adolescence, young people experience a period of dynamic transformations, as their body develops through maturation. Alongside physical changes, young people’s sense of identity evolves, with their relationship with their body, peers and social environment influencing their sexual desires and explorative behaviours (Brooks-Gunn and Paikoff, 1997). These sexual behaviours are crucial to understand given that the most common form of transmission of HIV for young people in Zambia is heterosexual intercourse (UNAIDS, 2015). In the absence of sufficient knowledge during this period of transition, young people may be at enhanced risk of infection (Dixon-Mueller, 2009). Young women are particularly impacted by taboos and cultural norms, through which there is a reluctance for Zambian

parents to talk about pre-marital sex, sexual behaviour, and sexuality (Butts et al. 2018). As a result, they are prevented from exposure to accurate knowledge, due to cultural beliefs rooted in harmful gender norms that are perpetuated across wider Zambian society including in schools, churches, cultural and health systems (Nesamoney et al. 2022).

Whilst each young person living with HIV has a unique set of life circumstances, Mburu et al. (2014) suggests that:

*“Understanding the basic individual and environmental factors that influence their experience of living with HIV is a vital step towards surrounding them with ‘protective factors’ at the individual, community and structural levels” (p. 10)*

This is of particular importance to young people as they are less likely to be tested for the disease and to be able to access care when required in sub-Saharan Africa (Eba and Lim, 2017). It appears there are a number of legal, policy and social barriers which restrict young people’s access to HIV services, with factors such as social stigma, unstable guardianship, negative attitudes from caregivers, and fears around confidentiality all impacting upon Zambian youth (St Clair-Sullivan et al. 2019). The poor relationship between young people and their interaction with HIV care services is even more of a concern given AIDS is a leading cause of death among adolescents in Africa (Eba and Lim, 2017).

Whilst an increase in sexual behaviours can be linked to the period of adolescence, it has also been associated with the environment within which young people are embedded (Magnani et al. 2008). Stephenson’s (2009) study on young people in three African countries, including Zambia, highlighted how community-level influences on young people’s sexual behaviours were specific to gender and cultural context. Stephenson’s (2009) research highlighted that the interaction between the community and the individual varied between young men and women, where men were afforded greater freedom and young women were relegated to a vulnerable position (ibid).

Young women are also at increased risk of HIV infection because of “high levels of social and economic vulnerability, inadequate access to life skills and information, low levels of negotiation skills and unequal protection under statutory and customary laws and traditions” (NAC, 2006, p.8). Zambian young women have reported facing peer pressure in relation to their sexual behaviour, feeling compelled to have multiple partners in an attempt to obtain economic support (Svanemyr et al. 2022). As a result, there is a tendency among young women to compete, entering sexual partnerships which could help them financially and in turn enable them to keep up with their peers (Nshindano and Maharaj, 2008). Meanwhile, young men were found to feel “considerable pressure to conform to the stereotypical behaviour generally expected of them” (ibid, p. 40), believing that if they were seen to have multiple sexual partners this would increase their social status amongst peers. For many young men, this behaviour is seen as a way of demonstrating their virility, with masculinity intimately related to multiple sexual partners (ibid).

#### **4.3.4 Young People and Education in Zambia**

This section will discuss education provision, which is the main social institution that young people engage with. The right to education forms one of the key principles underpinning the Education 2030 Agenda and the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNESCO, 2020). The importance of education was explicitly demonstrated through its formulation as a stand-alone SDG, which specifies its aim to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 18). The importance given to education has been echoed by most families in the region, where it has been recognised to be a powerful tool to transform lives, with many parents across Africa highlighting the need to provide their children with a good education as a priority (Hoogeveen and Rossi, 2019). Furthermore, literature has also highlighted the link between education and economic success, demonstrating that a country’s education level is critical (ibid). Linking to the previous section, individual levels of education remain an important socio-economic factor associated with reducing the odds of HIV infection (Nakazwe et al. 2022) with the greater the educational attainment in some urban and rural communities in Zambia linking to a reduced risk of HIV infection (Michelo et al. 2006). Despite this increase in awareness and importance, millions of young people remain deprived of educational opportunities, some of which are the result of social, economic, and cultural factors (UNESCO, 2020).

The Zambian education system adopted a 7-5-4 school structure in 2011, whereby learners may spend seven years at primary school, five years at secondary school, and a minimum of four years at university level. However, the current state of the Zambian education system continues to be plagued by poor education quality, inadequate resources, and low progression rates, with the recent COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating these challenges (USAID, 2024). Following a success election campaign in 2001, the Mwanawasa administration adopted universal primary education (UPE) as government policy in 2002, targeting primary schools from grades one to seven (Bratton and Lolojih, 2014), with a desire to provide free and universal primary education (Ministry of Education, 2016). UPE was introduced with a vision to tackle inaccessibility, inequity, and high school drop-out rates (Hapompwe, Correia and Mwanza, 2020). Whilst the UPE has enhanced education provision and increased the enrolment rates of students, it has however also led to the decline in the quality of education, where teachers have been unable to cope with the large influx of students (Mwanza and Silukuni, 2020). Moreover, the UPE programme increased access to primary education in Zambia, the country’s focus on basic education in the recent decades has resulted in the neglect of the secondary education provision, which has been constrained by limited investment and resources (UNESCO, 2016). Access to secondary school education is “far more difficult for the majority of youth Africans to obtain” (Day, 2015, p. 8), with significant costs involved for young people and their families.

There appears to be some positive momentum in educational provision for young people in Zambia, but this is not without its challenges (Lindsey et al. 2017). Zambia was reported as having made remarkable progress in improving access and equity in education, achieving gender parity at primary level, but challenges still remain throughout the education system (UNESCO, 2016). Gender disparities in school enrolment figures are common, with girls facing substantial challenges in attending and remaining at school (Hunleth et al. 2015). Within compound communities in Zambia, families aid the cycle of inequality experienced by young women by prioritising the education of male children (Schlyter, 1999). Mwaanga and Prince (2016) highlight that managing the household means girls are often removed from school at a young age, where they are “expected to fulfil ‘birth jobs’: preparing food, washing clothes, collecting firewood and caring for children” (p. 593). As a result, girls continue to be at a disadvantage in relation to their male peers, with a high percentage of female students dropping out of school in upper primary and secondary, as well as recording poorer levels of transition to secondary schools (UNICEF, 2020). For some young women, an increasing domestic workload at home, along with perceived vulnerability affect their attendance at school due to length of their everyday journey to school (Porter et al. 2011). Furthermore, a lack of menstrual hygiene facilities, teenage pregnancy, child marriage and a low value placed on a girl’s education, have created additional challenges for girls in Zambia (Day, 2015). This is of particular significance, given that lower secondary level aims to consolidate and expand the basic skills acquired during primary school, whilst upper secondary helps prepare young people for the world of work, or to progress into further education and training (UNESCO, 2012). These complexities are reflective, and indicative of the influences of poverty and power that shape the lives of young women, with gendered disparities being witnessed in the everyday school experience (ibid).

More so, the poor reality of many government school has had social consequences, as young people, who are unable to progress to secondary school or are unable to gain meaningful employment have evidenced experiencing anxiety, severe frustration and feelings of despair carrying the tag of ‘drop-out’ and ‘failure’ (Kaluba, 1986). The limited job prospects after graduation (Bajaj, 2010) mean that even if young people can access secondary level qualifications, they are often left inadequately prepared for formal sector employment (Ansell, 2004). For low-income students in particular, secondary schooling requires a significant economic cost which returns limited economic gains after graduation (Bajaj, 2010). Yet, for many young people from resource-poor communities, education has become their main hope for escaping poverty, providing a perceived pathway out (Crivello, 2011). As a result, it appears that more young people are delaying their transition to work in the hope that completing secondary education will increase their opportunities for obtaining formal sector work, which is better paid (Ansell, 2004). The result is an increased expectation “that a secure future requires paid employment, preferably in the formal sector. This, in turn, increasingly demands secondary education” (ibid, p. 185).



#### **4.3.5 Young People, (Un)employment and Entrepreneurship**

In sub-Saharan Africa, the issue of youth unemployment is widespread and prevalent (Honwana, 2012), posing a major challenge for governments (Gough et al. 2013). Governments across the continent are under enormous pressure to create more jobs for the continent's young and rapidly growing population (Mueller et al. 2019). Whilst the 2000s were a time of unprecedented economic growth in the region, with positive structural change and a reduction in poverty as a result, there is the concern that this time period of rapid growth did not generate enough job opportunities to meet demand associated with the 'youth bulge' in population (Thurlow, 2015). Whilst Africa's 'youth bulge' presents a range of opportunities (Filmer and Fox, 2014), it is also causing alarm, as African economies struggle to absorb the growing number of young job seekers entering the labour market (Mueller and Thurlow, 2019). This shift in demographic make-up has created not only a sense of urgency within national governments and the international development community, but also a sense of anxiety (Resnick and Thurlow, 2015). As a result, a number of strategies and policies are being introduced across the African continent that are focused on the promotion of 'inclusive growth', whereby the population are invited to participate in the development process, with job creation becoming a major policy objective (Mueller et al. 2019).

The issue of unemployment and underemployment has been particularly prominent in Zambia (Day, 2015), with formal youth unemployment rates making up a large proportion of the total employable population (Ministry of Labour, 2017). Whilst the unemployment rates in Zambia overall have declined substantially over the recent years, from a high of 19.7% in 1993, to 4.2% in 2023 (World Bank, 2024a), the rates for youth unemployment have increased slightly in the last five years (World Bank, 2024b). The 2022 annual Labour Force Survey results shows the overall scope of the issue, highlighting that 18.8% of youth in Zambia were unemployed, with the highest youth unemployment rate being found in the 15- to 19-year-old age group, where 32% of young people were unemployed (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2023). Youth unemployment was higher in urban areas than in rural areas, with 20% unemployed compared to 16.5% unemployed. It is predicted that around 375,000 Zambian young people will enter the labour market each year by 2030 (Merotto, 2017), a number which dwarfs the 137,000 productive jobs being created annually (Betran, 2022). Unemployment is also generally higher among females than males, with 21.3% of female youths unemployed compared to 17.2% of male youths (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2023). The youth unemployment situation in Zambia can be attributed to a number of factors, including the weak education system, which as discussed above, does not prepare young people for working life by equipping them with the necessary practical skills (Shamenda, 2012).

For young people in Zambia, the main causes of unemployment or underemployment have been identified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2020) as: low education and skills; low absorptive capacity of the labour market for new entrants; the concentration of growth in highly capital-

intensive and urban-based sectors such as mining; and low levels of entrepreneurship coupled with limited access to appropriate technology, finance, and markets. Many young people seek to engage in informal employment, which has been referred to in the literature as the second economy, the black market, the unobserved economy, the unreported economy, or the underground economy (Fiege, 1990). Individuals engaging in the informal sector may fulfil poor-quality jobs, in poor working conditions, with limited salaries and no benefits such as paid leave and health insurance, which only exacerbate wider problems (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016; Fapohunda, 2012; Gough 2006). According to the 2022 Labour Force Survey, 76.3% of the labour force in Zambia is employed in the informal sector (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2023), highlighting an environment where informal work is the norm and 'formal' employment is the exception (Gough, Chigunta and Langevang, 2016). The informal employment rate is higher for females at 81.9% compared to 72.5% for males (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2023).

In Zambia, informal activities occur in cities and towns in places such as market stalls, on the streets including street vendors and traders, on the roads amongst traffic when it comes to a halt and from home (Muuka, 2003). For those working in the informal economy, the activities involved vary widely, and include selling of second-hand clothes which are normally imported from Europe, Asia and South Africa; selling of foodstuffs including nshima; and selling of other wares including radios, wrist watches, nail polish, perfumes, jewellery and car spare parts to name a few (ibid). The informal sector is where most entrepreneurial activity throughout Africa is located (Lindell, 2010). For many, starting a business is perceived as an attractive route to earn an income (Gough, 2006), and as a result, young people have turned to entrepreneurship in a desire to generate an income. Traditionally associated with men, entrepreneurship has grown within the female population, with women's businesses growing more rapidly than their male counterparts (Langevang and Gough, 2012). Promoting female entrepreneurship has been viewed as both empowering women and as a means through which poverty can be reduced (Minniti and Naude, 2010).

One factor observed that has contributed towards high numbers of female entrepreneurs in Zambia is the effect of increasing poverty on household income, whereby women are forced to start their own micro and small enterprises to help sustain their families and support the income the men bring to the family unit (Choongo et al. 2020). The focus for young men who engage in entrepreneurship is often on manufactured goods such as electronic gadgets as well as offering services such as charging mobile phones and car washing. Young women, on the other hand, can often be found operating from open-sided tabletops on the side of roads offering services such as plaiting hair as well as selling a range of goods including cosmetics and fruit and vegetables (Gough and Langevang, 2016).

Entrepreneurship and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have dominated the informal sector in Zambia (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016). It has also been acknowledged that for many young people this sector is where they are most likely to create an employment opportunity, even if the work

is low-skilled, irregular, and low paid (Day and Evans, 2015). Entrepreneurship is now increasingly being promoted as a tool to tackle youth unemployment (World Bank, 2006), providing a means of economic growth, and generating employment opportunities (Langevang and Gough, 2012). The growing problem of youth unemployment has started to receive attention at the highest governmental level, with state and non-state actors initiating a number of programmes designed to promote youth employment through entrepreneurship education (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016; Chigunta et al. 2005). Whilst the specific responses for youth unemployment vary from one African country to another, the Zambian government hopes that their vigorous promotion of entrepreneurship may help to substantially address the problem of youth unemployment (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016). Moreover, the Zambian government has identified female entrepreneurship as a means through which development can be achieved, with the National Gender Policy being introduced in 2000 to take forward this agenda, seeking to attain gender equity and empowerment of women in all socio-economic areas (Kamuhuza et al. 2022).

Chigunta and Mwanza (2016) have identified that one of the key challenges surrounding youth employment and youth entrepreneurship policies and support programmes is the education and training system. Zambia is currently facing a crisis of both high levels of youth unemployment rates and a shortage of young people with employable skills, with the education sector characterised by a lack of relevance to the labour market, limited linkages between industry and the world of work, and more specifically a lack of entrepreneurship training and career guidance (ibid). Whilst entrepreneurship education programmes attempt to counterbalance the challenge of youth unemployment, with young people being encouraged to move from being 'job seekers' to become 'job creators' and self-employed entrepreneurs (Langevang and Gough, 2012), there is little evidence regarding the impact of these policies and programmes (Chigunta and Mwanza, 2016).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on people, exploring the social and development contexts within which young people and young women in Zambia live their everyday lives. Drawing on wider literature, the chapter has identified a number of key elements that contribute towards shaping the context within which young people live and highlights the precarious conditions that many now face. The actual experience of each young person differs, but is shaped by the broader context in Zambia, and their more immediate setting at home. This thesis recognises that in light of these factors, it is important to recognise the diverse perspectives, situations, and responses young people may experience, understanding their personal experience of youth, and being a young people in Zambia. More so, it is important to acknowledge and understand the extent, or potential lack of power felt by young people both within their family and in the wider community.

## **Chapter 5: Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will familiarise the reader with the core components of the research, identifying the key approaches and tools as well as the philosophical, methodological, ethical, and procedural aspects of the study. The previously discussed literature and theoretical approaches informed the core issues at the centre of this thesis and subsequently shaped the research process I adopted. Central to all of the methodological approach is the recognition that subaltern voices still remain underrepresented in SfD research, particularly those of indigenous women whose voices, to date, are mostly missing (Stewart-Withers and Hapeta, 2023). Therefore, this thesis, which critically explores the lived experiences of young women in SfD in Zambia, acknowledges calls to decolonise methodological approaches in SfD, and to avoid hegemonic practices, seeking “to redress the marginalisation of subaltern voices” (Banda and Holmes, 2017, p. 4). As Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) propose, transformative SfD research must begin by “interrogating the relations of power underlying sports-based interventions” (p. 296), including through gathering the perspective of a variety of stakeholders, particularly the young women who are at the centre of this research.

The process of undertaking research in the SfD field generates significant ethical challenges (Bloodworth, McNamee, and Olivier, 2019). These ethical issues played an influential role in shaping my research design process. The entire fieldwork process is permeated with a range of connected ethical issues, such as ethical challenges in the field, ethical issues relating to research methods, ethical dilemmas concerning engaging, and the ethical dimensions of the researcher’s identity (Lunn, 2014). For this study, I had to negotiate my own path regarding ethical research practice within the context of SfD in Zambia, with the adopted research design, chosen methodology and sampling techniques all ingrained with ethical issues which needed to be considered to ensure that the research remained socially and morally acceptable. Throughout the following sections, I will detail a number of ethical considerations that were acknowledged in the research process, and the action I took to navigate them, including principles of safety for both the participants and myself, principles of consent, and principles of anonymity, confidentiality, and data protection (Brydon, 2006).

This chapter begins by examining the methodological approaches traditionally adopted within SfD, and the ways in which they informed my research process. I then outline my positionality and reflexivity, acknowledging the ways I am implicated within the research process. Following this, the paradigmatic framework, methodological position and the study’s philosophical foundations are detailed. Next, I provide an overview of the research approach, including the fieldwork process and the participant sampling technique as well as the data collection methods utilised, including semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The chapter concludes by highlighting the modes of data analysis utilised.

## 5.2 The Development of Research in SfD

The early years of research within SfD were dominated by descriptive and non-critical accounts (Coakley, 2011), which helped map the growth of this new ‘movement’ (Kidd, 2008). However, as the field has grown, so have the calls for an improved evidence base (Jeanes and Lindsey, 2014). These calls have been particularly focused round building rigorous evidence that can facilitate sport’s potential to address wider social goals (Nichols et al. 2011). Coalter (2007; 2010) has also highlighted the prevalence of poor monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices and ‘ill-defined programmes with hard to follow outcomes’ in the SfD field. At various stages in the growth of the SfD field, reviews of the evidence available have taken place, with more recent commentary suggesting that the lack of a credible evidence base regarding the processes and impacts of SfD programmes is *still* an issue despite the burgeoning of SfD literature (Lindsey et al. 2017). The SfD field has come under criticism for the way in which evidence has previously been produced, and how this is used to demonstrate the perceived success of SfD programmes (Harris and Adams, 2016; Darnell et al. 2022).

More so, there appears to be a substantial gap between theory and practice (Cornelissen, 2011); a concern that mirrors views found more broadly in international development, where there have been many calls for more evidence-based policy. This theory-practice divide in the SfD field has resulted from the methodological and contextual challenges present, related to the myriad of types of initiatives utilised (LeCrom et al. 2019). The call for more evidence-based policy has been coupled with an ever-increasing requirement for provision of an evidence base for stakeholders, with many who invest money and resource into SfD desiring to see firmer results that can confirm specific positive results. Participants, employees, and stakeholders within SfD are often placed under real pressure to prove the benefits of a programme, where failure to do so would impact the future of such programmes (Darnell et al. 2022). As a result, the starting point for many M&E approaches may be to find evidence to support positive outcomes, or demonstrate that programmes do actually work (Harris, 2018). The absence of a compelling body of evidence has been identified as a barrier to convincing private sector donors and policy makers to increase support for the SfD field (SDPIWG, 2006).

In seeking to address these limitations, academics, policymakers, and practitioners have called for an improvement in the way the impact of SfD is measured through monitoring and evaluation (Lindsey et al. 2017). As a response to these calls, the SfD field have witnessed a significant increase in the use of M&E tools, with different models and frameworks being applied globally (Harris, 2018). Despite multiple M&E approaches now being available in the SfD field, it has been recognised that few are actually implemented in practice (Harris and Adams, 2016). Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding the importance, and challenges of measuring ‘impact’ (Lindsey et al. 2017). In relation to both the methodologies utilised, and the actual measurement of impact, Cronin (2011) advocates the use of ‘strong behavioural indicators’, which are definable and measurable, and this has resulted in the

“proliferation of overlapping/competing toolkits” (p. 22). However, these indicators are often developed by Global North researchers who are operating internationally in locations in the Global South, highlighting the limitations of existing approaches, particularly within SfD where M&E has a degree of “uncertainty about valid impact measures” (Coalter and Taylor, 2010, p. xii).

Whilst the overview above provides a snapshot of the most common evaluation-orientated research processes utilised in SfD, it also highlights some of the challenges faced in producing evidence of impact, conducting M&E, and undertaking research. Arguably, it could be suggested that there is a lack of methodological innovation in the SfD field, which is supported by the debates regarding the legitimacy and efficacy of research methodology in international contexts (Sherry et al. 2017). As such, there is need for this research to disrupt the conventional research process (Hayhurst, 2015), acknowledging the extension of neo-colonial tendencies which permeate the SfD field, and the problematic power relations that exist (Nicholls et al. 2010). Operating as a Global North situated researcher, I recognise the potential experiences and knowledge that I carry, consciously and subconsciously, and how this has influenced my conduct within the field (Darnell, 2007; 2010; 2012). Furthermore, I have striven to account for the nuanced sociocultural contexts and complex social relations present in the SfD field (Hayhurst, 2015), adopting a more participatory, reflective, and collaborative research approach. I also operate in response to Kay’s (2009) call for more “reflexive forms of research [that] provide a mechanism for the expression of local understandings and knowledge that are crucial to the assessment of the ‘social impact’ of sport in development contexts” (p. 1190). Through building strong relationships with a range of stakeholders in the field, I was able to draw on “skilled, experienced and informed locals in order to collect accurate and valuable data in unfamiliar locations” (Collison et al. 2016, p. 422). This enabled me to create a space where the power imbalance between the researcher and field are less pronounced, going beyond simply speaking to participants involved in SfD programmes in a quest to hear and understand the local voices, knowledges and cultures that are involved in the SfD field (Sherry et al. 2017).

Academics have continued to advocate for an ongoing and renewed commitment to the qualitative study of SfD (Darnell, Whitley, and Massey, 2016), recognising it as a valuable approach to capture the multi-faceted, and often complex process individuals experience through involvement in SfD (Kay, 2009). Through a qualitative approach, rich descriptions of the social world can be captured (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), allowing the recognition of the “fluid and intricate interactions between people and the socio-historical worlds in which they exist” (Silk, Andrews and Mason, 2005, p. 5). Within the SfD context, this provides particular value by giving the researcher a mechanism through which to address complex social phenomena, reaching beyond the SfD programme itself, to the broader social context of family and community (Kay, 2009).

Research in the international development context requires an approach which critically addresses the enduring ‘colonial’ power relationships which are present within SfD, and qualitative methodologies provide a means through which this can be addressed by capturing authentic local knowledge (Kay, 2009). More fundamentally, qualitative reflexive approaches allow the researcher to develop a deeper understanding when it comes to their engagement with interlocutors, especially relating to issues of empowerment and power in SfD programmes (Kay, 2012).

### **5.3 The Researcher’s Positionality and Reflexivity**

Outlining the methodologies in previous SfD research enables an understanding of where this study sits within the wider SfD field and highlights how this has informed the research process itself. In addition, it is vital to acknowledge the way I, as the researcher, am implicated within the research process. This thesis, as detailed in Chapter 1, was borne out of a personal experience in Zambia as part of a UK volunteering programme in 2010, followed by a period of six months spent in-country in 2015 managing the delivery of the same programme. During this time, I was exposed first-hand to a number of peer education activities within the SfD field, interacted with the participants, and gained wider insights into the SfD field. The more time I spent in-country, the more I sought to understand the programmes in greater depth. I, therefore, recognise that my previous involvement in the SfD field in Zambia in numerous guises, including volunteering with the two NGOs involved in this research, puts me in a complex position.

Over the past decade, a plethora of academics have examined the ethical issues and challenges related to Global North researchers undertaking fieldwork in the Global South and have raised questions about power and positionality (Brasher, 2020; Bilgen, Nasir and Schöneberg, 2021; Doiron and Asselin, 2015; McSweeney et al. 2023; Scott and Moura, 2024). Due to my race, gender, status, and socio-economic background, I had to be aware of the privileged position I held, potentially assuming a position of power in regard to the research participants. In conducting cross-cultural research, I was immediately placed in a position of hierarchy, and therefore I needed to be conscious of the inevitable partiality of my position. These factors are inherent when conducting research in the Global South and emphasise the need for reflexivity throughout the research process, an approach which can serve as a tool to dismantle embedded power hierarchies (Bilgen et al. 2021). This is particularly important with regards to recognising the potential impact that the researcher’s characteristics can have on the research (Adamson and Donovan, 2002), and include the influence of colonial histories and the researcher’s positionality:

*Development is never neutral... Power relations continue to shape the way development is understood, implemented, and researched. The problematisation of, and the reflection on, these structures has once again demonstrated that our positionalities as well as our*

*privileges, values, beliefs, interests, and experiences influence the process of how we perceive the reality and study developmental issues (Bilgen et al. 2023, p. 531).*

When considering positionality within the research site, researchers from the Global North need to recognise the impact privilege has on their ability to gather data from the field (Bigen et al. 2023). As McEwan (2009) discusses, “privileges may have prevented us from gaining access to Other knowledges... the knowledges that we are not equipped to understand by reason of our social positions” (p. 274). I, as the researcher, needed to go through a process of ‘unlearning’ privilege, recognising the ways of thinking, and worldviews that are developed and the disabling effect these can have on the research. To ethically encounter participants from the Global South, I needed to learn from the subaltern, unlearning “dominant systems of knowledge and representation” (Kapoor, 2006, p. 641), whilst recognise how my status, throughout the research process, can influence power relations (Scott and Moura, 2024).

Within qualitative research, the presence of the researcher, from inception to conclusion, is central and as a result the researcher is implicated within the research process as I have emphasised above. The qualitative methodology adopted was informed by recognition that it is impossible for the researcher to remain outside the subject matter, and the importance of reflecting “upon the way in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life and social identities have shaped the research” (Willig, 2013, p. 10). This approach maintains that “what is discovered about reality cannot be divorced from the operative perspective” of the researcher (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p. 20), recognising that the I have been part of the subject matter, and integrated in the social world I have been studying (Bridges, 2017).

In SfD, reflexivity is recognised as a key part of the research process, where the contextual experiences and local knowledge of the participants are considered essential ingredients for a successful study. As a result, researchers seek to reveal the ‘unknown’ of a diverse range of sociocultural settings (Sherry et al. 2017). Traditionally, knowledge production in SfD has privileged a Global North perspective (Nicholls et al. 2011), with grassroots practitioners’ knowledge under-considered, and sometimes dismissed in favour of knowledges from the Global North (Nicholls, 2009). Therefore, to adopt a research process which accounts for this knowledge production, requires a deep immersion into the environment of the people under study, entering as fully as possible into the everyday life of the community (Keesing and Strathern, 1998). Hence, reflection and reflexivity have been crucial elements to the different stages of the research process, enabling me to take account of the influence of biases within the research (Flick, 2014), whilst understanding the various selves that I embody whilst conducting fieldwork (Johnstone, 2019).

Reflexivity and power shifting have been suggested to be “inextricably intertwined” (Spaaij et al. 2018, p. 31), and therefore foregrounding a reflexive sense of humility was important in enabling me to probe



deeper in the methodological approaches I adopted, and the research that I conducted (Spaaij et al. 2018). Shifting the degree of power between me, as the researcher, and participants was a vital consideration to ensure I could adopt an approach that allowed me to relinquish my inherent power (Frisby et al. 2005), working towards democratising the research relationship (Kay, 2009). Without this, the research process ran the risk that the power remained solely with me, with the participants being viewed as merely subjects used to provide information (Spaaij et al. 2018). Therefore, I had to critically and continuously reflect on my own values, experiences and knowledge whilst acknowledging that my social, cultural, and historical location may be an extension of colonial domination (Smith, 2012). This research sought to capture the multiple knowledges embedded in local cultures, understanding the local voices that are involved in SfD programmes and therefore, it was important to constantly reflect on the potential impact my presence may have on the emerging data. By recognising the way in which the research was undertaken, and knowledge was produced, and through retaining constant attention to reflexivity, the foundation for conducting locally relevant, and meaningful research in Zambia was established (Sherry et al. 2017).

These experiences within the SfD field in Zambia, coupled with my recognition of my interpretative frame as a white, non-Zambian, highlight my complex position as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’. My former position as a volunteer with both Sport in Action and EduSport over the previous 10 years, as well as my shared experiences in a number of communities, facilitated and benefited my access to the field and the participants and, subsequently, the data collection processes I applied. Having previously shared in SfD experiences with the participants involved in this research, to some extent my position reflects that of an ‘insider’ as my educational links, social networks and unpaid employment have enabled me to gain a foothold in the communities that I sought to study (Humphrey, 2012). Research has suggested that such positioning offers several advantages, including easier access to the field, a better understanding of the context and culture(s) under study, an understanding of the nuanced reactions of the participants, and the potential for the participants to be more open with the researcher, affording greater depth of data gathered due to that familiarity (Adriansen and Madsen, 2009; Padgett, 2008; Unluer, 2012). Nevertheless, my positioning in terms of being an insider was only based on a “process of negotiation rather than granted immediately on the basis of ascribed status” (Beoku-Betts, 1994, p. 417). Instead, despite my familiarity with the SfD field I was studying, I needed to be aware that my location, my race, and my social characteristics in relation to my participants also situated me as ‘Other’. As a result, I was aware that my ease of access to the research field was determined by my ability to be flexible and adapt to the scenarios faced, having to negotiate the status that was ascribed to me by those around me, particularly that of race and gender which differed from the participants. This positionality in turn had the potential to influence power relations, group dynamics and the phenomena under investigation (Scott and Moura, 2024), and as such, an awareness of this was kept at the forefront.

Some academics claim that ‘insider’ researchers are those who share ethnic, social, linguistic backgrounds or cultural characteristics (Liamputtong, 2010), whereas being an ‘outsider’ is often equated with being a stranger (Ergun and Erdemi, 2010); neither aspects appear to reflect my position. With this in mind, I accept that I explored the ‘space between’ (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), that allowed me to occupy the position of both an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ researcher, adopting ‘multiple positionalities’ (Caretta, 2015) and ‘sub identities’ (Giwa, 2015). For example, depending upon whom I was interacting with, I was able to embody a particular position to relate specifically to those around me, including that of a researcher, NGO staff member, sporting professional, session participant, colleague and friend. Through doing this, I was able to consolidate my membership within a particular group of individuals, adopting and performing an identity which related to them. The relevant characteristics that influenced my positioning were linked to my habitual patterns of behaviour, temperament, and emotion, and differed from my participants in ways due to my upbringing in the Global North, and therefore an awareness of how I stood in relation to the research community was accounted for (Lunn, 2014). Furthermore, I was aware that my upbringing, which is socially constructed, is both time and place specific, and needed to be considered along with the everyday spaces through which my identity was made and remade, informed by the spatial discourses within which I resided (Holloway, 2015). In noting the ways I am different from the participants in my research, I also note the ways I am similar; for example, in the case of the female peer leaders my gender, my sporting interest and background, and my previous role as part of the SfD programmes under study, and this allowed me to adopt the position of both an insider and outsider (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). I also acknowledge that at times during the research I adopted a range of stances, strategically positioning myself to reduce the difference between myself and my participants (Hammett, Twyman and Graham, 2015), focusing on the creation of reciprocal engagement, rapport, and trust with the participants (Sherry et al. 2017).

## **5.4 Paradigmatic Orientation**

A central principle of this thesis is to analyse the lived experiences of female peer leaders in SfD programmes in Zambia. Given the often “complex nature of the social world” (Sharp et al. 2012, p. 36), as I have emphasised above, this research adopted a flexible research design (Robson, 2011), avoiding rigid frameworks by using a qualitative methodology. To ensure this was feasible, there was a need to locate myself within the paradigm that best fits my research’s purposes; with the paradigm influencing the whole research process (Meriam, 2009). A paradigm can be understood as a set of beliefs, representing a worldview that defines the nature of the world and an individual’s place in it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

My methodological approach was guided by an interpretivist paradigmatic approach, providing the context within which my research sits, with these beliefs and values guiding my actions and the choices I made when engaging with the participants (Creswell, 2013). Interpretivism views the world as a social reality that is a product of those who inhabit it, with meaning produced through everyday activities (Blaikie, 2010). Through embracing this “world of human experience” (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 36), an understanding of personal and cultural meanings could be gained, exploring ideas emerging from everyday practices, behaviours, and languages of female peer leaders (Chirkov, 2016). Rather than viewing my participants as a set of measurable variables (Silk et al. 2005), interpretivism enables the realities of my participants to be captured, allowing for diverse interpretations of a given phenomenon to be considered (King, 2004). Within this light, and for my research, the realities of the participants are (re)constructions of the SfD field, subjectively constructed by their thoughts and actions, differing for each peer leader within their moment in time and space (Denscombe, 2010).

The adopted paradigmatic orientation provides a background of theoretical ideas which guides the research design (Grix, 2001). Within this, the philosophical positioning also indicates the epistemological and ontological assumptions which ground every research paradigm (Blaikie, 2010). Clear ontological and epistemological considerations are required to ensure the appropriate research strategy can be selected, and it is from these that the various methodological designs flows (Grix, 2001; Crotty, 1998). These philosophical assumptions consist of a stance towards how the researcher knows what they know (epistemology), the nature of reality (ontology), and the methods used in the process (methodology) (Creswell, 2003).

#### **5.4.1 Ontology**

Ontology is concerned with the nature of what exists, and what there is to know about the world (Ormston et al. 2014), and various ontological positions reflect different understandings about what can and cannot be real (Chirkov, 2016). Within social sciences, ontology addresses questions regarding the essence of social reality and the social world (Blaikie, 2010), seeking to understand “what can be known” (Leavy, 2014, p. 3). The interpretivist paradigm guides the research through a relativist ontological standpoint, proposing that multiple meanings of social reality are constructed by individuals (Markula and Silk, 2011). The relativist ontology questions the ‘out-there-ness’ of the social world, perceiving reality as intersubjective by emphasising the diversity of interpretations that can be applied to it (Willig, 2013). This research recognises that for each of the female peer leaders involved in this study, their personal social reality exists “in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific” (Guba, 1990, p. 27) dependent on the individual who holds them. Therefore, this thesis acknowledges these unique lived experiences within the social inquiry, and through aligning with the ontological position adopted by the interpretivist paradigm, this will enable these experiences to be understood.

### **5.4.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology is concerned with the “nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis” (Hamlyn, 1995, p. 242). Whilst ontology offers positions on ‘what can be known’, epistemology poses questions regarding ‘who can know’ (Leavy, 2014), and more so, “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Concerned with the theory of knowledge, epistemology seeks to understand what is true and what is not true (Klakegg, 2015), exploring “the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Furthermore, epistemology focuses on the ways of knowing and learning about the world (Ormston et al. 2014), providing a “philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (Maynard, 1994, p. 10). This philosophical substructure views research as an embodied activity (Leavy, 2014), referring to the way in which a researcher knows about the reality that they are studying (Clough and Nutbrown, 2008).

Informed by the paradigmatic perspective of interpretivism, the corresponding epistemological position is that of a subjective epistemology, recognising that “humans create knowledge through a subjective meaning making process” (Markula and Silk 2011, p. 54). Adopting this stance acknowledges that I, as the researcher, and the participants are constantly influencing one another, with the knowledge produced forming as a result of that collaborative interaction (Almeida, 2017). As Schutt (2012) observes “people construct an image of reality based on their own preferences and prejudices and their interactions with others” (p. 86). Assuming a subjective epistemology allowed the research to explore how female peer leaders have arrived at the point where they know what they know, recognising that there are numerous ways through which context and experience can shape individual understanding and actions (Markula and Silk 2011).

### **5.5. Research Approach**

Guided by the elements of the interpretivist paradigm, this section will discuss the research procedure and methods employed by this study, presenting a description of the data collection process undertaken, detailing the research sites and field visits, whilst reflecting on the role I took throughout. This section will also discuss the sampling methods adopted, which enabled me to access the relevant participants for this study. Due to the desire to capture the subjective experiences of the peer leaders whilst allowing an analysis of their lived experiences, the data collection process was conducted over a period of three years. As a ‘full immersion can be rather intense’, and not always feasibly possible, as with this study, “the researcher is recommended to go in and out of the field at regular intervals in order to take a step back and reflect efficiently on the situation under study” (Bray, 2008, p. 304). Undertaking fieldwork over multiple years acknowledged previously expressed concerns, that short-term, fly-in-fly-out research reinforces colonial relations (Spaaij et al. 2018); focusing on a longer-term project meant I was

able to take a more ethnographic approach. Through avoiding a ‘short-termism’ approach, I was also able to focus on shifting and sharing power with the participants throughout the research process, recognising that local knowledge is “critical for achieving a truly informed understanding of SfD in context” (Kay, 2012, p. 31).

### 5.5.1 Fieldwork

The table below provides an overview of the data that were collected during each phase of the fieldwork, including the participants engaged, the role they held and the means through which they were engaged.

<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Fieldwork 1</b>	<b>Fieldwork 2</b>	<b>Post-Fieldwork</b>
Semi-structured	Nine semi-structured interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Five female peer leaders</li> <li>- One female Project Manager</li> <li>- Two former female peer leaders</li> <li>- One male site coordinator</li> </ul>	37 semi-structured interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 22 female peer leaders</li> <li>- Six male peer leaders</li> <li>- Six former female peer leaders</li> <li>- One NGO Project Officer</li> <li>- Two male Site Coordinators</li> </ul>	0 semi-structured interviews
Life Histories	Six individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four female peer leaders</li> <li>- One former female peer leader</li> <li>- One male site coordinator</li> </ul>	During Fieldwork 2, the same six individuals from Fieldwork 1 were engaged as part of collecting life histories.	Two individuals engaged post-fieldwork.
Informal	To complement the data collected above, informal conversations were held with	To complement the above data, informal conversations were held with	0 informal conversations. This information is

	approximately 70% of the interviewees across the course of the fieldwork, to build on the information collected during the semi-structured interview, and to clarify any questions.	approximately 30% of the interviewees.	included in the digital methods below.
Observation	<p>Observations undertaken in the Lusaka communities of Chawama, Chipata, Chilenge, Kalingalinga, Kabwata, Kamwala, Munali and Mtendere.</p> <p>See Appendix D for more information on my research sites.</p>	Observations undertaken in the Lusaka communities of Chawama, Chipata, Chilenge, Kalingalinga, Kabwata, Kamwala, Munali and Mtendere.	Not applicable
Digital Methods	Not applicable – at this point, digital methods were not planned for	Not applicable – at this point, digital methods were not planned for	<p>Six individuals, who had previously been interviewed, were engaged digitally following the second fieldwork. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two male Site Coordinators</li> <li>- One former female peer leader</li> <li>- Three female peer leaders</li> </ul>

**Table 1: An overview of the data that were collected through each method during each fieldwork visit.**

For this study, the data were collected in two visits which encompassed field visits to the research sites in Lusaka, Zambia. Each field visit occurred over a period of three to six weeks, allowing me to become accustomed to the environment, immersed in the culture, and become a familiar face with the participants again. I required this time in the field to ensure that when the data collection process began the participants were comfortable, at ease, and willing to share their thoughts and experiences.

I travelled to Zambia in June 2017, to undertake the first phase of the fieldwork. During this field visit, which also formed part of the scoping process, I was able to visit identified and potential research sites, connect with in-country partners in person, and begin the data collection process. This field visit also acted as a 'reconnaissance trip', where I was able to test the feasibility of the proposed research methods and undertake some preliminary interviews in the field. Due to the nature of this research, ethical approval was obtained by the relevant Durham University ethics committee (see Appendix I). For the fieldwork, ethical approval was obtained from the School of Applied Social Sciences and this application addressed aspects such as the sensitivity of interviews, the risk of the participants' anonymity being compromised, stressors including cultural differences and language barriers, as well as the challenges of conducting research as a lone researcher. This ethics application was under constant review during the fieldwork trips, which ensured all ethical considerations were fully taken into account regularly (Binns, 2006).

During this trip, I conducted nine semi-structured interviews with a range of participants including five female peer leaders, two former peer leaders, one female project manager and one male site coordinator. During the interviews I piloted the interview guide, which gave confidence that the method would enable collection of rich data and enabled subsequent alterations to be made for future interviews (Harrell and Bradley, 2009). As a result of this 'reconnaissance trip', I was able to confirm the themes of the interview guide, as well as exploring topics that were linked to the research question but also provided space for the peer leaders to provide additional information that was relevant to them (Rabionet, 2011).

As part of this initial phase of the fieldwork, I also held meetings with both Sport in Action and EduSport Foundation, to discuss their involvement in the research. I provided each NGO with an 'Information Sheet' (Appendix A) which detailed what the research aimed to do, why the research was being conducted, why their organisation was being asked to take part, what was required of them, and what was going to happen with the data after collection. It was during these meetings that both NGOs agreed in writing to support the research project, confirming they would like to be involved, they were happy for the research to take place at their delivery sites, and that they would help facilitate my access to potential participants. In addition to this, both NGOs acknowledged and agreed that they understood that any aspect discussed relating to their organisation might be included in this final thesis. Following

the first fieldwork trip, I left the field and spent time analysing the data I had collected, whilst beginning to identify key themes emerging.

The second block of fieldwork took place in June 2018 for a period of three weeks. Prior to this return to the field, I completed a further ethics application identifying any additional potential hazards, evaluating ongoing risk and where necessary, putting precautions into place. During this second field visit, I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants from both NGOs, Sport in Action and EduSport. I engaged participants from a variety of contexts, and from multiple levels within the NGOs, including active peer leaders, community members, site coordinators, NGO staff and former peer leaders. The key focus of this field trip was to speak to a range of actors involved in SfD, addressing Guest's (2009) suggestion that it would be beneficial to know more about individuals and communities and their diverse experiences relating to their development through sporting programmes. Therefore, I strived to capture the range of stakeholders in the SfD field through these interviews, speaking with a variety of groups of people such as: NGO staff who manage and organise the SfD activities and programmes in the communities; female peer leaders who work in various communities and deliver the programmes at grassroots level; male peer leaders, who work alongside female peer leaders; community members who observe the SfD programmes in action. To enable access to these individuals, and to acknowledge my positionality, I adopted different positions when engaging with a potential participant, making myself relatable to that specific individual, and striving to reduce the potential barriers to our engagement (see Section 5.5 for more information).

The focus of interviews was predominantly female peer leaders who were at varying stages on their journey; some who were new to the programme, some who had been part of the programme for several years, as well as some who had graduated from the programme or left for another reason. It was important that, when speaking to all of these participants, I captured their journey as a peer leader, including how their individual perspective was linked to, and potentially influenced by, broader contexts. In total, during this field visit, I conducted 37 interviews, which included semi-structured interviews as well as informal conversations to supplement the semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place at a number of different geographical locations which I had selected because of their salience to the participant. The majority were conducted either at one of the delivery sites, where the peer leader was active or resided, or near the NGO offices, coinciding with another event they were attending. For some interviews, I either travelled to someone's house, visited the local community, or we met in a familiar public space. The interview record detailed for this fieldtrip is presented in Appendix B.

The third phase of the fieldwork was due to take place in the summer of 2020, when I had planned to return to Zambia to conduct a series of focus groups along with a number of additional semi-structured interviews with members of staff from both of the NGOs. The purpose of the interviews was to speak



to staff members involved in the delivery of SfD programmes at Sport in Action and EduSport to understand more about their programmatic approach as well as the design and development of their programmes. The reason for including focus groups in the data collection process was twofold; firstly, the focus groups were to be used as an opportunity to check the validity of the key themes I had identified in the interviews conducted during the previous fieldwork trips. Secondly, the focus groups were designed to provide the opportunity for the participants to share further experiences, supplementing the knowledge I had already gathered. The focus groups had been designed to select participants based on similarities, given that focus groups can be advantageous when the interviewees are similar and cooperate with each other (Creswell, 2013). However, this field visit and subsequent in-person trips could not go ahead due to the global COVID-19 pandemic where travel restrictions were imposed (see Appendix C for Durham University's Covid-19 Academic Impact Statement). At the start of the pandemic, I made decision to pause the data collection process until the situation improved, and travel was permitted, but given the level of uncertainty during the pandemic, it was difficult to anticipate its end (Rahman et al. 2021).

Throughout my fieldwork I employed multi-sited ethnography, an approach that has gained prominence within the field of sport studies, particularly the social investigation of sporting cultures over recent years (Sparkes and Smith, 2012). I adopted an ethnographic approach as this privileges a contextually rich type of qualitative research, where through my time spent with the participants, data are produced that reflects the fine-grained daily interactions that constitute everyday life (Falzon, 2016). Originating from anthropology, ethnography places an emphasis on fieldwork with participant observation as a core element, which is considered the source of knowledge acquisition (Collison and Marchesseault, 2018). Participant observation, which will be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 5.6.2), provided key contextual data in my study. I situated myself in the field, observing, and gathering descriptive and analytical elements that spoke to the real-life social situations of the female peer leaders that were unfolding (Creswell, 2013). Adopting a multi-sited ethnographic approach enabled me to immerse myself in multiple SfD delivery sites across Lusaka (see Appendix D for details about the research sites), being 'here and there', to study the female peer leaders' involvement in SfD programmes first hand. Through this approach, I was able to trace "how culture is constructed across multiple sites rather than within one", mapping the connections, relations and associations that bind those various sites together (Van Duijn, 2020, p. 283). As such, ethnography enabled me to elicit insights into the lived experiences of others (Collison and Marchesseault, 2018). Furthermore, these insights extended the questioning beyond the individual level, to grasp an understanding of the impact and influence of social, historical, political, and economic domains (Phillips, 2023) as these are intertwined with the participants' experiences.

### 5.5.2 Participant Sampling

This qualitative study placed an emphasis on the personal experiences and unique stories of female peer leaders to capture their lived experiences in SfD programmes in Zambia. To achieve this, the differing sampling methods I employed enabled me to access the relevant participants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and views in relation to their experiences in SfD programmes in Zambia. A purposive sampling approach was predominantly utilised, enabling relevant individuals to be identified and accessed. To begin, I used this method to engage with potential participants and made contact prior to the first field visit, inviting them to take part in the study. As a result, I was able to maximise the fieldwork visits and my time spent in country by utilising my established network in Zambia, building on connections already made to engage individuals who possessed the knowledge and experience relevant to this study. A large proportion of the participants were recruited through this sampling process, with others recruited through both a snowball and opportunistic sampling processes (Gill, 2020). Snowball sampling allowed me to recruit additional participants: staff from both NGOs identified potential individuals and facilitated introductions for me. Within this context, the staff from the NGOs acted as ‘gatekeepers’, representing the SfD communities where the research was taking place and providing me with access to the field (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). Additionally, I used opportunistic sampling, also commonly known as convenience sampling, when I met someone in the research field who was relevant to the research process. Through this method, participants who met the research criteria and were ‘to hand’ were invited to take part in an interview (Denscombe, 2010), giving me access to a broader range of participants where data were easy to capture (Creswell, 2013). This broad range of participants included female peer leaders, along with individuals from multiple levels within the NGOs. For this research, it was important to understand the perspectives of those at the ‘front line’ of SfD programmes and practices (Nicholls et al. 2011) whilst also recognising that ‘development’ encompasses a multiplicity of actors who hold diverse perspectives (Long, 2001).

Through this sampling approach, I selected participants based on prescribed criteria such as ‘an involvement in SfD’. I began by identifying individuals involved in either of the Zambia NGOs with which I had previously built connections, together with other individuals I knew, in order to re-connect with potential participants. The core participants of this research, which were female peer leaders, had to meet set criteria to ensure they were relevant for the study and were asked to take part based on the following:

1. The participants had indicated that they were willing to partake in the research and would be happy to conduct follow up interviews and discussions.
2. The participants were currently actively involved in the delivery of sport for development and peer education programmes as a peer leader.
3. The participants were female.

4. The participants fell within the African conception of ‘youth’<sup>4</sup>.

Alongside these core participants, my wider sample included people who were influential in Zambian SfD and in the lives of the female peer leaders. These individuals were selected based on my knowledge of the population and the nature of the research questions. However, I also aimed to utilise the guidance and knowledge of this group to locate and identify a wider set of participants who would also be able to contribute towards forming a breadth of sample. These individuals included others who have been involved in SfD and peer education programmes, such as NGO staff members alongside site co-ordinators, family, and community members from the sites in which these female youth peer leaders reside. Through interviewing a handful of members from the wider community surrounding the female peer leaders, I hoped to capture an understanding of the context within which they live their lives.

## **5.6 Research Methods and Data Collection**

My qualitative research methodology combined observations, semi-structured and informal interviews. This methodological triangulation reflected a desire to seek and explore personal and social experiences, meanings, and practices as well as the context within which these take place (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015). Through a qualitative methodology, I was able to explore, unpack and describe social meanings and phenomena from different perspectives (Flick, 2014), capturing the varying views of individuals involved in SfD in Zambia. Furthermore, this methodology allowed a voice to be given to those often unheard, helping to explain ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘under what circumstances’ phenomena takes place (Skovdal and Cornish, 2015).

### **5.6.1 Interviews: Semi Structured and Informal**

A primary source of data this research relied upon was in-depth semi-structured interviews. Through these interviews, I attempted to make the research world visible by becoming immersed within the experiences of female peer leaders (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This method enables the generation of descriptive, rich data through providing a space for the peer leaders to talk about their own experience in their own words (Siedman, 2013) as well as their interpretation of their social world (Arthur et al. 2014). A core qualitative research method, semi-structured interviews provided a flexible and powerful tool to present an opportunity for the voices of those within the SfD field to be heard, exploring the way they make meaning of their experience (Rabionet, 2011). Through this open approach, participants were encouraged to take a lead, shaping their own narratives when discussing their individual experience

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 4.2 Youth Studies and Conceptualising ‘Youth’ for more detail.

(Arthur et al. 2014). In line with other qualitative research in SfD, semi-structured interviews offered flexibility, allowing me to capture unexpected information, as and when it arose during the interview process (Raw, Sherry and Schulenkorf, 2022).

This form of data collection is characterised by an interviewer-led scenario whereby the interviewer is guided by a set of open-ended questions, and through conversation creates a space for participants to narrate their experiences in a free-ranging and full way (Arthur et al. 2014). The relationship between the interviewer and participant is an active process which produces knowledge in a conversational relation, encompassing linguistic elements (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). According to Mwaanga (2011), this process “brings the interviewer into the world of the participant, providing understanding of participant perceptions, attitudes, feelings and opinions” (p. 129). In this study, through face-to-face interviewing, I was able to establish a more open and honest environment, by focusing on developing a positive rapport with each participant, getting to know them on a personal level, showing an interest in their life and their specific responses. Face-to-face interviewing also enabled me to account for non-verbal communication alongside verbal responses (Arthur et al. 2014). Through asking questions to understand, validating how my participants were feeling and responding specifically to the information they were sharing, I was able to adopt an empathetic approach which enabled me to remain “sensitive to needs of the participants” (Markula and Silk, 2011, p. 21), creating a space which promoted a freedom to talk (Silverman, 2011). I also utilised techniques including probing, to ensure clarity through the narrative, encouraging the participants to elaborate on any areas of importance to enable a fully in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study (Galletta, 2013).

Throughout the interviewing process, I was guided by a pre-prepared interview guide for each of the semi-structured interviews conducted (see Appendix G). This interview guide consisted of questions that ensured the research topic was adequately explored, beginning with a range of broad questions encouraging the participant to talk about their individual story, their personal experiences, perspectives and beliefs, before moving into questions which attended to the nuances of that story (Galletta, 2013). My intention for this guide was to ensure a flexible space was created to explore the complexity of the peer leaders’ lived experiences, creating a form of conversation between us (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). This interview guide attempted to attend to the “ideological and philosophical issues of sport, development and the implementation of SDP” (Darnell 2010a, p. 60), recognising that the experiences of the peer leaders are “not frozen in time but change and grow” (Muncey, 2010, p.8) and therefore this evolving nature needed to be captured.

The semi-structured interviews allowed insights to be gathered from a wide range of parties involved in SfD, thus providing a stronger, more in-depth understanding of opinions, experiences, attitudes, and feelings (Edwards and Holland, 2013). The interviews discussed aspects relating to the outlined research questions and were also used to select potential participants for a life history case study. Each

interview was recorded on a dictaphone and subsequently transcribed, with each participant given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity throughout. This was an important component of the research due to the need to balance confidential issues which might arise, and any sensitive information disclosed, especially relating to either of the two NGOs, staff, or subsequent programmes with which the individuals had been involved. To add to the quality of data collected, I also took notes during the interview to capture any key points arising. These notes also allowed me to reflect immediately on the nature of my interactions with the interlocuter, giving me the space to capture key information such as body language and specific words and phrases including insider language. Following on from each interview, and throughout my time in the field, I kept an ethnographic diary to record and capture my experiences, observations and interactions (see Appendix J for an extract from my ethnographic diary). Following a process of continual reflection, I was able to monitor my research methods and make adjustments where necessary.

All potential participants were made aware of the nature of the research, their role and what was required of them prior to taking part. Following the return of a completed informed consent form, all participants eligible were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview (see Section 5.6.1) to explore their lived experiences as either a female peer leader or someone who was involved in the SfD field. Alongside this, I asked them questions about their understanding of sport and gender. This process occurred in stages, and informed consent forms were completed as and when each participant attended an interview. Furthermore, some participants were interviewed once, whereas others were engaged numerous times in the research process. A copy of the participant information sheet and consent forms are presented in Appendix E and F, respectively. For those individuals who potentially struggled to grasp the nature of the form, due to language barriers, I arranged for a trusted member of the local community to support the process, translating the information into the local language, Nyanja. I also informed each participant of their right to withdraw at any time, both before, during and after the interview (Markula and Silk, 2011).

Where opportunities arose I also utilised informal interviews, commonly referred to as informal conversations (Swain and King, 2022), natural conversations (Bernard, 2011) and unstructured interviews (Patton, 2002), to add to the data collection process. These informal interviews took place as and when appropriate and were the result of opportune moments in the field, offering an additional complementary source of realistic data to supplement data produced by more structured methods (Swain and King, 2022). A large proportion of participants I engaged through informal interviews were those I had previously interviewed more formally but also included additional people I met during my time in the field. When utilising this form of interview, I had to adopt a level of flexibility to ensure I could recall and make relevant notes after the conversation had taken place, as I did not record these interactions (Edwards and Holland, 2013). My notes and reflections focused specifically on the way the female peer leaders told their stories and how they attached meaning to them (Swain and King, 2022).

Similar to unstructured interviews, informal interviews were conducted with no formal interview guide: I posed questions in a conversational manner in relation to ongoing fieldwork and sought to build on the comments that arose from spontaneous dialogues (Roulston, 2010). This form of interview has been suggested to be beneficial for research that explores people's behaviour and their interaction with their environment, providing more valid knowledge including tacit understandings and implicit meanings (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), something this research attempted to do.

As my research focused on 'human subjects', I was responsible for ensuring the research process was conducted in a manner which did not cause harm, and that all participants were treated with respect and dignity (Markula and Silk, 2011). I needed to be 'culturally sensitive', acknowledging that conducting research with individuals from Zambia required me to exhibit culturally appropriate behaviours, be aware of key values, and demonstrate a willingness to learn (Eide and Allen, 2005). Furthermore, I needed to acquire local and cultural knowledge of the social group under study, understanding the "social, familial, cultural, religious, historical and political backgrounds" (Jackson and Mead Niblo, 2003, p.24) within which I was operating, taking these into account when planning, and undertaking the research process. Throughout the research, I was conscious that the study must be undertaken in a way which benefitted the local people (Liamputtong, 2007), producing knowledge that would be worthwhile to the host community and broader academic community (Bloodworth et al. 2019).

### **5.6.2 Life Histories**

Whilst utilising the above methods, I sought amenable participants who were open to having their experiences and life explored in even greater depth, and for these participants life histories were incorporated into the interviews (see Table 2 for details of these participants). Life histories can act as a source to provide evidence for cultural exploration and to access personal experience and attitudes (Kratz, 2001). Life histories are valuable in studying cultural changes that have occurred over time, allowing a narrative of a participant's life to be formed, drawing links between current experiences and behaviours whilst capturing the way these cultural patterns evolve (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Whilst a popular approach in a range of disciplines, the life histories method has rarely been applied in the field of sport, social development, and peace (Okada and Young, 2014). In the studies where the method has been applied, it has been highlighted as an effective way to "reveal the nuanced and contextual place of sport within a person's biography" (Darnell, Whitley, and Massey, 2016, p. 3).

Through a life history approach, the chronology of human life can be tracked, using biographical recollections to tell the story of an individual (Okada and Young, 2014). Furthermore, through adopting this approach, I was able to link individual behaviours to the social themes that characterise daily life, providing the female peer leaders with the opportunity to tell their own story, conceptualising an experience or aspect of life they have experienced, adding depth and evocative illustration to this study

(Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Whilst this study primarily focuses on the life histories of young women, the inclusion of one male participant was a deliberate and a contextually grounded decision. His involvement was not intended to shift the focus away from women's voices, but rather to enrich the research by offering insight into the broader social and relational dynamics that shape the lived experiences of the young women involved. As a mentor and community figure, he plays a significant role in the lives of the participants, offering valuable insight into the structural and interpersonal dynamics that influence gendered experiences within SfD. His perspective enriched the research without shifting its focus, providing a holistic understanding of the broader SfD environment and landscape. The decision to include this participant was made with careful ethical consideration, ensuring that the central focus remained on the experiences and agency of the young women, while using his account to support, and contextualise their narratives. Through collecting life narratives, I sought to capture the aspects which make an individual unique, such as their achievements, failings, predicaments, and aberrations, striving to understand how their identity provides the shape and coherence of their life (Crewe and Maruna, 2006). This allowed me to paint a substantial picture of them as an individual in their various phases and trajectories, which will allow the reader to enter into those experiences (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). As Okada and Young (2014) conclude, SfD interventions and programmes are inevitably limited by the wider socio-political climate in which they operate, and as such, researching an individual's experience in SfD requires capturing the broader social context within which those experiences occurred, an insight which a life histories approach can assist with providing.

The table below provides an overview of the characteristics of the participants who were involved in life histories.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Birth Location</b>	<b>Current residence</b>	<b>Family Context</b>	<b>Current Situation</b>	<b>Aspirations</b>
<i>Refers to their profile in Appendix B – Interview Record</i>						

1	Former female peer leader	Mtendere	Mtendere	Lives at home with mother, her child, some of her siblings and wider family members	Working in a local fast-food chain six days a week	Finish schooling, attend college, work in a job such as nursing
2	Female peer leader	Kabwata	Kabwata	One of eight children, she is third last born. Raised by her mother after her father passed away	Actively involved as a peer leader, delivering at one site and managing another site. Alongside this, studying project planning and management at college.	Desire to progress to university and work full time in sport, such as a NGB or SfD NGO
27	Project Manager, then former Peer Leader	Copperbelt	Kaunda Square with her sister	One of nine children, she is the second last born	Working for a not-for-profit, locally based multi-media communications organisation	Desire to get a full-time job within sport
28	Female peer leader	Chawama	Chawama	Lives at home with her mother, her father passed away recently	Actively involved as a peer leader and coaches a community college team alongside. Recently completed her primary	To gain full time employment as a teacher through the government



					teaching qualification	
34	Male site coordinator	Mtendere	Mtendere	Born into a family of 12, with his mother and father	Married with his own family	To progress in his coaching and work with the Zambian National Netball Team
37	Female peer leader	Kamwala	Kamwala South	Lives with her father and two younger sisters	Volunteering as a peer leader, but has developed her own micro-enterprise to generate an income	Aspiration to become a neurosurgeon, work in medicine or public health

**Table 2: An overview of the characteristics of participants who were involved in life histories in the research**

### 5.6.3 Participant Observation

Another method which was utilised throughout the fieldwork process was participant observation. Participant observation is a method which involves the researcher participating in the daily activities, interactions, events, or rituals of the group of people or community under study as a means of learning about the aspects of their life, culture, and routine, both explicit and tacit (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). For this study, I had to immerse in the everyday culture of various communities across Lusaka, to experience the lives of the participants as much as possible. This involved learning the basics of the local language, partaking in the activities that were being delivered at each community site, taking on the role of an active participant and coach when attending SfD programmes, and indulging in the local food and drink. Through doing this, I was able to enter into the community I was researching. Following this, I had to learn to remove myself daily from that immersion, to provide the space to intellectualise what I had seen and heard, attempting to put things into perspective (Bernard, 2011). I also had to use my social self as a research tool, building relationships with the research participants to generate data through a two-way interactive process (Hume and Mulcock, 2004). As a result, participant observation has been suggested to be an “intensely humanistic methodology” (ibid, p. xviii), with the process inevitably being affected, and shaped by the nature of the relationship created between the participants and myself, and the social position I adopted whilst in the field (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

For this research, observations were conducted in a number of communities where SfD and peer education programmes were delivered (see Appendix D for details about the research sites). These sites included the communities of Chawama, Chipata, Chilenge, Kalingalinga, Kabwata, Kamwala, Munali and Mtendere. All participant observation was conducted either outside in a community area, inside a classroom or school building, or within a safe space where the participants reside or carry out their daily activities. I chose to utilise numerous research sites as this allowed me to submerge myself within the daily activities, interactions, and events of the female peer leaders, observing behaviour, rituals, interactions, and events in a natural context (Belsky, 2004). These observations were used as a means of learning about the explicit and tacit aspects of the lives and culture of the participants in the research (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). I utilised my ethnographic diary to capture and note down my observations, both as and when they occurred, and subsequently my reflections after I had left the field. I themed the commonalities and differences across my observations and used these insights to support the data analysis process.

This research acknowledges that conducting participant observation in public and private spaces differ, and for this study, this occurred throughout the fieldwork. For observations occurring in a public space, such as a community, I ensured that where possible people were aware of the objectives of the research and the role I was holding. Despite some suggesting that in public spaces observations can occur without explicit permission being gained, as long as the researcher “adheres to the normative expectations of public behaviour” (Lofland et al. 2006, p. 36), I sought relevant ethical approval and consent forms from all individuals involved. For observations occurring in private spaces such as schools, homes, and offices, I also ensured that my role and the purpose of the research had been disclosed. More so, I gained approval in these environments, for example from the headteacher of the school, the head of the family unit within a home environment and from staff in the NGO offices.

Throughout fieldwork visits, I conducted field observations of the participants in action, where I took on various roles’ dependent upon the situation in hand. Field observations within the communities where SfD programme delivery was taking place gave me the opportunity to acquire a fuller picture of the daily life of the programme, and the participants (Hasselgård and Straume, 2015). Reflecting Gold’s (1958) typology of the roles a participant observer can adopt, I was able to assume one of four key roles: ‘complete-observer’, ‘observer-as-participant’, ‘participant-as-observer’, and ‘complete-participant’. Through a continuum of involvement, I was able to adopt a variety of different positions dependent upon the degree of involvement I wanted to attain in the lives of the participants. For some site visits, I adopted the role of ‘participant-as-observer’, ensuring my status as observer was made known but I was still able to participate in group activities such as playing sport, supporting the delivery of coaching sessions, officiating, cheering from the sidelines and support with childcare and cooking duties. This particular role was very important because it gave me a deeper insight into the context I was studying, where I was able to develop relationships with the participants over time and, as a result, I became

involved with their central activities (Takyi, 2015). At other times, I adopted the role of ‘observer-as-participant’ which involved observing as unobtrusively as possible, engaging in the local community setting but only for short periods of time, and this included sitting in on meetings or observing classroom lessons (Arthur et al. 2014). I rarely, if at all, adopted the role of the ‘complete observer’ and ‘complete participant’ as I always disclosed my identity as a researcher. Through these various roles, I was able to be both an insider and outsider simultaneously, with the degree of participation at any given moment being determined by the research questions and epistemological approach.

#### **5.6.4 Digital Methods**

To accommodate the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to adapt my methodology significantly to adjust to the new reality created by the pandemic (Rahman et al. 2021), as the focus of data collection had been designed to be reliant on face-to-face interactions in the field in Zambia. During the height of the pandemic, I thought there would be the opportunity to return to the field, but as a result of its ongoing impact, I made a decision to transition to a digital work environment and digital research methods to allow a continuation of the research. The use of digital platforms is a relatively new approach in field-based research, but since the COVID-19 pandemic, the approach has been gaining attention (Saudik, 2022). As a result, where possible, I engaged with some of the participants via virtual methods, continuing with informal interviews through digital platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The conversations I conducted through this method were informal and casual in nature and were used as an opportunity to take the data back to the participants to provide them with a chance to give feedback. I initially adopted this approach with the aim of reducing the likelihood of ethnocentric interpretations of the research findings and thus benefit the overall research process (Adamson and Donovan, 2002), but found there were limitations. Whilst these interactions helped with clarity around some of the previously collected data, pivoting to a virtual approach was not as successful as I had hoped it would be. The feasibility of interacting or attempting to interact, via virtual platforms was impacted by a lack of access to airtime data among participants, weak or inconsistent connection, and the challenge of generating a flowing verbal conversation through this means.

Whilst pivoting to remote data collection gave me the opportunity to collect *some* data and to sense check other parts, I acknowledge the limitations of being unable to travel to Zambia to undertake this in person. The proposed subsequent field trip(s) would have given me the opportunity to again check the validity of the data collected, but also to talk further to any participant who had previously been interviewed. This would have included the delivery of focus groups, something which was prevented due to the pandemic. I also acknowledges that pivoting to digital data collection methods created a digital reality that presented “new contexts for ethical dilemmas and ethical choices” (Paulus et al. 2017, p. 753), where there were concerns of confidentiality and privacy arising with the sharing of sensitive

information over a digital platform (Marhefka et al. 2020). Furthermore, as addressed earlier in this thesis, digital research methods are suitable for communities with stable internet networks, an infrastructure that most indigenous communities in the Global South lack. This in turn often causes marginalised communities to become further removed from the knowledge production process (Saudik, 2022). Whilst I found that connectivity to the internet had generally improved in Zambia, my access to participants was limited by their ability to get online, which was often determined by the costs associated with data charges.

## **5.7 Data Analysis**

It was important that I adopted an analysis approach which enabled me to understand how the female peer leaders experienced their world, giving my participants a voice by generating an understanding of the phenomenon under study. There are a number of analysis approaches that could have been suitable for this research, including interpretative phenomenological analysis, thematic analysis and narrative analysis. For example, thematic analysis offers researchers flexibility, supporting them to analyse interviews and data collected through observations, providing a systematic approach for generating codes and themes from data. Thematic analysis can be applied to identify patterns in relation to the lived experiences of participants (Clarke and Braun, 2017). Narrative analysis, as a further approach, focuses on understanding individual stories and experiences, seeking to examine the structure, meaning and function of narratives, focusing on the core narratives from the participants personal stories (Riessman, 2022).

This study adopted an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach so as to place the lived experiences of the participants as the starting point of the investigation and meaning-making process (Griffin and May, 2012). To a greater degree than thematic analysis and narrative analysis, IPA was suited towards my study's objectives of understanding the lived experience of individuals, focusing on how my participants processed their experiences and the things that had happened to them. IPA supported me to consider the world of the participants as far as possible, developing understanding of the meaning and interpretation of lived experiences through the voices of the individuals (ibid). This analytical approach enabled me to interpret each participant's unique experiences individually, on a case-by-case basis. Through focusing on the individual participant's perception and experiences of the world, IPA allows human experience to be acknowledged as a topic in its own right, which also gives it meaning (Kimberley, 2022). The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, informal interviews, and participant observation were analysed using a thematic coding based on the interpretative phenomenological analysis approach, focusing specifically on the personal interpretations the female peer leaders attached to their experiences. IPA is often utilised for researching marginalised groups, something this study sought to do, by enabling the researcher to carefully attend to the

experiences of the participants without understanding of such experiences being suppressed by prevailing assumptions about them (Griffin and May, 2012).

To begin, on return from each fieldtrip, the recorded materials were transcribed verbatim. I initially trialled the software package NVivo, to assist and support with the analysis of the qualitative data but made the decision to utilise more traditional tools for qualitative data analysis instead, because it became evident that each interview and encounter needed to be read and analysed in-depth, as a stand-alone piece, with careful attention to potential complexities, and a strong appreciation of the individual contextual setting. Through a phenomenological analysis approach, I could hope to achieve this, placing an emphasis on gaining an individual's understandings of phenomena – in this case gender - and how it interrelates with sport, peer education and SfD.

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience which allows the researcher to make sense of human behaviour by analysing the unique meanings individuals have of the social world, concentrating on the subjective aspects of social life that are internal to the individual's consciousness (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Through adopting this approach, interpretative phenomenology analysis allowed the examination of how the participants made sense of their life experiences, concerned with exploring experience on its own terms, in a given context, space and time (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Furthermore, this approach to processing knowledge enabled the rich detail of individual answers to be retained, whilst highlighting significant statements that provided an understanding of how the peer leaders had experienced SfD programmes (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Interpretative phenomenology analysis is an inductive, fluid, and emergent process (Finlay, 2011). For this study, I used the data analysis guide proposed by Smith et al. (2009) as guidance, adopting the following steps and processes. Firstly, I immersed myself within the original data, through a process of reading and re-reading the transcripts. This was accompanied, where possible, with listening to the audio-recording of the interview so as to bring it to life once again with a voice. Through this process, the participant became the focus of my analysis, entering the participant's world through an active engagement with the data. As a result, the re-reading of the data facilitates an appreciation of the interactive nature of the interview, highlighting "the location of richer and more detailed sections, or indeed contradictions and paradoxes" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 82). Secondly, I began the initial level of analysis of the data through note taking, examining, and exploring the semantic content and language used in the transcripts. Whilst a time-consuming process, the initial note taking gave me the time to grow familiar with each transcript, through which I began to "identify specific ways by which the participant talks about, understands, and thinks about an issue" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). Such notes can attempt to unravel complications, highlight important content, and point to metaphors and other linguistic devices used (Smith, 2016). It is important that I engaged with each line of dialogue, posing questions about what the words meant for the participant, deconstructing their narrative to bring

into focus a more detailed understanding of the participant's words and meanings. Furthermore, I was able to see the interrelationships between one experience and another as a result of this process, developing an understanding of the embedded nature of context within the narratives (Smith et al. 2009).

Step three of the interpretative phenomenology analysis process focused on translating the initial notes into emergent themes, bringing the data together. As Smith (2016) details, the aim in this step is to “construct thematic statements which are both specific, dynamic and grounded in what the respondent has said at that point in the interview, but which are also moved to a more distilled and abstracted level” (p. 223). I found the challenge during this step was to reduce the volume of the data whilst maintaining the detail in each narrative, enabling connections to be made across the transcript (Smith et al. 2009). Through this process, I moved from a descriptive reading of the text to an interpretative reading of the text. The next stage was concerned with searching for connections across emergent themes across different transcripts. Within this stage, I organised the emergent themes chronologically in respect of the time at which they occurred in the participants' lives, examining them throughout looking for connections. Similar themes were grouped into clusters, with the dominant themes becoming master themes for this research. Each cluster were given a superordinate theme, with the comprising themes detailed underneath. For example, as shown in Appendix H, which is an example of the preliminary analysis of the interview transcripts, the themes included family life, involvement in sport, community context and gender norms.

During the final stage of this process, I moved to each transcript in turn, repeating the process until all had been analysed. Where the data from the observation notes and ethnographic diary were connected to an individual person, this was included alongside the transcript to provide broader context. The observation notes and ethnographic diary data that related to more than one person were analysed separately and grouped alongside the emergent themes to support them with additional insights. This process took place between each fieldwork visit, taking each participant's transcript and treating it on its own terms. The key with this approach is to ensure each participant's account is given “justice to its own individuality” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 100). Once all transcripts had been individually analysed, connections between cases were made and a list of themes devised which were common across the participants. This also included aspects which, whilst they may appear seemingly different, are actually illustrations of the same transcendent property (Smith, 2016).

## **5.8 Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has set out the methodological approach and specific methods used in this study, highlighting what data collections tools were adopted in an attempt to capture and analyse the lived experiences of female peer leaders in SfD programmes. Pivotal to this identified methodological approach was a recognition that the voices of indigenous women are under presented in SfD research,

and therefore the approach needed to take this into account, seeking to utilise methods which allowed their voices to be heard. An interpretivist paradigmatic approach was the philosophical stance used in this research, viewing social reality as subjective, and a product of those who inhabit it (Blaikie, 2010). This was important, because I wanted to provide a critical analysis of the lived experiences of female peer leaders, and as such required an approach which allowed this to be achieved. Underpinned by an interpretivist paradigmatic approach, this placed an emphasis on qualitative data and the collection of diverse, rich narratives that were drawn from a unique sample whose experiences were captured to make sense of phenomena. Research participants were purposively sampled from Sport in Action and EduSport, the two SfD NGOs featured in this research, and included active peer leaders, community members, site coordinators, NGO staff and former peer leaders. As a result of their prominence in the SfD field, in Zambia and more broadly, Sport in Action and EduSport were effective means through which participants for this research could be identified and engaged.

The process of undertaking research in the SfD field, particularly with young people and within a Zambian context, generates ethical issues and challenges that I, as the researcher, needed to be aware of. Jeanes and Kay (2013) highlighted the exceptional complexity researchers working with young people in the Global South face, including two interrelated significant ethical challenges regarding issues of informed consent and issues surrounding power in the researcher-participant relationship. As a researcher undertaking research within a very similar context, I was aware of the prevalent ethical issues at play, and these played an influential role in the way I shaped my research design process. Throughout the research process I engaged in critical reflexivity, recognising the potential impact my positionality could have on the research (Adamson and Donovan, 2002). This enabled me to recognise the dynamics that existed between me, as a white, middle-class, English-speaking researcher from the Global North and my participants, who were black young people from the Global South. Elements such as my gender, race, social class, geographical location, as well as the influence of colonial histories, all played into these dynamics. As such, for this study, I had to navigate the complexities that are present when undertaking ethical research practice in Zambia, engaging in a culturally reflexive process, consciously asking myself questions about what I thought I knew, so I was aware of any underlying assumptions when it came to interpreting my findings. This ensured that the young people were both engaged and protected, and their contextual experiences and local knowledge remained at the forefront of this research.

## **Chapter 6: The Lived Experiences of Young Women as Peer Leaders**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins to explore the collected data, presenting, and drawing on the participants' narratives to address the study's overall aims. Here I present three particular life histories of female peer leaders which detail the outcomes experienced over time by these young women. I have decided to present three life histories because the lives of these individuals give a good representation of the diversity of experiences across the group as a whole within this research. I made the decision to select the following three participants because these individuals were participants with whom I had developed rapport and built a strong respectful relationship with over time, and through these relationships a level of trust had been established. This trust permitted a willingness and openness between us which provided the opportunity to gain greater insight into the lives of each individual, capturing their nuanced story and enabling me to understand how they have navigated their social context. As a result, these individuals were some of the most in-depth data collected, where the young women were particularly open to discussing their life histories and as such, the richness of their lived experiences were able to be captured. Through focusing on their stories, this provides the best opportunity for in-depth analysis. Moreover, the three life histories below are different from each other, but represent a broad cluster of outcomes of other peer leaders which allows me to show different perspectives and patterns across the research participants.

In the previous chapter, life histories as a method was discussed (see Section 5.6.1), and the ways in which these individuals were engaged in the research process was described (see Table 1 in Chapter 5). Their individual experiences, which are explored in more detail below, relate in various aspects to the experiences shared by my wider participant group, with individual facets of their story encompassing the experiences of others. Through doing this, I will explore the experiences they have faced on their journey as a peer leader, and where they have ended up as a result of their experiences to date, their worldview and what this has meant for them. Within the subsequent chapters, I will discuss what part sport, and wider life experiences played in helping a peer leader reach this point, and more so the importance of these contextual factors.

The narratives below explore the individual journeys of three different female peer leaders, all of whom have come through the SfD programmes delivered by the NGOs, but who had subsequently found themselves in quite differing situations at the time of the research. One peer leader, Juliet, is thriving through the programme and finding her place within the SfD field; another, Martha, utilised her experiences as a peer leader to launch herself into a career outside of the SfD field; and finally, one, Esther, who despite similar experiences during her times as a peer leader has ended up as a single mother, no longer involved in sport and struggling to survive. All participants referenced in the



following chapters have been assigned a pseudonym and will be referred to by that pseudonym throughout.

## **6.2 The Life of Juliet, a Peer Leader**

*“Before I even got into sport, I was very anti-social, I never used to know how to get any conversations with people, I was very shy and struggled to confide in people. But the time I got into sport and facing a guy in a competition and realised I could face them; they can’t really put me down. And you know, I gained that confidence, I feel with interaction with different people... that boosted the way I looked at certain things... To be frank, I love giving my skills and the reason why I enjoy doing that is somebody once spoke to me, and it created a difference in me. I felt that if somebody spoke to me and I’m this person today, I can help a child become who they want to be and help them conquer their dreams”- Juliet, 23 years.*

Juliet is currently a peer leader with Sport in Action and is based at the Fountain of Hope; a community site and orphanage in Kabwata, Lusaka. Alongside her role as a peer leader at the Foundation of Hope, Juliet is also site coordinator for the UTH Special School, which is one of the delivery sites where Sport in Action operate and is also in Kabwata. Kabwata is a bigger constituency but covers a number of Lusaka suburbs including Kabwata, Libala and Chilenje. Juliet is 23 years old and comes from a family of eight. She is the third last born, with five brothers and two sisters. Juliet and her siblings were raised by her mother after her father sadly passed away, and as a result she took on an active role in the domestic life at home. Juliet is part of the family planning and management, often stepping in to fulfil her mother’s responsibilities when she travels with work - her mother is a businesswoman. When at home, Juliet is responsible for her younger brothers, with three of her siblings married and living with their own families – one sister and two brothers. Outside of the busy home life, Juliet has completed Grade 12 and, at the time of this research, was at college studying project planning and management. Juliet is completing a diploma, a two-year programme with intentions to major and hopefully progress to study at degree level. I first met Juliet during one of my early trips to Zambia where we came into contact at the Sport in Action office, and we became very acquainted over the years. Juliet was interviewed at the Sport in Action offices and subsequent informal and formal conversations were held during my time in Zambia and the follow up visits. All my interactions with Juliet, both as part of this research and outside, have been positive and she has always been very willing to share her story and be open about her experiences in and through sport.

Juliet’s journey in life is not dissimilar to many young women I have met during my various times in Zambia. The following explores the way Juliet expresses her understanding of her experiences, the experiences she has gone through, how she has perceived them, and as a result, how her life looks now

through her own eyes. For Juliet, her experiences in and through sport led her to realise that unlike many of her friends from her local area, she wanted to live a different life. Juliet explained that in comparison to the majority of her schools friends, who ‘obviously get married’ once they have completed school, she had decided that path of life was not for her. Juliet expressed that the life followed by many of her school made was not what she needed, and instead she chose to take the proactive approach in finding an alternative life for herself; something that all young women in Zambia may not have the agency to do so. As a young child, Juliet had an interest in basketball and netball but had not played the sports since school. However, it was not until she was 18 years old and seeking an alternative life for herself that she stumbled upon Fountain of Hope, one of the delivery sites of Sport in Action. An interaction with the Lead Coach and Site Coordinator Samuel, in which Juliet expressed a desire to be involved in ‘whatever was going on’ and that she ‘wanted to keep busy’ resulted in the opportunity to get involved in the sports programme. Highlighting her interest in basketball and netball, Coach Samuel offered Juliet the opportunity to lead some of the sports, providing other young people with the chance to partake and play in the sessions.

Beginning with leading the delivery of some sessions at Foundation of Hope, before running training for the netball team based at the site, Juliet then progressed after a student from the Wallace Group<sup>5</sup> project identified her as a potential peer leader. One of these communities is the community Juliet volunteers within, and therefore every summer since she became a peer lead in 2013, she has spent time with the student and staff who travelled across from the UK. Through her commitment to the programme, and her passion to deliver, Juliet’s name was discussed amongst staff at Sport in Action. Whilst she had never really been a participant as such, Juliet took on a leadership role helping to manage the Fountain of Hope site and contributing towards the delivery of sport for development projects. Juliet attributes her progress into the role of a Peer Leader to Coach Samuel, who she highlighted played a ‘large part’ in this.

Whilst Juliet acknowledges that she had a very demanding upbringing, looking after her siblings and managing the household, she was keen to highlight that as a girl child in the city her responsibilities were not as great as those from the rural villages. For a girl child in the village, she highlighted that their role is traditionally to take care of the house and learn how to run the house because, at some point, the understanding is that this young girl would be married off to a head man, or somebody who is farming in the village, and would be required to run their own household. Whereas for her, and some of her fellow young women in Lusaka, they are afforded the opportunity to study, learn, and potentially

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<sup>5</sup> The Wallace Group is a group of UK universities who deliver an international sports programme called Volunteer Zambia. The programme focuses on working with and supporting Sport in Action by using sport to engage, education and empower young people in Zambia (Volunteer Zambia, 2023). A key element of the programme is the Student Project, where every year around 60 student and staff volunteers from the Wallace Group universities travel to Zambia to deliver sustainable sport for young people in various communities (Volunteer Zambia, 2023).

develop a career. This is in complete contrast to those young women in the villages, where the focus is on raising them to become material wives rather than go to school, get an education and a career. From Juliet's experience, it was clear to see that the support network surrounding a young woman was essential in supporting their development and progress and also very influential in shaping the hobbies and activities that they engage in.

Despite the opportunities afforded by a childhood spent in the city, Juliet was quick to acknowledge that she had not ever related with kids from different backgrounds, and this was a huge learning process as part of her route into becoming a peer leader. Coach Samuel was pivotal in supporting her in this:

*"[Coach name] took me into that process [of becoming a peer leader] to help me realise certain things I never knew I had, like certain qualities. So, from that experience I learnt a lot and that is why I am here today".*

Through this, Juliet was able to become aware of certain qualities she did not know she possessed, and she began to put these into practice. Outside of the support of Coach Samuel, Juliet was quick to acknowledge her support network and the environment around her in supporting her on her journey as a peer leader. Unlike many of her peers at school, Juliet's social groups are largely formed of other young women who are involved with Sport in Action, other young women who are also on their own journey as a peer leader. These young women, along with her best friend, all expressed similar interests, which included their desire to be involved in sport – something quite a large number of women from the wider community were not interested in. Juliet explained, as did a number of other participants, that other young women who are not engaged in sport, or peer leadership programmes such as the ones delivered by Sport in Action and EduSport, had different interests. From her experience, she highlighted that often these young women found themselves in situations where they are surrounded by drugs and alcohol. Sport, in this sense and in the case of Juliet and her friends, provided a focal point, an interest for young people to engage in and an activity to fill their time. As Juliet explained from her observations, for the young women who were not involved in sport, they often found themselves in different, and sometimes precarious, situations. This is increased when these young women were disengaged in school and were not receiving the support or attention from their parents and friends so 'they resort to keeping themselves busy with drugs and alcohol'. For Juliet and her fellow female peer leaders, their interest in sport and their role as a peer leader has provided activities that occupies their time. Juliet's best friend, who is not a peer leader but is involved in sport, has similar interests and her role in the media industry explores how sport and recreation helps young people stays away from bad vices like drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse which has been increasing in the local community in recent times.

Juliet's support network extends beyond her friends, and her home life is equally supportive of her involvement in sport and her role as a peer leader. Juliet recounted how her Mum is happy that she holds this role, as not only has it benefited her, but it has also had a positive impact on the wider family.

Two of Juliet's brothers had previously dropped out of school, and had not completed their studies, but through her experience as a peer leader, Juliet was able to share with them the things she had learnt through sport. She was keen to highlight that the exposure she had received had helped her, and in turn helped her siblings, recognising that it is not just about her going to school and getting a job, but that it is about her contributing to the community that she comes from, and adding value. Through her experiences in sport, Juliet had begun to ask herself 'what legacy am I building for myself', and as a result Juliet thought her siblings had begun to ask themselves the same questions. Juliet also openly acknowledged the appreciation her family and her community have shown as a result of her being a peer leader, in turn further supporting her with her pursuits.

The experiences Juliet gained through her role as a peer leader, which at the time of our first interview had been a role that she had held for four years, not only shaped her development as she grew up but is reflective of the person she is today. Juliet first became a peer leader when she was 18 years old, and whilst she had engaged in different activities compared to her peers, she reflects that her experiences 'triggered' in her certain things that she had previously not possessed or had been aware of. Prior to Juliet becoming involved in sport and taking on the role of a peer leader, she admits she was 'very anti-social, 'shy' and 'struggled to confide in people'. But, because she had the opportunity to get involved in sport, she spoke highly of who she became as a result of that exposure and the interactions within that space:

*"I feel with interaction with different people, my first travel outside of the country was when I attended Camp Sweden through sport. It was in Sweden and that boosted the way I looked at certain things. The interaction I had with different people and getting their views, their backgrounds, I feel that even people in a worse situation than I am. So, for me to feel really bad about myself, I just have to remember that there is someone worse off than me. How do I help that one who is worse off than me, I can't do that if I feel bad about myself, and I am down?"*

Furthermore, through her role as a peer leader, Juliet reflected on learning about 'psycho-social' things and how these enabled her to develop her ability to deal with certain things. In comparison to her brother, who often found himself in bad company, taking drugs and drinking alcohol, Juliet said she was able to use her experiences gained through her time as a peer leader to make more informed choices about the activities she engaged in, and the company she kept. For her, not only did this 'keep her on the right path' but also allowed her to act as a role model to her brother and impart the following advice Juliet:

*"This is as far as it's going to go with you, if you hold this direction this is going to be the end result... You can help yourself by doing something better for yourself".*

Whereas for Juliet, her experiences are comparatively different to her brothers, with sport becoming the element which captured her focus unlike her brother, who engaged in drugs and alcohol:

*“I feel it is in some instances, it’s like rehabilitation in the way that, if I begin to have an interest in sport and then become addicted to sport, then I would cut down on the other addiction I have, it’s like a replacement. You’re not addicted to drugs anymore; you are addicted to sport”.*

For Juliet, her experiences in and through sport taught her that life is not just about work. She recognised that there is more to life than going to work and for her, she wanted to be able to reflect on her life and to be proud of what she achieved. Juliet’s use of the expression that there ‘is more to life than work’ could be taken to reflect that she had found herself in quite a privileged position where work was not a necessity. This is an interesting stance, especially given the economic context for young women in Zambia, as discussed earlier in Chapter 4. For Juliet, she believed that her perspective of life and more so, what she wanted to achieve through her life was vastly different to her peers, and she attributed this change to how she had developed as a peer leader. Juliet said:

*“Instead of looking back on life and thinking I should have done this but having that feeling of I can do much more now from what I have learned, then I’ll be able to give credit to what I have done, in the future”.*

The opportunity to be a peer leader provided Juliet with the chance to share her skills and experiences with others. From the conversations I had with Juliet, she evidenced a desire to want to ‘give back’, to give to others as she had been given to by Coach Samuel. Without Coach Samuel supporting Juliet and seeing in her the things she was unable to see in herself, Juliet believes she would have never had become a peer leader and would never have had the opportunity to learn everything she did. From her perspective, Juliet expressed:

*“To be frank, I love giving my skills and the reason why I enjoy doing that is... somebody once spoke to me, and it created a difference in me. I felt that if somebody spoke to me and I’m this person today, I can help a child become who they want to be and help them conquer their dreams”.*

Juliet indicated that she felt that what she had achieved through sport was ‘a calling’, and that through her role as a peer leader she was living with purpose. This was even more significant for her as a female in the sporting domain, a place that is traditionally male dominated, with women often facing obstacles to be found within this field. Many of Juliet’s friends had often followed alternative paths, taken other opportunities, or pursued different careers due to the resistance they faced as a female in sport, and she recognised this. However, despite appreciating this, Juliet expressed a desired to use her experiences and her role as a peer leader to strive for equal opportunities for others, and to make a path that others can follow:

*“When you look at sport itself, we women aren’t there. You find its men who are always appearing on the board. Women are the ones who are told to do most of the petty work. So, I feel if we can have equity... Equality is not there yet. Equity, yes because being able to balance as a woman, what roles as a leader can she do? Roles and responsibilities that can be given. So, I feel if we change our mindset and mentality towards certain things, we can give each other an equal opportunity to make a difference in life. We have a Vice President who is female, so that is really helping. This one year that she has been in term, has really pushed certain women to greater heights and we have seen the progress that’s been happening. In most positions, women have been known to be the best managers so far. If given an opportunity, I feel we can do more, and I want to do more”.*

Juliet aspirations for the future were an extension of what she was achieving through her experiences as a peer leader and site coordinator, expressing a want to have a company with the aim of ‘empowering more women and creating a difference’.

Similarly to the role of a peer leader, and as discussed earlier in the thesis (see Section 2.3.4), those who take on additional responsibilities including managing a delivery site and becoming a site coordinator, as Juliet does, still operate primarily in a voluntary capacity, receiving monthly allowances and a stipend for their involvement in the programme. Juliet explained that it was her proactiveness in her peer leader role at Fountain of Hope which led to her being given additional responsibilities, including that of managing the delivery of programmes at a specific location, allowing her to progress even further on her peer leader journey.

Juliet’s progression as a peer leader is a strong example of why NGOs adopt and deliver sport-for-development based education programmes, giving young women the opportunity to develop and progress in a context where they are traditionally disproportionately affected by various social, economic and contextual challenges (see Section 1.4). Within the Zambian context, where gender inequality is deeply rooted in cultural, social, and economic systems, young women face considerable structural disadvantages compared to their male peers - disadvantages that are further intensified for those living in poverty (Jeanes et al., 2013). For young women like Juliet, her involvement in sport - starting as a participant, then becoming a peer leader, and now managing a delivery site - highlights what success can look like when young women are supported and recognised as capable leaders, especially against the broader contextual background.

For Juliet, her journey to date, would not have been possible without the experiences she gained as a result of sport, which enabled her to gain the ‘power to’ act in a way she desired. Her journey illustrates how sport can be a transformative space that enables young women to develop not only skills and confidence, but also agency and the capacity to make meaningful choices and act upon them. This aligns with Rowlands’ (1997) concept of ‘power to’, where through her involvement in SfD programmes and

being a peer leader, Juliet gained the power to act in ways that aligned with her values and ambitions, demonstrating an active capacity to navigate and reshape the conditions of her life. Despite the presence of strong social and cultural norms, that placed a demand on her to fulfil responsibilities at home as a young woman, Juliet found a way to pursue a life that interested her beyond these constraints and permitted her the opportunity to give back; something being a peer leader allowed her to do. This progress demonstrates how being a peer leader gave her the capacity to create change in her own life, shifting to a place where she had the agency to act to change and challenge those structures around her. The wider context surrounding her journey, despite her success, reflects the broader struggles many of the participants faced during their time as a peer leader, where they are operating in a patriarchal society. Her journey reflects a process of negotiating, resisting, and reimagining her role in society, all acts of agency that challenge existing gender norms.

Juliet's progress through her role as a peer leader demonstrates how SfD programmes can empower young women to become agents of change, not only within their own lives and also within their communities. Whilst elements of Juliet's story was echoed in the experiences of several other female peer leaders, only a small number of participants experienced a similar level of progression. This contrast highlights both the potential for transformation and the significant challenges young women face in navigating their role as a peer leader within a broader environment that is marked by deeply-rooted structural inequalities.

### **6.3 From Participant to Practitioner: Martha**

*"I always and I'm going to be saying this, I have experienced it [sport] and I think I'm an example from being a participant at Sport in Action to being a peer leader to now being a member of staff. I am now able to rent a house on my own. So, it has so much, I have seen people who have gotten scholarships through sports and now they have graduated and now they have jobs, and they are doing better. It is because of sport. So, I think sport provides more than people think, people think you are just playing but there is so much more to it than that. Yes, you are going to the pitch with your boots stockings and playing football, kicking the ball but there is more to kicking the ball. It brings to you a lot of things which benefit you in so many ways, there is information given, there are opportunities like scholarship and others they have jobs, guys in the office they get paid. I have got to where I am now because of sport. So, it brings more, and I have benefited so much" – Martha, 27 years old.*

At the time of our first interview, which took place in June 2017 as part of the phase 1 of the fieldwork, Martha was the Project Manager for the Girls in Action programme at Sport in Action. A year later, when we met in Lusaka again, Martha had left her role at Sport in Action, moving to gain full time

employment outside of sport, working for a not-for-profit, locally based multi-media communications organisation. Prior to these two roles, Martha was a peer leader for six years, based at the Munali site working in schools around Munali. Largely a residential area, Munali is known for the University of Zambia, whose campus is based nearby. As an area, Munali is also home to several shopping centres including East Park Mall and Arcades Shopping Mall, alongside a number of mid-range hotels. Martha is 27 years old and comes from a large family. The first-born sibling is a man, with Martha being the eighth child, and the last born being the ninth, the one she currently resides with. All of her siblings now live in Lusaka, apart from her mother who stays in a small hut without electricity on a farm in rural Chibombo, where she works planting maize and pumpkins.

Martha and her siblings' current living arrangements are vastly different from the ones they grew up in as a result of urban transition. Currently residing in Kaunda Square, a neighbourhood in Lusaka, Martha was raised in the Copperbelt region of Zambia until her family moved to Chongwe to live on a farm. Kaunda Square is one of the urban compounds located East of Lusaka city and is a typical residential neighbourhood with small compact houses, rundown buildings and poor infrastructure. Kaunda Square is part of the Munali constituency and is situated within walking distance to Sport in Action's Munali site. Growing up on a farm was challenging for Martha, where she was required to walk three hours a day, without shoes or a bag whilst carrying her nephew to get to school. Life on a rural farm came with its difficulties, many days Martha recalled that she would only have sweet potato for lunch which her mother made for her in the morning to take to school. Alongside this, the lack of finance in the family meant she was unable to buy books and stationery for schools, so she would write in pencil and when the book was finished, she would rub everything out and start writing again as her family did not have the finances to get any more books. She grew up in the village life between Grades 4 and 7, where outside of school there were few activities for young girls. Progress to high school was not guaranteed as a lot of families could not afford this, and as a result a large proportion of young girls would stay in the village, with their mothers and often ending up marrying young as a result.

For Martha, her mother did not want this for her daughter, and despite attending school whilst living in a rural village, in Grade 7 Martha was still unable to read and, in a desire to help change things, her mother sent her to Lusaka to stay with her cousin. From here she repeated Grade 6 and 7 and was able to write her exams. However, it was during these years that sadly her father started to get sick, and most of her family ended up moving to Lusaka. She moved to another community called Mtendere, and was able to attend Munali High School, with her sister paying for her school fees as a result of gaining employment at Lusaka airport. Martha completed secondary school in 2009 and progressed to study psycho-social counselling with a placement at Kabwata Clinic.

I first met Martha in 2015 at the Sport in Action offices during my six-month period spent in the country. As one of the project managers for Sport in Action, Martha and I worked closely together on the Girls



in Action programme, and she was incredibly supportive in helping me settle in. Martha was always on hand, ensuring I had everything I needed throughout my time in Zambia. When I interviewed Martha for this research, we met at the Sport in Action offices and had subsequent informal conversations with her during my time in Zambia, the follow up visit and since. Similarly, to Juliet and her experiences of life as a peer leader, Martha also had progressed through the peer leadership programmes delivered by the NGOs. As a result of her experiences, Martha had secured herself a job outside of the sport-for-development field working for another non-for-profit organisation. Unlike Juliet, who has progressed through the peer leadership programme and had gained a position as a site co-ordinator, Martha has used her experiences gained through sport, to pursue a career beyond sport. Martha had commenced her journey with Sport in Action in the early 2000s, beginning as a football and baseball player before progressing to become a peer leader and subsequently moving onto a role working within the Sport in Action office. For Martha, her transition out of the SfD field felt like the natural time to leave as she had been with the organisation for a very long time and in a variety of roles from participant to peer leader to staff member.

Martha's story echoes similarities to that of Juliet's, with both young women highlighting a key individual who was influential in their route into peer leadership, and who inspired them as they progressed from a participant to a peer leader. For Martha, this individual was Simon<sup>6</sup>, a site co-ordinator and Sport in Action member of staff who oversaw the operations of the Munali Site. Martha first discovered Sport in Action through school, but not through physical education or organised extra-curricular activities but through additional lessons she was taking on a weekend. One weekend Martha attended school for an extra lesson, which provided additional support to help her as she was catching up from the gaps in her education as a young person, and she found several people playing baseball at Munali, of which one of those people was Simon. She initially watched from a distance, admitting she had no understanding of the sport or what the rules were, but soon found herself involved and playing:

*"I was watching from a distance and thought oh that is really nice, and then this man, his name is Geoffrey, he was there, and he was a coach coaching them baseball. [Simon] was amongst them people... Watching from a distance, Geoffrey told us to come and play and get involved. I had no idea, I just saw where people were wearing the gloves, so I picked them up and went on the pitch. Since that day, I enjoyed it, I had fun, and started going from there. I then joined football, I was playing volleyball for the school, so the interest started from that one weekend".*

What began as an unexpected encounter one weekend, quickly became a core part of Martha's life, where she joined a couple of sports teams and became an active member in the local community. Martha explained that her experience in and through sport extended beyond simply playing, but that when she

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<sup>6</sup> Pseudonym used

was at Munali as a player, she was taught different things and through the use of sport as a tool, learnt a number of key life lessons:

*“When I was a player, they would teach us different things, through what they were teaching me, especially, with what they were teaching us on the girls, because growing up a Zambian typical girl, we are told marriage is the most important thing we can ever achieve in life. And, well not, we are not considered to be people who can be in sport”.*

Martha further indicated that her exposure through sport taught her many life lessons, shaping her development and helping her progress into the person she was at the time of the interview. However, this did not come without its challenges, and the messages she often heard growing up as a ‘Zambian typical girl’ where ‘marriage is the most important thing’ was echoed through her life at home where she faced resistance from her family to be involved in sport. As her interest in sport grew, and she spent more time at Munali playing, she expressed a desire to progress into becoming a peer leader, but her sisters did not agree with her decision:

*“I had issues with my sisters at home. I will leave home as early as 8am, then when I was peer leader I wouldn’t be home until 18:00 hours. And every time I got home then would start shouting at me. Where are you going, what have you been doing, you are not going to benefit anything, you are supposed to be at home cleaning and all those things, you are going to come pregnant and all those things. So, I would sneak out of the house just to go to Munali every day, and I would come back, and put up a lie about where I had been. But through the time I was a player I learnt a lot and I wanted to do what [Simon] was doing and what other peer leaders were doing. I wanted to do what these guys were doing. So, my interest came from the sessions I was going too, and learning different things, so here the interest grew and develop.”*

The above narrative highlights an interesting paradox, where Martha’s decision to sneak out of the house, to attend the sports ground and partake in sport, could be reflective of other young people’s approach to enable them to engage in more problematic behaviours. Whilst her decision to act in opposition to her family’s beliefs led to her participating in sporting programmes, it indicates that some people do not necessarily view ‘sport as a diversion’, instead believing it could operate to actually lead to her interacting with the wrong crowd and ending up pregnant.

Martha’s progression from participant to peer leader sadly was not as straight forward as she would have hoped. The resistance she faced from her family, mostly her sisters, meant that she had to be deceitful about where she had been and the activities she had been involved in, to ensure she was able to pursue her own interests. Martha explained openly that the way her sisters viewed women’s involvement in sport differed greatly from her own, and that unlike her nephew, who could openly play, and no-one would say a word about it, they expressed concerns about what she was doing and who she

was spending time with. The greatest concern that was mentioned numerous times during our conversation was her sisters' belief that a woman being involved in sport would result in pregnancy and that a women's interaction with men via sport would result in a sexual encounter. Furthermore, Martha described how her sisters believed many of the things she learnt via sport, such as problematising early marriage, safe sex and condoms, and the menstrual cycle, were taboo and should not be discussed at home. The messages Martha was being exposed to during her time as a participant and a peer leader contrasted those she was hearing at home.

Without the support and guidance of Simon, and the wider group of peer leaders at Munali, Martha was open in discussing how her life could have ended up very different, especially in light of the resistance she faced at home. The experiences Martha shared highlights the importance of young women having a role model, and a support network, in helping young them on their journey as a peer leader; elements Juliet also identified. Unlike her sisters, who held very traditional views around what role a woman should and should not be, emphasising their job as 'cooking and at home doing chores', Martha found safety in a support network that helped her on her journey as a peer leader. This support network, the majority of whom were male, inspired Martha on her journey:

*"I wouldn't pick on who, but it was just the sessions I was attending and wanting to be with Simon, [and two other NGO male staff members]<sup>7</sup>, those who are now in the districts working. Yes, it was because of the sessions and that was what inspired me. I wanted to be like those guys who were teaching me, I wanted to be different, so because I wanted to be like them that is where the inspiration came from. Also, because, I told myself that I have been poor my whole life, so I wanted to get to this level, if I do this, this is what is going to happen to me so that is also what inspired me".*

Her desire to 'want to be different' whilst, perhaps standing in contrast with others in the wider community, echoed the views of some of her closest friends, who were also heavily involved in sport. Her two closest female friends had attended the same school as her; however, their friendship did not begin and develop until they played baseball together and has since spanned over 10 years. Outside of these other two young people, Martha's closest friendship group was noticeably male – something that was uncommon in Zambia for a young woman - and was also formed of young people who were part of the sporting programmes at Munali. From Martha's experience, it is evident that being surrounded by a network of likeminded individuals, who have similar interests and who also engage in sporting activities, was pivotal in supporting her progressing from participant to peer leader, but also in enabling her to continue to engage in sport despite resistance from family members. The gender of Martha's support network did not appear to be a determining factor, rather it was their interest in sport, their

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<sup>7</sup> The names of these staff members have been removed, but both are male and work for the NGO. Previously these individuals have worked in the NGO office in Lusaka, but now they operate in the field, managing the delivery of various programmes in the districts.

participation at the sports ground and their similarities which brought them together. Sport, as it did for Juliet, provided the common interest amongst a group of friends that gave them a focus, filled up their spare time and provided them with an interest they could develop and progress in. This also helped keep them away from ‘wrong things’:

*“It does, it does because if this person knocks off from school at 12 and they have sports at 14 [hours], they are going to spend those hours in a field sport...The time they spend in the sports field keeps the young people away from other negative things there will be thinking about... So, I think it keeps them busy and it keeps them from doing other activities especially things like beer drinking and getting pregnant, drugs abuse and alcohol abuse. I think it does, no I know it does because I have been there before”.*

For Martha, her involvement in sport, and being surrounded by sporting people provided an important focus that occupied her time. Furthermore, this interest increased as she progressed into life as a peer leader where she would spend hours at the sports field around her schooling commitments, despite opposition from her family. It appears that even when the pressures of family life increased, and her sisters questioned her decision to pursue her sporting endeavours, attempting to influence her negatively, her passion for sport and her role as a peer leader overrode that influence.

It is important to note, that at one point, Martha temporarily stepped away from her role as a peer leader to gain paid employment elsewhere as a receptionist, highlighting that she felt she was no longer ‘benefiting’ and was ‘growing old’. However, this only lasted a year before she quit her job to return to volunteer for Sport in Action as a peer leader. For Martha, sport was and is her passion, and despite not getting paid for her time as a peer leader, her love for what she did and her passion for working with young people and the bonds she created, together with the opportunities to share her experiences and life skills, and to encourage others into sport was enough to motivate her.

Despite her love for sport, there came a point in time when Martha chose to step away from her role with Sport in Action. However, she attributes her ability to progress as largely down to the experiences she gained in her role as a Peer Leader. At the time of our third interview, Martha had gained paid employment with another organisation in Zambia, working on a women and girls’ focused programme which was centred on delivering education workshops for young people to develop character and life skills. Alongside the educational delivery arm, Martha also provided HIV testing and counselling via a mini clinic she delivered in the rural communities within which her organisation operated. For Martha, she attributed her ability to obtain her current position to the experiences, skills, and knowledge she gained through sport and through her time as a peer leader.

When discussing the ways in which she had developed personally through her role as a peer leader, Martha highlighted how not only had she gained knowledge and a greater understanding of topics such as safe sex and HIV/AIDS, which she had been able to apply in her new role, but more so she had

developed her interpersonal skills. Through being a peer leader, Martha explained that she had the opportunity to network and become a leader to her peers, which allowed her to develop her communication skills, her confidence in leading and working with others, and her ability to problem solve. Additionally, because of her role as a peer leader, her spatial mobility had increased, and Martha had previously had the opportunity to travel and ‘to go to so many different countries’. Martha described how she was the first person in her family who had travelled beyond Zambia, which was in a stark contrast to the small hut in the village where she grew up. Through this exposure to different cultures and different people, Martha identified that she was able to develop a greater understanding of the world she lived in, learning from other people and growing in her mindset, all elements she believed helped her progress personally and professionally.

However, Martha felt that decision to step away from the sporting sector was necessary as the opportunities to progress were limited and if she did not leave at the time she did, she would have ‘ended up staying there for a very long time’. She remarked:

*“There isn't many places to go [and progress], like there are few [positions] the ones in the [Sport in Action] office, it is just yeah but there aren't any other places to progress. So that's why I left as there wasn't any progression once I've got a job in the [Sport in Action] office.”*

For Martha, she considers herself one of the ‘lucky ones’ having progressed from participant to peer leader and then onto a job in the Sport in Action head office. However, she was open about her concerns for her former peers, highlighting that she believes that many of them are not aware of what is beyond the programme itself, that life as a peer leader is all they know.

While Martha reflected on her time as a peer leader and whilst she spoke openly and very highly of all that she gained and benefitted through that role, she did not believe the support the NGOs were offering was sufficient. One of the factors that was highlighted through the interview process was the support Sport in Action and EduSport provided for the young people who were part of their programmes as peer leaders. Whilst this support varied from person to person, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, for some this included financial support through the provision of monthly stipends. These stipends were provided to help contribute to the peer leaders’ income, providing them with the funding to be able to travel to their delivery sites, as well as covering the core costs associated with their role. When discussing stipends, Martha expressed concerns about the minimal financial provision other peer leaders were receiving compared to the actual costs that they needed to cover:

*“I would like to know, because how much are the volunteers getting. I think it's about 420 kwacha a month as a stipend. If you ask me personally that is not enough. It is not enough, you need transport. For a girl they have so many needs, and if you're getting that much on spending on transport, then there's not enough to support the rest of their life”.*

In our conversations, Martha revealed both further personal frustrations with the way the SfD sector was set up and also highlighted her concerns for other peer leaders beginning their journey by questioning what would be next. The more senior roles within the organisations were held by individuals who had been in their jobs for a number of years and therefore this meant ‘other people cannot get the opportunity to do that’. Furthermore, this conflict between wanting to stay because of her love of sport and a love of her job, versus her desire to progress, meant she felt she had no other choice:

*“So, it's difficult even if, for example if I was to stay, I would ask myself, like what next after this. I can't get that position or this position because they have held onto those positions for so many years. So, I need to think of what is plan b, so maybe it is even hard for the peer leaders, maybe that is why they are staying, they just want to be peer leaders, maybe it is because they have seen the environment that is there. They see there really isn't any other way out besides staying as a Peer Leader.”*

This conversation links into wider concerns regarding the journey of peer leaders, asking questions as to what is next once they have progressed through the programmes. Looking back at the purpose of such programmes, it is important to remember that many of these young people do receive some financial compensation for their involvement as a peer leader, although these stipends are minimal, and will be discussed further in this thesis, as well as receiving materialistic benefits including sponsorship of school fees. But when they complete their schooling or possibly reach a point where they have achieved all they believe they can as a peer leader, the question is asked as to what career opportunities are next. This raises questions as to the balance of responsibility between peer leader themselves and the NGOs running the programme. The following chapter will continue to broaden and deepen the discussion regarding opportunities for peer leaders to progress.

Martha's story highlights how for some participants they ‘outgrew’ their time on the SfD programme, gaining agency to pursue an alternative life away from the sporting field. For Martha, she attributes her time on the SfD programme as a key factor in who she is today. Her involvement in SfD, firstly as a participant, then a peer leader before a project manager, offered her a rare space to build confidence, form friendships and gain a sense of identity beyond her rural upbringing. Whilst involvement in SfD offered her structure and support, where she has been able to gain knowledge, skills and safety in a support network and SfD family, Martha felt that the programme offered little opportunity for advancement beyond where she had progressed to, and she expressed a sense of stagnation in terms of future opportunities. In contexts where young women frequently face uncertainty, limited educational or employment prospects, and social expectations that restrict their autonomy, the structure offered by her involvement as a peer leader in SfD offered Martha a sense of stability, providing her with an important framework for her daily routine, the opportunity to belong to SfD family and the chance for personal and professional development. The structured nature of SfD programmes created a social space

outside of traditional gendered environments where Martha could foster ‘power within’ (Rowlands, 1997), gaining a strengthened sense of confidence and identity beyond traditional domestic or reproductive roles. Her attendance at regular training sessions, the delivery of workshops and her leadership responsibilities gave her a sense of purpose and focus, elements that are often missing from the lives of young women living in marginalised communities in Zambia.

Demonstrating what Rowlands (1997) described as ‘*power to*’, Martha made the difficult decision to step away from her role within the SfD field and pursue an alternative path; an act of agency that reflected her growing sense of what she wanted for her own future. Similar to Juliet, Martha’s story could be seen as a ‘success’ story, highlighting how young women can develop through SfD programmes. Her journey shows how empowerment is not static and how she was able to reclaim her agency within a structure that was designed to support her; and had done so previously. Her experiences point to the need for SfD programmes to evolve alongside the young people they serve, ensuring that ‘power to’ is not just fostered but also sustained and progression pathways are clear and available. Martha’s ability to navigate the constraints of the programme no longer serving her needs, demonstrates how for her, empowerment not only related to the ability to participate within such a programme despite facing resistance from her family, but the ability to choose a new path that aligned with her evolving goals. For Martha, the experience of being a peer leader was valuable in the short term but failed to facilitate long-term personal and professional progression. Out of all of the participants I interviewed, Martha’s story was similar to a handful of other young women, although their progression beyond SfD and into another field varied. This highlights how for this cluster of participants, SfD programmes lack clear pathways for continued progression, as well as limited opportunities to transition into more formal educational, employment or leadership roles. This suggests that whilst SfD programmes can provide the foundation for individual empowerment, they may lack the mechanisms to address deeper structural barriers to upward mobility for young women.

#### **6.4 The Story of Esther: From Peer Leader to Young, Single Mother**

*“I stopped, because I was a peer leader, but I also wanted to be playing at the same time. I can’t just be coaching and no playing. I was really aspiring to play as well. The reason I stopped was because I stopped playing at school and I had financial difficulties so had to find some money as well so I could help myself” – Esther, 22 years old.*

When I first met Esther three years prior to conducting this research, she was a peer leader at one of the Sport in Action community sites called Mtendere and was an active member and coach of the netball team. Mtendere, which was formerly known as Chainama Hills, is a low-income settlement in Lusaka and is a densely populated area. Admired by her peers and colleagues alike, Esther was an active

member of the Mtendere community site, heavily involved in the netball programme and always willing to lead life skills and netball specific sessions to the other young girls and women attending. Three years later, and I meet Esther in a very different life position to the one which I left her in. She is no longer involved in sport or engaged in any activities at the community site. She has gained employment working at a local fast-food chain, working six days a week, and has ended up as single mother with a young child. Sadly, Esther no longer has contact with her child's father.

Whilst Esther was initially reserved in talking openly about the situation with her child, showing a lack of willingness to discuss how she ended up pregnant, after spending some time together following our interview, she began to open up about her situation. Her child's father is aware he has fathered a baby but refuses to take responsibility for this. He does not help out financially, and as such Esther still resides with her parents, working to try and provide for her child. She also is trying to save enough to finish school and go to college. Esther never explicitly spoke about her pregnancy as a 'bad thing', but she did talk about the importance of sport in keeping girls busy, expressing that without sport to focus on, young women end up drinking and becoming pregnant, indicating that for her, the pregnancy was unplanned, and potentially unwanted. This will specifically be discussed later in this chapter, but there appears a paradox in Esther's life, whereby she believes one thing, yet the reality for her is different.

Esther currently resides at her home with her mother, her young child, and a number of her siblings and wider family. Alongside working a full-time job, Esther has household responsibilities including cooking, looking after her younger family members, cleaning and maintaining the order in the household as a young woman; something she highlights that none of her male family members have to do. Esther has yet to complete high school due to financial challenges and has completed up to Grade 11. Esther expressed hopes to return to school and graduate but highlighted that this was dependent upon finances available. She also explained her aspirations to one day progress to college to study nursing which is a three-year course. I interviewed Esther at her house in Mtendere and follow up conversations were held in and around the community school site in the area. In my initial conversation with Esther, she was a lot more reserved than our previous encounters but after spending some time together during my fieldwork, she began to relax and open up more.

After first meeting Esther in 2015, I had spent numerous hours with her across my six months spent volunteering with Sport in Action and EduSport and observed her deliver a range of sports-based and life skills sessions in the community. Esther, as one of the peer leaders at the time, was responsible for supporting me whenever I was in Mtendere, which was one of a number of community sites I was volunteering within. Whenever I visited Mtendere, Esther assisted in facilitating the organisation and delivery of sessions, ensuring all logistics were managed locally. It was during these interactions with Esther and her other female peers that the idea for this research was explored and became a reality.



Unlike Juliet and Martha who had both progressed through the programmes and used their experiences as a peer leader as a platform to step into the next part of their life, Esther had ended up in a different place, and I was curious to understand more about the factors which had led to this happening.

For Esther, her route into becoming a peer leader was like Juliet's journey, with a friend and peer identifying traits in her she had not realised and as a result asking her to join the programme. Esther began her journey in sport through playing netball in her community, being a player for the local team which was attached to a delivery site that was also part of the Wallace Group project. Like Juliet, Esther spent her summers interacting and working with the Volunteer Zambia students from the UK who had travelled to Zambia to coach and deliver sport-based education programmes. Through being involved as a participant of these sessions, Esther was highlighted by a UK student who was volunteering in that community as well as by a local site coordinator George<sup>8</sup>, who identified leadership characteristics in Esther which would be well suited to the role of a peer leader. Esther recounted that it was through her commitment to the netball sessions, being a role model to her peers and her natural leadership style, that she Esther was invited to become a peer leader.

Esther spoke highly of the knowledge and skills gained through her time as a peer leader, exploring elements such as how to manage her peers and navigate issues, with her role exposing her to training that she previously would have never been aware of. In her own words, Esther expressed:

*"It helped a lot, because I got what they were training, and what they were telling me I got them, I understood them very well, so I was able to handle issues... I was being trained, and it gave me skills that I could go and use with those I coached".*

Covering topics including child marriage, sexually transmitted infections, and gender-based violence, Esther's active participation as a peer leader as well as her involvement in the gender-focused programme Girls in Action exposed her to information and knowledge she had previously never been taught. The training and development opportunities highlighted by Esther were also expressed by a large majority of the research participants, who spoke about the benefit of their involvement as a peer leader, and how their role had helped them develop skills and knowledge, which otherwise would have been inaccessible for them. Whilst the actual specific knowledge the peer leaders were exposed to differed from peer leader to peer leader, based upon their age, their length of time on the programme, the community they volunteered in as well as how active they were in their role, all of the participants did highlight how they had gained as part of the programme. This will be explored in further depth in the following two chapters.

Through her leadership role, Esther explained how it changed the way she lived, helping her to understand what things she should get involved in and what aspects she should avoid. She talked

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<sup>8</sup> Pseudonym used

confidently about how her time as a peer leader has ‘helped me in the way I lived’, for example learning to speak and read English more fluently, gaining confidence to deliver sessions to her peers particularly around sensitive topic areas, developing her communication skills and growing in her netball coaching ability. For Esther, sport gave her the opportunity to learn all of these things and to interact with people she may never have met. As highlighted by both Martha and Juliet, Esther also had someone who inspired her and acted as a role model in her life prior to her becoming a peer leader. For Esther, this person was Juliet, whom she identified as a key figure in her life, someone who ‘empowered’ her and gave her the confidence to take control of her life and step into the role of a peer leader:

*“...The reason why I wanted to come up a leader, I had a role model who inspired me and the empowered me to become one. Because of the work they were doing, at Sport in Action as a Peer Leader. I thought they were doing I wanted to be like them, people like Juliet”.*

All three life histories have expressed the importance of role models and support networks, highlighting how the people you surround yourself with are influential in the life decisions you make. In the case of Juliet and Martha, these role models and community around them were pivotal in enabling them to succeed as peer leaders and progress through their roles. However, for Esther, despite having this role model, questions can be asked as to what other support could she have benefitted from to help her avoid getting pregnant. But more so, whether she had an area of need, what were the factors that contributed towards her unexpected pregnancy and whether anything or anyone could have addressed these.

Alongside providing her with new knowledge and skills, Esther also explained how, through her role as a peer leader, she was able to get involved in new things which kept her busy and prevented her from becoming involved in ‘bad things’. For many young women in Zambia, taking drugs, consuming alcohol, getting involved in anti-social behaviour, and ending up pregnant as a teenager was a common occurrence I encountered, and something Esther highlighted in many of her friends who did not take part in sport. Similarly to Juliet either, Esther expressed how important being involved in sport is for positively influencing the behaviours of young women:

*“Because they [young women] don't have anything to do. So, they can only, the only thing which they can manage, is to go out and drink, become pregnant. At least when you involve yourself in sports, it keeps you busy and at least you don't have that time. For going out.”*

The opportunity to partake in sport as a participant, to progress into the role of a peer leader and to become a role model to their peers and local community was made much easier when experienced alongside friends. As noted by Juliet and Martha earlier, many of Esther close friends were also peer leaders, and this group of Esther’s associates had progressed through the programme together. The close association with other young women who were also peer leaders provided Esther with a support network which differed from other young women within the local community. For Esther, and other young women that I interviewed, having such a social group helped them develop in their role as a peer leader,

modelling and reinforcing positive behaviours, practicing their workshop and session delivery, and strengthening their knowledge and skillset. This support network also extended into the family environment, with Esther expressing the importance of family support in allowing her to thrive in her role as a peer leader. She acknowledged:

*“It would have been harder for me because I will need their [family] support. So, because I was supported, with them, they encourage me, I was so happy when I'm out [in the community], I was feeling that support from my family.”*

However, unlike Juliet and Martha who thrived through the peer leadership programme, progressing, and being involved longer term, Esther ended up in a different place. Instead, Esther found herself in a situation where she became pregnant and as a result was a single mother, despite all that she had learnt and gained through her time as a peer leader. Esther is one of a handful of peer leaders I am aware of, who since being involved in this research have resulted in becoming pregnant. When interviewed, all of these young women were able to comfortably talk about their experiences as peer leaders, what they had learnt, the knowledge and skills gained, and the importance of their involvement sport being pivotal in helping them to stay away from ‘bad things’ as emphasised here by Esther:

*Like when you're not doing anything, like you just at home doing nothing, it's easy for you to make up something which keeps you busy. So, it's very easy, if you like, going from places to go and drink to do something bad but not have like any activity or any programme you can be in. So at least once they are involved in sport or netball, at least it's good for them, they are kind of, how can I say it, they can help themselves because of this. So, it is not good just to be at home doing nothing it is better they keep themselves busy. Some other sports they help, sports they help a lot, sport, and physical activity”.*

The narrative highlights the perspective Esther holds when talking about the benefit of being involved in sport and physical activity, and how important it is in providing young people with an alternative focus, particularly one which some believe helps keep them away from drugs, alcohol, and unprotected sex. The belief that being involved in sport helps keep young women away from ‘bad things’ was a common narrative emerging throughout the interview process, however as Esther’s life history shows, this is not necessarily true in practice for all young people. It appears that despite these experiences, the positive influence of sport and her role as a peer leader dominating her time, the demands and influence of life outside of sport led Esther, and a handful of other female peer leaders to a situation where they became pregnant. This outcome resulted in these young women having to find somewhere to live, to decide what they were going to do with their life, where to get money from, identify who might to help them; all as they navigated life as a first-time young mother. Often, as highlighted through my conversation with Esther, a sense of desperation kicks in and many young

mothers are struggling to find meals to eat, having to stand on their own two feet with their families disowning them because they ended up pregnant:

*“You have to find somewhere to live, you have to start now, you have to look so what you are going to do for your life now. You have to think now, where to get money from, where to stay, who can help. If you must work as a maid you work, it means for you too, to you just have to, anything just to find meals for you and your baby. Whatever it takes to survive, to live”.*

For these young women, ending up pregnant appears to be an ‘accident’, or at least something that was never planned in the short term. From conversations with other participants, it was widely highlighted that for young women the challenges they face growing up are vastly different to those faced by their male counterparts, and for many, it is much more difficult to succeed as a young woman within this context.

Unlike Juliet and Martha, Esther’s journey highlights the complex challenges faced by young Zambian women who must navigate the tension between structure and agency in their everyday lives. Esther’s experiences demonstrate that although her time spent as a peer leader did support her personal growth, this was only to a certain extent, with the societal constraints she faced away from the sporting field, particularly in her home life, were much stronger than the agency she held. Esther’s story shows how despite gaining knowledge and skills through the SfD programmes, her ability to remain as a peer leader was shaped by the structural constraints around her. Whilst she did gain some ‘power within’ to act (Rowlands, 1997), talking confidently about how her time as a peer leader ‘helped’ her in the way she lived, her experience reflects the tension between individual agency and the systematic barriers that may operate to limit the processes of empowerment. Her story highlights how young women can have agency, but that agency operates within and against powerful structural constraints.

Esther’s story shows how many of the young women involved in SfD saw the programme and their roles as peer leaders as a meaningful focus, something positive that kept them away from what they often referred to as ‘bad things’. For Esther, leaving the programme after falling pregnant was not because she lacked motivation or a desire to remain a peer leader, but rather than cumulative pressure of family responsibilities and wider expectations from her community that weighed upon her once she left the safe and supportive space of the SfD field. When Esther talked about her experience, it was clear she felt a deep sense of shame, something she did not just feel herself, but that was also reinforced by the people around her including her family. Esther found herself in a situation she had once judged negatively, and she saw her pregnancy as something that had held her back and marked the end of her journey as a peer leader. The shame she felt linked into bigger structural and cultural ideas about how young women are expected to behave in Zambia, especially when it comes to sex, and what’s considered respectable behaviour. In her community, being a young single mother was seen as a negative thing,

and people treated it that way, even though her situation was shaped by a whole range of social and personal factors. Esther's experience highlights how shame is not just an emotion young women feel, it's something shaped by the community around them. It's a powerful tool used to control behaviour, built into the cultural norms and gender expectations that continue to limit what young women can do and how they're seen.

Esther's experience demonstrates the relational nature of empowerment, showing how it is deeply influenced by the people around her and the social context she lives in, especially one where structural inequalities are not addressed. Being a peer leader gave her valuable knowledge, skills and confidence, but once she stepped outside of the supportive environment of the SfD space, the challenges she faced in everyday life made it hard to hold onto that growth. For Esther, she did feel empowered through SfD, but that feeling was constantly challenged by the pressure of traditional gender expectations, family responsibilities, and financial struggles. Whilst she did develop a sense of agency, it seemed limited to the space of the programme itself and didn't always carry over into other parts of her life. It appeared as if her empowerment had boundaries, shaped and held back by the same systems she was trying to rise above. This reflects what Rowlands (1997) describes as '*power within*', where Esther gained a growing sense of self-worth and identity but without sufficient '*power to*' take meaningful action beyond the programme's reach.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Through this chapter, the life histories of three young women in Zambia have been shared. The narratives above explore each individual and the journey they have taken through sport, SfD and life as a peer leader, to the place that they had reached at the point that my field data collection finished. The three individuals were chosen as they had each progressed in a similar way through the SfD programmes as a peer leader but had ended up in different situations. Two of the young women have resulted in positive situations, in employment, and may be viewed as 'success stories' of the SfD programmes. However, other young women, including Esther, have ended up with a different outcome, with Esther finding herself as a single young mother struggling to navigate life. Throughout the above life histories, there are elements of their stories, or experiences, which are reflective of the wider participant group, with similarities being shared across their individual journeys. However, there are also differences, with some other experiences, and 'end points' not being captured in the above. As such, the next two chapters will begin to critically analyse the wider data further, delving into a deeper exploration of the experiences of the peer leaders. This will explore aspects of collectivity in the peer leaders' experiences but also individuality, recognising that each journey is complex and uncertain, with unique experiences related specifically to that individual.

## **Chapter 7: The Sporting Life**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter will look at the ‘Sporting Life’, that is the experiences of peer leaders and the role that sport has played in their lives, both in respect of their involvement in sport more broadly, and their involvement specifically within SfD. I will look at the relationship between sport and the lives of the peer leaders, considering how their involvement in sport, their experiences in and through sport, and their engagement with the SfD organisations and programmes have influenced and shaped their journey. By considering how these factors impact the participants’ involvement in peer education, and subsequently shaped the experience they had, this in turn will contribute in part to understanding what influence SfD programmes have in the broader trajectory of a young woman’s lives. The chapter will explore what factors have made for success, but also what factors have made for problems along the way.

By focusing specifically on the young women’s accounts of life as a peer leader in SfD, the chapter is addressing a recognised gap (Lindsey et al. 2017; Nicholls et al. 2011). It will do what Guest (2009) proposed, recognising that it would “be useful to know more about the diversity of actual experience of individuals and communities as related to development through sport programmes’ (p. 1348), and therefore the discussion below seeks to present localised accounts of young people and their views and experiences of SfD. The narratives shared have been collected via interviews and informal discussions with female peer leaders, male peer leaders, community site coordinators, NGO staff and young women who used to be peer leaders but have since finished their involvement as such. Chapter 5 provided more information regarding the participants, the criteria applied, and the sampling methods utilised to recruit them. The primary focus of the data collection was centred around the young women and their experiences as a peer leader in a SfD programme, but it was important that the conversations moved beyond purely a sporting focus and, as a result, the narratives below provide not only an insight into the lived experiences of young women within sport, but also the context within which these programmes operate. Other interviews with male peer leaders, community site coordinators, NGO staff and former peer leaders also informed the discussion, providing additional insights to aid the analysis and discussion. As the discussion progresses, where appropriate I reflect on the relevance of the theoretical perspectives introduced in Chapter 3 around gender and empowerment.

The chapter will begin by exploring the interviewees’ conceptions of empowerment, before looking at the involvement of female peer leaders in SfD programmes and how this is shaped by the community within which they operate, and its associated resources. Next, this chapter will examine the gender differences in the experiences of young women, before seeking to understand the place sport has in their everyday lives, including their friendships, the influence of role models, and the extent and ways that SfD may provide young women with access to ‘safe spaces’. The chapter will conclude by exploring

the wider opportunities and experiences the young women have been able to access because of their involvement in SfD and peer education programmes, and the influence this has in the wider trajectory of their lives.

## **7.2 Women's Empowerment through Sport in SfD and Peer Education Programmes**

This first section will begin by exploring the participants' conceptions of empowerment, seeking to analyse how they understand empowerment, and what this looks like in their lives. Furthermore, this section will look at how SfD programmes have supported development outcomes amongst the peer leaders. As discussed in Chapter 2, Sport in Action's Girls in Action programme and EduSport's Go Sisters programme both have an explicit focus on gender equality, seeking to empower women and promote gender empowerment. Building on Rowlands' (1997) work, the findings I present in this section will be situated within the discursive frameworks of SfD, gender and empowerment. As highlighted in Chapter 3 (see section 3.4.2), empowerment is a multi-level construct that occurs at both an individual and collective level (Kabeer, 2011). This section thus commences by focusing on the individual dimension of empowerment from the perspective of the female peer leaders.

Through the data collection process, each participant was asked to describe what empowerment means to them, and there were some commonalities emerging in their responses. Previous literature on women's empowerment in the Global South has paid little attention to "making sense of what the term 'empowerment' means to/for beneficiaries" (Samie et al. 2015, p. 925), and this research sought to address this, by understanding how each participant viewed empowerment:

*"Empowerment for me, to be empowered, in my own words, to like someone imparts knowledge into you" – Female peer leader, Chawama*

*"So, for me empowerment means being equipped, with knowledge, on both social on what is happening around the country and what is in what is happening in my life" – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

The two narratives above echo the vast majority of participants who believed that empowerment was about someone else passing something onto them. This perspective suggests that the peer leaders have a limited understanding of the concept of empowerment as it is contrary to previous literature which indicates that empowerment cannot simply be bestowed on others (Rowlands, 1995; Cornwall, 2016). These conceptualisations by the participants also reinforce the belief that empowerment is a process, linking more with Rowlands' (1997) 'power to' form, whereby power is generative, and through their involvement as peer leaders, the young women are able to create new possibilities for their lives.

Whether this be knowledge, skills, or confidence, each of the female peer leaders spoke about how they personally claimed to experience this type of empowerment first-hand through their involvement as a peer leader in the SfD programmes:

*“I think my time as a peer leader has helped empower me, so now I can help others with the same. I think it is, it has helped a lot” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“Being a peer leader has empowered me. It means like someone has to put knowledge into me” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

The significance of their involvement in SfD programmes as ‘empowering’ for young women and helping them develop confidence and self-belief was recognised by the participants. Through their involvement as peer leaders, the young women discussed how they had been empowered through sport, illustrating “feelings of empowerment that are the product of sports experiences that spillover to daily life” (Streetman and Heinrich, 2024, p. 804). Empowerment for these women was thus perceived by them to occur at an individual level, where they developed through their experiences in SfD programmes, and these were personal developments which extended beyond the sporting space:

*I have learnt a lot. For example, I have learnt, I never had self-confidence, I had never like, I had most of the times I used to have fear talking to a crowd. But now I'm able to talk to the crowd without fear. So yeah, I have much more confidence” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

*“Like it gave me courage first of all... But for on my side, I think I gained courage through that so that has also empowered me in a way. And I started believing in myself” – Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

*“I have gained knowledge and learnt things. and it helped me understand the world more” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

*“I don't mind if it's a man or women, big or small. I am confident now; I have learnt that being a peer leader” – Female peer leader, Chipata*

Whilst the participants above indicate how the young women were ‘empowered’ through sport, it is important to emphasise that empowerment is not something that can be done for women. As Rowlands (1995) stresses, empowerment as a process “cannot be imposed by outsiders” (p. 105). Rather, external influences can provide intervention, contributing to the empowerment process by removing obstacles, offering signposts, and providing support (Cornwall, 2016). Within the SfD field, this is where the resources that NGOs offer can be so important, providing young women with this external support,



through the provision of opportunities, advice and guidance that enable individuals to transform their personal situation.

The insights from the interviews also suggest that engaging in dialogue with their peers and debating over topics were considered as empowering processes which helped the young women develop a greater awareness of the world around them. The reference to ‘fellowship’ and the impact of others links to Cornwall and Edwards’ (2014) stance that empowerment is a relational process. The ‘relational’ nature of empowerment emphasises the importance of collectiveness and solidarity, through which the relational dynamics of power become drivers of change. As a result of building relationships within the SfD space, the female peer leaders were able to develop respect and trust with their peers, embracing the “essential sociality” of empowerment (Cornwall, 2016, p. 344):

*“Empowerment... to encourage someone to do something... it is encouraging them and supporting them to achieve something” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“I have learnt a lot, lot of things. One, here when you are doing a Peer Leader teaching, you learn about leadership, fellowship... you learn about how to develop self-confidence, assertiveness, so I have learnt a lot” – Female peer leader, Kamwala*

*“Because without sport you would never have the chance to get that close to them and build those relationships. The closer they get to you, that is the opportunity you can now impart knowledge and life skills” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

Drawing on Zimmerman’s (1995) work on psychological empowerment, and the ‘intrapersonal’ dimension and Rowlands (1997) dimension of ‘power within’, the way in which each young woman draws on the opportunities SfD offers them and becomes empowered through their engagement with others can begin to be understood. These dimensions appear significant in the particular empowerment process that young women go through because they focus on the psychological elements and relate to the way individuals view themselves, including their self-worth, self-knowledge, and self-efficacy. As a result of becoming a peer leader, the participants were also able to indicate changes in their behaviour, becoming more confident. This change did not just relate to their ability to speak publicly, and lead their peers, but also their belief in their ability to act. This links into agency, which as discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3), relates to the capacity of women and girls to be able to take control of their own circumstances and take purposeful action and pursue goals. The previous lack of such agency was highlighted by this female peer leader from EduSport:

*“I would say that my life before I became a peer leader, I was like a shy person. And I was a person that didn't have much confidence in those, I didn't believe in what I can do or like*

*also, I did not know what decision to make what I thought was good for me or what was not good for me. So, I was living my life, but living it in another person's shoes” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

However, as a result of her participation in sport and her role as a peer leader, her progress is an example of empowerment through SfD, as she proceeded to explain:

*“But from the time I became a young leader I have become like a person that can make decisions for my own, I can stand up and defend my rights. Like I know what I want. Nobody can come to me and tell me, no, you cannot do that” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Alongside this narrative, most of the young women alluded to how their agency was increased as a result of their involvement in SfD as a peer leader. Whilst none of the participants actually used the term agency, they did refer to making their own choices, standing up for themselves, and pursuing their own goals (Kabeer, 1999):

*“... one of the things I have learnt, is that we are given, we can change whatever we feel as long as we have the drive, we have the platform, we have the right people with you who can be able to support your cause, some people you can work with to be able to develop something” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Kabeer's (1999) work on the measurement of women's empowerment provides a useful model to begin to understand girls' agency within the context of the female peer leaders' experiences. Kabeer (1999) argued that the ability to exercise choice incorporates three inter-related dimensions: resource, agency, and achievements. Resources include material resources in an economic sense as well as various human and social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice. Furthermore, according to Kabeer (1999a) resources in the broader sense are “acquired through a variety of social relationships... including the domains of family... and community” (p. 3). For the participants of this research, the chance to become a peer leader afforded them the opportunity to engage in a variety of workshops which exposed them to new ideas, knowledge, and skills. Their participation also gave them the opportunity to build a new network of friends and relationships formed of other SfD actors. These opportunities could be viewed as social resources which helped foster a shift in consciousness so the young women could begin to understand their situation and come together to act to bring about change. As a result, the participants were empowered (power to), building agency and gaining control to make their own decisions (Rowlands, 1997). For some of the young women, they emerged from the SfD programme operating from a position where they believed they could do more compared to their peers who were not involved in the programme, which links to the ‘power within’ form of empowerment

(Rowlands, 1997). For the female peer leaders in Zambia, developing their capabilities may enable them to exercise an increased control over certain parts of their life, gaining agency to make decisions and to improve their cognitive processes of reflection and analysis (Kabeer, 1999a).

### **7.3 Female Peer Leaders Involvement in SfD Programmes: Significance of the Community Setting and its Associated Resources**

Sport in Action and EduSport both operate in a similar way, working in local communities, becoming a focal point for the delivery of sporting activity within that particular area (see Section 1.4 and Chapter 2). The use of a community hub as a point of delivery enables young people from across that specific geographical space to be able to access the opportunities available within their local vicinity.

Utilising peer-led education is a common approach for both Sport in Action and EduSport, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3), which is driven by the belief that young people are well placed to support their peers with gaining information that will help them identify well informed-choices as well as learning life-skills components that enable them to act on these choices (Lindsey et al. 2017). Emerging from the various conversations with the female peer leaders was a recognition that their level of engagement with the different SfD programmes, and the level of responsibility they assume varies, and this was heavily dependent upon the community within which they reside while conducting their work in SfD. For the vast majority of participants, the community where they were a peer leader was also their community of residence, and they predominantly worked within this space to deliver SfD programmes. For others, if the SfD NGOs did not operate in their home community, they were usually attached to a delivery site within the local vicinity, if possible. Others again held a slightly different role, working peripatetically, but within a similar geographical area in Lusaka. These individuals were usually more ‘senior’ peer leaders and had oversight responsibilities, supporting other peer leaders in their roles. As a result, the roles that the peer leaders take on differs considerably and can also change from day to day. Whilst Sport in Action and EduSport have a similar approach to involving peer leaders in the delivery of their SfD programmes, the opportunities available to each peer leader is determined by the community to which they are attached, as highlighted here:

*“Let me say, like for here, and like Chawama, there might be there might be a slight difference because Chawama is quite big whereas K-Town [Kalingalinga] is a small area. So, what we have here is that actually we are ... restricted on other things because it's small and everybody can be found in this small area. Whereas for Chawama it is big, and there are different types of things that goes on [and] what is found that side.” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

For those communities encompassing a larger number of young people, the peer leaders highlighted how they had the opportunity to deliver a much greater portfolio of work. The facilities available at each community site also determined the diversity of the sessions delivered, with some sites having specific, purpose-built facilities for a variety of sports, and others simply being formed of a gravel or sand-based piece of land. The latter was commonly noted as one of the most widespread challenges facing the peer leaders when it came to delivering community-based sports programme, where a lack of, or in some cases no facilities or equipment were available. While the peer leaders talked of situations where they were able to adapt their approach to enable a session to go ahead, it was evident from the interviews that a major obstacle in the delivery of SfD programmes was the resources available at their disposal. A female peer leader from Chawama describes her experience:

*“What I would say, is that EduSport yes provides us with some footballs and equipment but not at any time provide money or say here is some cash to support you in the work you do. So, it would be up to you to start to look for ways to make sure you can travel to games, to attend sessions, so you have to look for ways to help yourself.” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

The challenges highlighted above are common across the Global South, where limited facilities and equipment impact the quality of programmes delivered (Akindes and Kirwan, 2009). Furthermore, the lack of financial support to enable the peer leaders to effectively execute their role was also frequently mentioned in this research and is an element that will be explored in more depth later.

One female peer leader, who had personally experienced living in two different communities where EduSport operated, explained how she had contrasting experiences during her time volunteering. She recognised that whilst she possessed a lot of knowledge about the role of peer leader, how to deliver interactive sessions and how to engage young people, the actual physical opportunities she had to deliver SfD programmes was determined by where she lived:

*“Since I grew up, I was a peer leader that side, and we had a lot of things that side. Since I have shifted here, I had a lot of knowledge about being a peer leader, so it is not really hard to interact with others, although the area depends. It is not like, when you are staying in Kabulonga and Kabwata, there are some areas whereby they are a lot of participants. Some of the areas they are nice areas, they are people that side, who close the gate, who it is good to know as it is difficult to find peer leaders. But for some areas they are open, the communities are open so whenever you are at the pitch the kids just start coming. In Kabwata, you will need to speak to the parents, to get the participants to come to the grounds to play.” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

On any given day, the peer leaders, individually or collectively, dependent upon the number at the site, are given responsibility for the delivery of community sports activities. For some community sites, this

resulted in a handful of peer leaders involved with one session due to their personal interest in that specific sport, whereas for other sites, the peer leaders were sometimes left to take sole responsibility for the delivery of all the activities that day. Quite often there were situations where a number of peer leaders were competing for the same opportunity to lead, and as such, they shared the workload between them. This was largely evident for the female peer leaders, compared to their male peers, where regularly the young women would be involved in the delivery of netball, for example, as a group, compared to maybe one male peer leader delivering a football session. This approach was also irregular, as the commitments the individual peer leaders held outside of sport also impacted their availability to be present to coach and lead, and therefore on one day there might be five peer leaders available to deliver a netball session, whereas on another day there might be one available to deliver a volleyball session.

Alongside this, the peer leaders also assumed responsibility for the delivery of school-based sports sessions, which was particularly pertinent for the community sites which were based at a school, as the peer leaders were often pulled in to help with the delivery of curricular and extra-curricular activities. For example, at the delivery site Mtendere, which is based at Mtendere Community School, the peer leaders have a prominent presence in and around the school and are visible to the students and teachers. At the school there is a netball court which operates as the space where the students have their physical education lessons, but also where the Sport in Action delivers their programmes. Given the visibility of the peer leaders, who often arrive at the school before their sessions, they are regularly asked to get involved with the sessions and assist.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.2), the peer leaders deliver SfD activities, particularly the young women via Go Sisters and Girls in Action, where they are responsible for the facilitation of ‘life skills’ sessions that are intended to develop core-content knowledge and broader life skills. Through this delivery, the peer leaders highlighted how they support their peers to develop interpersonal skills, to gain knowledge about issues pertinent to their life such as gender-based violence, alcohol abuse, early marriage, teenage pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS. They also discussed how through the sessions they provide a space through which their peers can discuss problems in their lives and develop strategies to combat these. Using sport as a focal point enables the peer leaders to recruit young people to take part in the sessions, whilst using this as an opportunity to speak to participants before, during and after the sporting activities. The perceived importance of these programmes was highlighted by this peer leader during one conversation:

*“I can, we can share knowledge and information. We teach all subjects like early pregnancies, early child marriages, the disadvantages of those things. We help the girls understand important life things.” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

Similarly, another peer leader from a different community also spoke of the importance of teaching life skills alongside the delivery of the sporting activities, and how through their personal experience they have learnt a lot, which they now teach to other young women:

*“And again, there are a lot [of things we learn].. In terms of me personally, life skills, because when you come to play netball, we normally do a life skills session alongside. In life skills we are taught how to be a good person in life, how you can achieve what you want, as in maybe us we here in Zambia there are a lot of teenage pregnancy, so sport has helped me understand how to avoid that. And like early marriages, I am able to avoid them because I have learnt the skills to be able to do that.” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

The structure of the SfD programmes, particularly the Go Sisters and Girls in Action, which are female specific programmes, provide a space in which the young women can support their peers in relation to vital issues that affect them in their youth. These programmes seek to address complexities that could come with mixed gender participation, as well as the challenges young women face partaking in sporting activities in a male-dominated space.

#### **7.4 Female Peer Leaders Involvement in SfD Programmes: Gender Differences**

Through Go Sisters and Girls in Action the young women are afforded the opportunity to partake in sport, which challenges perceptions about sport being a male-only space and allows them to challenge wider cultural stereotypes of gender appropriateness. This was evident in the perspectives shared by the male peer leaders who were interviewed, who expressed that as a man, sharing the SfD domain with women had ‘absolutely hundred percent’ changed his perception. He further goes on to explain:

*“Because I once used to have negative thoughts about these ladies, I just thought they were just naturally down, but when I came here [sports ground], I noticed that there are those ladies who are even brighter. Okay, those who are even seen in the community were intelligent, bright, or can-do better things than men... I think it has changed a lot. I now consider them [women] to be one and the same [as men], these days I don't consider either female or male. I think we are the same person, and to be successful it doesn't matter on whether we are male or female as we have been through the programme” – Male peer leader, Kabwata*

This peer leader had recognised that prior to joining the SfD programme he had underlying beliefs about the role of a women, and did not see them as equals, until they shared a space as peer leaders together. When discussed further, it was apparent that these beliefs stemmed from his upbringing, the views he had been exposed to and the way culture taught him with regards to gender norms and the role of a man and woman in Zambian society. He further went on to explain:

*“Sport is a very good tool that you can use to bridge the gap that is between men and women. I'm seeing it positively and even the kids that we usually work with around when they when you bring them in for the first time, they'll be like they don't want to play with the girls. But when you mix them, when you stay and work with them for say a month, you realise some of them complain that when you play with girls, but in time they change their minds” – Male peer leader, Kabwata*

From the perspective of this male peer leader, and it was a view evidenced throughout a variety of interviews with other male participants, there was a belief that sport and SfD programmes can change the views of boys and young men in relation to women. This was both in relation to the presence of women within sport, but more broadly in society too:

*“It [SfD programmes] did change my view of culture and then not, not for a negative way, but in a positive way because I can feel like to see definitely if somebody can wash plates so can I. If a woman can do it, so can men. This person, the way she is feeling, even me that is the way I am feeling. It is just different because of what we are taught about male and female, but when it comes to, working, and we are all the same” – Male peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

The importance of the structure of the SfD programmes to create a space in which gender norms could be challenged, culture views can be questioned, and men and women can be viewed as equals was noted by the young women as well:

*“It is changing bit by bit, because now there are specific programs that talk about sport and gender, and equality. For men and now started to see the benefit of women being involved in sports, they are beginning to understand that women can also do it” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

The provision of female focused programmes appeared to be influential in the peer leaders journeys as, for some, particularly the younger participants, it was via this opportunity that they got involved in sport. Without this dedicated space, a number of the participants noted that their access to sporting opportunities has been limited, or that they had previously faced resistance when trying to take part. The specific journey each peer leader took to become involved in sport varies, but there were some similarities emerging:

*“I first became involved in sports when I was at school through Go Sisters” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*“I joined EduSport through school. They introduced, there's this programme called Go Sisters, which empowers girls through sport and helps girls to learn about more their lives and behaviours and society. So that is why I joined, and by then I was in school, [name of*

*school], that was I was in Grade 10. and then from there, I kept coming and we would go for camps and things” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*“In terms of sport, I never had, I was kind of a person who was never involved into sports. But since the time that I met EduSport, they had to empower knowledge about sports in me as I didn’t know it. So, there are important knowledge, and she imparted knowledge about sport into me. These are knowledge I didn’t have before” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

The majority of the participants discussed how their first access to sport was not via school, but through one of the programmes being delivered by EduSport or Sport in Action. These programmes provided girls and young women with the opportunity to take part in sport, something that had previously been unavailable. The provision of a female-only space created a deliberate opportunity for young women, where they were able to take part in sport as a participant but also gain new knowledge, develop skills, and grow as a person. Furthermore, this environment had also provided them with a space in which they believed they could thrive, and in turn they were now able to provide the same opportunity to the younger girls in their community. It is worth noting that the route into sport was not the same for all peer leaders, particularly a minority of older women who had joined the SfD NGOs at a time when these female focused programmes had yet to be developed, and as such had a much less traditional journey into sport.

From talking to the peer leaders, it was highlighted that largely the Go Sisters and Girls in Action programmes were traditionally built around more ‘feminine’ sporting activities, whereby the young women would play a sport such as netball before engaging in a life skills session. Some of the participants did suggest that they personally found it easier to recruit their friends to attend a session when the sport on offer was netball, as there was a sense of familiarity about it. Whilst the programmes had developed, and the SfD NGOs were now delivering a broad range of activities for young women, it was common to arrive at a community ground to find the young boys playing football and the young girls playing netball. This gender distinction was more visible at some of the community sites, particularly the smaller ones where there were less resources and as a result, they had streamlined their efforts predominantly on the two gender dominant sports. This observation suggests that the norms of the community may also influence the way SfD provision is delivered in that context, with the programmes available reflecting what is ‘expected’ by those around the site. However, for the larger sites, for example Fountain of Hope, where there were numerous sporting facilities, the provision of sports had expanded, and girl’s football was now also on offer alongside boy’s football, changing the perception of the young people as well as their peers:

*“Sport has done a really good job, because I already said, girls are not often viewed as being able to play football, football is often only meant for boys, and men. So, as in for now, you can find that women are playing football, basketball taking part in different*



*sports, and you can find that women are pretty much better than men.” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Alongside this, sports such as volleyball were also offered as a mixed-gender activity, providing a space in which young men and young women could compete together. From observation, the mixed-gender activity were delivered by both female and male peer leaders, with young women taking the lead in managing the participants and overseeing the delivery of opportunities for boys and girls together. Challenges around segregating sport by gender, but also integrating young men and young women with mixed-gender participation link to some of the complexities in the way sport interacts with local cultural norms, and how the SfD organisations often try to address these beliefs by challenging the wider cultural stereotypes around gender appropriateness through the activities they offer.

### **7.5 Peer Leaders and Sport: A Part of Everyday Life**

One of the key themes emerging throughout the interviews was the influence, and impact, of the young women’s involvement in sport on their everyday life. When the young women spoke about their experiences of SfD, they frequently described the benefits their participation had on their wider life. This was particularly notable when referencing ‘non-sporting’ friends, as the peer leaders were able to draw a key contrast between how different they viewed their lives compared to their friends who did not partake in sport. This insight has also been reflected in wider literature, which has found that activities provided by SfD NGOs are greatly valued by those who participate in them; a finding that is particularly pertinent for peer leaders who typically have higher and more intense levels of engagement than participants (Lindsey et al. 2017).

When asked to talk about their experiences of sport, the participants spoke overwhelmingly positively, and it was evident to hear that they all viewed sport as something that enhanced their life:

*“Very much. If I wasn’t in sports maybe this time, I would have how children, I would have been married, and stuff you know these guys they lie. So at least for me sport has been telling us everything, they tell us about life to stay No, you don’t you don’t have to prove yourself in that fact. They told us premature marriage is not good for my age. It’s not good. Yeah, so you have to concentrate on your school and sports. That would be better. So, I don’t know I have no Time for guys, only sport and then home, sport and then home.” - Female peer leader, Chawama*

*“It has given me a better life yes. I have learnt more being a peer leader, I’ve learnt a lot at least I have learnt to speak English, to read, to develop my communication skills. Sport allowed me to learn that I’m being a peer leader at the ground helps me.” – Esther, Mtendere*

The two narratives above are a snapshot of several conversations where the young women described their experiences of sport, and the joy they gained from participating. It is worth highlighting, that for the female peer leader from Chawama, she believed that if she was not in sport she would have been married at a young age and would now have children. As detailed in Chapter 6, this isn't always the case for young women who become peer leaders, as in the story of Esther. Despite being a peer leader, Esther fell pregnant at a young age, and unexpectedly found herself in the situation the peer leader above highlights that sport protected her from, suggesting this isn't the case for all young women.

The young women also spoke about the positive influence their participation in sport had on their lives, compared to their friends who did not participate in sport. This direct contrast, particularly when comparing themselves to their female peers, helped create an understanding of how invaluable the opportunity to take part in sport is for young people in Zambia, especially for young women who are not always afforded the opportunity. It was through these direct comparisons that the young people were able to highlight just how they believed sport had helped them, and how it benefitted their female friends compared to those who did not take part:

*“Some of the young girls, you know when I was 16 there was a time where it was after school, training time, training you go home, do the housework, do the house chores, eat, sleep and then compared to others [who don't play netball], they just stay at home. But now young people know how to make a decision, they know they can come to trainings, they can make a decision”. – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

This peer leader thus perceived a distinct difference between how she acted at 16 years old compared to her peers who did not do sport. At 16 years old she shared how she became an active member of the community, attending school, taking part in training and supporting in the household, whereas her not sporting friends just stayed at home. As a result of her participation in sport, she highlighted how she was now in a position to be able to make an informed decision about the things she engaged in.

For the following peer leader, whose journey was explored in depth earlier in Chapter 6, this narrative highlights just how different her life was in comparison to the other young women in her community, and how despite societal norms, she had managed to create a different life because of her involvement in sport:

*“When I look at all those things, I was blown away that this is where I have come from, and this is what I have. It was really nice that my family was very proud. Because they saw how I moved, they saw that I didn't get pregnant that they thought I would through playing sport, because they didn't know what I was learning, they were very proud... They told me how proud they were, how I was the only person who are doing things differently. Because most of them, they got pregnant at the age of 17, 16 and they stopped going to school*

*because in Zambia, most cases when a girl gets pregnant, their parents are going to force them to get married to the person that they has impregnated them.” – Martha, Kabwata*

The delivery of sports-based programmes by the SfD NGOS involved in this study were significant additions to the local communities where this research was undertaken. As detailed in Chapter 1, the two NGOs involved in this research – Sport in Action and EduSport – primarily operated in impoverished communities, seeking to provide opportunities, and equip local communities with the skills, knowledge and resources needed to take control of their own lives. The young people who participated in this study resided in compounds that commonly had limited amenities, services and resources (see Section 4.3), and the SfD programmes delivered often sought to provide services where they were most needed, particularly around education and skill development.

Outside of the programmes delivered by the NGOs, the opportunities for young people, both male and female, were limited. Without this provision, many indicated that they would not have had the chance to take part in sport, and particularly for young women, they would not have been given the chance to take on a leadership role through becoming a peer leader. From the interviews conducted, the young women were quick to acknowledge how important sport was to them and how integral it had become in their day-to-day life, often providing a structure and purpose to their days:

*“For me, I was going there every single day, from Monday to Friday, and then on Saturday I would be so bored at home. I had nothing to do, so I never really had a dull moment or a bad moment where I thought I am working every day, and I am not benefitting anything. I didn’t look at it like that, I was having fun, changing lives with how many kids I talked too and that was it for me.” – Martha, Kabwata*

This insight indicates, for this peer leader, how embedded her involvement in sport became in her weekly routine. Similar sentiments were also shared by other participants when discussing their weekly routine, highlighting how embedded sport, and more so, how their role as a peer leader had become the priority in their weekly routine. For the young women who were participants, their involvement in sport provided them with a structure, and a focus, with the interviewees highlighting how this kept them away from ‘bad vices’ and gave them a degree of purpose:

*“Well, it has sort of like saved me from, from bad vices, from the society, I can say that, and it has this through sport that I, I realized who I was in, and again, this confidence that I have. Yeah. So, I, it's kind of like shaped me in a way. So, if it wasn't for sport, I don't know where I would have been... But for me, sport as well been so beneficial to my life. I am here because of sport” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

For others, the opportunity to take part in sport was the highlight of their week and gave them a much-needed respite and distraction from life at home. This appeared to be more pertinent for young women compared to young men due to the external demands (revolving not only around domestic demands on their time but wider social norms and pressures) they faced. Whilst this is not to say young men do not face external negative influences, where sport can provide a positive focal point in their lives, it was evidence throughout all of the interviews that the participants, both male and female, highlighted the particular importance of sport in diverting young women away from less productive activities and negative influences, including underage drinking and underage sex. The particular importance for young women was noted here by one of the male interviewees:

*“Sport is really good for young women. Because if you look at the Zambia and most appreciate the community in which we live in, it's filled up with a lot of different activities. One of them is beer drinking, people that don't sleep. You find that someone who's already drinking in the bus, then you find the whole day find that people are drinking. And one unfortunate thing is that even young people are there, drinking, taking pot. When are they going to wake? When they go to school? Suspensions will arise. Okay. So, when we keep girls in sport, at least they're better off in sport than participating in all those activities. We see young girls in bars. When you look at their dressing, I mean it's very, very awful. As such, you cannot admire such a girl, a good young girl very energetic moving around the bars with young boys and men just for the sake of how being helped with some monies. That's just not good. So, with the sport that we do, we make sure that we catch some of the girls, put them into sport and then as they develop interest, then they begin to shun those activities” – Male peer leader, Mtendere*

Similar sentiments were also shared by another male peer leader when discussing why the provision of sports programmes were so important for young women, and how for his community, the prevalence of teenage pregnancies, for example, had been very low apart from a couple of cases:

*“Because of the like early pregnancies. Any pregnancies that happen here in [name of place] placement, I have not recorded a lot of such cases. It's only recently the two that came up. One of the reasons why is because we give very strict instructions to the girls. Like myself, usually I tell them, I see you with a boy, in an awkward place, then there is no friendship with me. When you are training here don't bring any boy here to come and watch you. Just because you're attending netball here, then you want to bring boys to be watching you, I don't allow that. It just has to be girls training. Don't go into bars, if you are found in bars then that will be an offense, and I'll go chase you for good because you'd be spoiling other girls. Yes. Then I tell them not to be found in bad company. Usually,*

*they'll get bad influence from there and then end up doing wrong things. So, with those tips, which I, yeah, I usually emphasis on, especially out here, some of them I've been following, they've come here to play [netball] instead” – George, Site Coordinator, Mtendere*

The approach of this participant above, in his role as a site coordinator, appears quite draconian, where he openly described the way he operated to keep the young people at training. Whilst he believed his approach provided ‘tips’ to the young women, his method does appear harsh, and although in his eyes he thought it is successful in keeping young women involved in training and away from unwanted pregnancies, being ‘strict’ may not always have the positive impact on the young women that he had hoped.

The importance of sport for young women was also noted by the female peer leaders themselves, and it was clear to see that sport was important in providing a focus for young women and not leaving them with an idle mind:

*“You will be busy; you won’t really just be idle. Because when you are idle whatever comes to your mind, if a friend is going to pop up and say let’s go and party, you just going to go because you have nothing to do. Whereas if you have sport, you have a programme, so you know if it says at this particular time I am supposed to be at the training field, at this time I am supposed to work on myself, so that when I am home I can make a small go and really make my talent become bigger”- Female peer leader, Kabwata*

For this young woman, alongside the other interviewees, they emphasised how important sport was to them as a focal point and as an integral part of their week but also as something to occupy their time and keep them away from less productive endeavours. This behaviour links to challenges around gender performativity (Butler, 1994), where women may feel pressured to act or perform in a certain way to create an identity which aligns with the women around her. Female peer leaders involved in SfD may have an opportunity to present a different identity to that of female friends not involved in SfD, who may, for example, want to go to parties and enjoy being a young adult. However, when a young woman does not want to engage in such behaviour, this is challenging the notion of gender by not partaking in assumed gendered behaviour for a young woman in Zambia. More so, when that individual chooses to instead focus on sport, this challenges the hegemonic ideologies of femininity as this is a gendered act which is linked to men and masculinity.

The individual levels of engagement in the SfD programmes varied from person to person and was often dictated by their commitments outside of sport; something that is explored in detail later in Chapter 8, where the interviewees cited having to balance the demands of home life, education or work where applicable and the expectations that come with being a young woman in Zambia, particularly domestic

responsibilities. As part of the interview process, each peer leader was asked to detail their weekly schedule, highlighting when, specifically, they spend time at the sports ground, as well as what other activities fill their time. For example, one female peer leader from Kabwata, who was 22 years old at the time of her first interview, held a more senior peer leader role and was responsible for managing the delivery of activities at one community site. Her usual weekly routine consisted of the delivery of physical education-based activities in the early mornings, where she worked across a number of local primary schools, before facilitating sport specific sessions around lunchtime, with a specific focus on girls' football. Outside of this, she shared that she spends her afternoons engaging in her other hobbies which include modelling, music, and song writing. According to Goffman (1959), this type of behaviour might help provide a veneer of consensus, whereby through putting on a womanly performance the female peer leader is publicly expressing herself in a way that she feels is accepted. Through this 'display' of engaging in activities that could be seen as feminine hobbies such as modelling, this female peer leader might be suppressing her actual feelings and instead conveying a view of a situation that she feels others would find acceptable. It could be suggested that this veneer of consensus operates to balance out her public presentation, where on one side she engages heavily in sport – a traditionally masculine domain – and on the other side she asserts feminine values and behaviours that she feels is necessary for her social interaction to be coherent with those around her.

For another female peer leader, who was stationed at Munali and 27-years-old at the time of interview, she had a busier schedule with her responsibilities as a peer leader filling her whole day. Her usual daily schedule, which was the same Monday through till Friday, begun with her leaving the house at 8am to walk to her first delivery site. Here she would conduct back-to-back workshops at three different schools across the morning before heading to the community site for the sport specific sessions in the afternoon. As she shared, she *“was going there every single day, from Monday to Friday”* and as a result, in her own words, *“I never really had a dull moment or a bad moment where I thought I am working every day”*. The scale of these commitments as volunteers is exceptional. Whilst previous literature in SfD notes the importance of voluntary peer leaders in the delivery of programmes, the extent of their volunteering has yet to be discussed, and as such, this thesis adds to this gap in the existing body of knowledge in SfD.

This level of commitment as a volunteer may have implications for a number of reasons. Firstly, given that the role of a peer leader is a voluntary one, questions can be asked as to what extent this demand is a requirement of the NGOs at the outset, or whether this is a choice on behalf of the peer leader. From the conversations held, it appears that it is a mixture of both. On one side, the onus falls on the peer leader to commit to as much or as little as they can, with different individuals engaging at varying levels with the programme as shown through this research. However, on the other side, it does appear that the portfolio of programmes the NGOs deliver is growing, and therefore, the demand being placed on the peer leaders is increasing. Given this research explores the involvement of peer leaders at two different

SfD NGOs, this could potentially highlight a disparity between the level of service and support offered by the two organisations. Which then, in turn, could impact the engagement levels of the female peer leaders, and subsequently the quality and quantity of programmes delivered. As this one peer leader from Mtendere expressed, she felt like it was a case of proving her commitment to the programme to get the chance to progress, which for her was a desire to gain a job in the NGO office: *“It is just whether the opportunity is there and whether I get a chance. Maybe they [NGO] might see the commitment I have... So, they might have to decide on that”*. For this participant, her role as a peer leader represents an opportunity to find a potential pathway to employment (Burnett and van der Klashorst, 2023), and therefore she may overcommit in an attempt to show the NGOs her potential value as an employee. A shift in perspective, therefore, might be required from the SfD NGOs to enable the young women to have clarity around the requirements of the role and remit of a peer leader, so they are able to make an informed choice, as well as clear information around career pathways and the progression routes available. This shift in perspective will ensure that the NGOs do not find themselves in a position where a large proportion of the female peer leaders feel as this individual did:

*“Well, I think sometimes if you are not fully appreciated because like I said, I'm not going to be a volunteer for the rest of my life. I love volunteering. But what am I going to get? Cause I feel they should ask volunteers because we volunteer our time all of the time. I wish they would provide a platform for us to, to learn things that we want. Or if there was a way of asking, what do you want to become? My organisation has never done that. They don't know what I want to become. If they know what I want to become, they can support me in that. If they cannot offer support, or not support me financially, but skills, if they offer me a skill that I'm able to develop myself, that I wish there was a way that they could have like a strategy, a plan for as long as they can”* – Female peer leader, Kaunda Square

Secondly, this requirement from the NGOs to fulfil the role of a peer leader may impact who has the capacity to take on the role. The perceived ‘benefits’ of being a peer leader will be discussed later in this chapter, but the financial capability to have the time to commit to the programme is pivotal. The dependency of the SfD NGOs on a volunteer workforce, recruited from unemployed youth in the local communities, contributes to a situation where young people are trapped in the transitional state of youth, always ‘becoming’, without the ability to move to independence and employment. As detailed above, the time commitment required for the role of a peer leader can be demanding, whereby a young person is required to be at the delivery site a number of days a week. The capacity for a young woman to commit to this, is determined by their ability to be released from other demands, including the need to earn an income elsewhere. Whilst the NGOs view the role of a peer leader as a voluntary one, where there is minimal remuneration through a stipend, the young people view this role as a job and an entry to possible income-generation as demonstrated by the participants in this research. The difference in expectations, between the NGO and young person, has been noted in wider literature, where a young

person's reliance upon the stipend brings the 'volunteer' label into question (Van de Klashorst, 2018). This is highlighted here by this peer leader from Mtendere: *"I do have a job, at Sport in Action. This is my job [being a peer leader]. But my Mum says I get a little amount from there, so she says I should find a job somewhere else where I can be getting more and more money"*. Earning a stipend for being a peer leader was a crucial element, as many highlighted through this research, but the minimal remuneration often offered by the NGOs is not sufficient to meet the needs of the peer leaders, their families, and their economic obligations.

Lastly, as discussed earlier in this section, the level of their involvement as a peer leaders influences the extent to which they can be engaged in other things. These other things may be productive, or potentially harmful. As noted in the case of the peer leader above who is stationed at Munali, her whole day is occupied by her role as a peer leader, leaving little to no other time to engage in different interests. For others they have to balance the demands of home life and domestic responsibilities, their education if they are still studying, and other livelihood strategies. For one of the younger female peer leaders at Fountain of Hope, who had only been active in her role a couple of years, she highlighted how her weekly schedule was predominantly split between being at the sports ground and fulfilling her chores at home. Her sporting commitments also filled her Saturday, where she played in a competitive fixture before attending church on Sundays. For her, she was open that outside of her commitments at home and the sports ground, she did not spend her time doing much else and therefore these elements dominated her time. Viewing her behaviours through the lens of Goffman's (1986) frame analysis helps provide an understanding of how people construct, and present themselves in different frames, based on the culturally determined definition of social order. For this young women, her performance at home in the domestic arena may be played out to satisfy family members, meeting the expected characteristics of her given gender category. Through her willingness to display and sustain the appropriate behaviour for a young Zambian women within the household, her performance meets the expectations of those within that environment, which in turn may allow her to continue with sport.

The above are three examples of the varying schedules the young women had in their role as a peer leader, with their commitment differing based on the community site they were operating from, the length of time they had held their role, their age and experience. Most participants describing taking part in the delivery of SfD activities on a weekly, if not daily basis, spending a large proportion of their time at the sports ground:

*"Yes, there might be other things which keep them busy but sport, for me has been the number one reason, the main help. For me individually, I got to school Monday to Friday, I know during the week I come back here to coach them up until 17:30 and then on weekends we have games. So, for me, I have no time, if I quote from the bible, "An idle mind is the Devil's workshop", so I don't have time to just sit... But I need to plan what I*



*am going to coach them tomorrow, so I have a number of things that I have put on my schedule. So that time when somebody invites me to go out, for a drink or for what, maybe I would be busy and caught up in my commitments, so I can avoid. So, by the time I will be moving out of the ground I will be tired, so I have no time to spend in those things” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

During these interviews, there was further exploration of the way the young people balanced their sporting commitments alongside their broader commitments, with many discussing the challenges they face when trying to ‘fit it all in’. Despite the role of a peer leader being an unpaid role, the young women’s desire to spend their time at the sports ground with their peers, taking part in sporting activities and delivering sessions was a prominent feature that came through in all interviews, with all the participants prioritising this commitment as much they could. For many of the participants, being a peer leader was more than a voluntary role, they viewed it as a job, and a role they wished to stay in for the foreseeable future:

*“For me, like, I will stay here as long as I like. Like for now, I can be a peer leader until the time I don’t want too, and I want to hand over that role.” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

Whilst being a peer leader is a voluntary role, the young women do reap other benefits from their involvement in the programme; something that will be explored later in this chapter.

## **7.6 Role Models and Mentors**

From the interviews, the young women who had become peer leaders valued the opportunity to take on a leadership role and become a role model to their peers and to their wider community. As in the case of Juliet, Esther and Martha, this was a desire that had stemmed from these young women having a role model themselves, someone who had inspired them to become a peer leader. When discussing their route into sport, as well as how they ended up becoming a peer leader, words such as ‘inspired’, ‘empowered’, ‘contributing’ and ‘role model’ were frequently used. All of the participants highlighted an individual who had inspired and supported them on their journey as a peer leader, and often this individual was another peer leader or a coach at one of the community grounds:

*“If someone empowers me, empowers me, that's giving me an opportunity to do what I want by helping me. Through being with [coach and site coordinator] and other people especially the coaches from Sport in Action. I think I have enough, you know, empowering someone is not about giving them the information of what you do but why to do it in person. For example, the time I was coming here as a player, I was looking at what he could do and that empowered me.” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

For this specific peer leader, she was given an opportunity and helped on her journey by a male coach at the community sports ground, who not only gave her information and equipped her with new knowledge and skills, but also acted as a role model, showing her what she could achieve as a peer leader. ‘Role models’ have been invoked as important personnel in the SfD field, particularly in relation to increasing the participation of girls and women in sport (Meier and Saavedra, 2019), and this importance also emerged in this research. It is noteworthy that these mentors included people from the wider community where they resided.

The use of the concept of sporting role models is generally based upon the assumption that the individual role model needs to be positive and worthy of emulation. This often leads people to think of high profile, famous professional athletes who use their platform for a greater good (Meier, 2016). But in the case of this research, the peer leaders had found their role models in their teachers, coaches, and older peers from within their community, who were active features in their time at local sports grounds. These role models were able to have a positive influence on the peer leaders through their close contact, situational relevance, and accessibility (Meier, 2016). These findings resonated with the testimonies collected during the interviews:

*“Yeah, my friend inspired me a lot, [coach]. I would before like I was I never knew him before we just see him from a very far distance but then through the work that he used to do for young leaders and inspired by like that, okay, maybe one day he might be a man, but maybe one day I will also need you to be some similarities of him need to also be in me, even though is a man, but I'm a woman but that should not be discouraged for me. To become what I want to become so I would say that he is My Greatest Inspiration” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“[Peer leader] just inspired me. There was this girl at our school, mostly on Mondays when you would have assembly, she would always be there let's say to teach about one or two things every Monday or they used to give a time. So, I used to admire doing that. So, like I joined Sport in Action from there.. They had a programme at our school, so I joined because I wanted to be like her” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*“Yes, it was because of the sessions and that what inspired me. I wanted to be like those guys who were teaching me, I wanted to be different, so because I wanted to be like them that is where the inspiration came from. Also, because, I told myself that I have been poor my whole life, so I wanted to get to this level, if I do this, this is what is going to happen to me so that is also what inspired me” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

It was almost universally agreed upon by the participants that the coaches, and older peer leaders in their community served as positive influences, providing a network of support. The above are a small sample of the strong narratives that emerged during the interviews, where repeatedly the female peer

leaders highlighted a role model or a specific individual who had inspired them on their journey. Furthermore, this role model had become someone they wanted to emulate and someone they strived to be like. Within this context, the role models not only provided guidance and a support network for the young women, but they led by example and evidenced what the life of a peer leader looked like through their leadership, personal qualities, and desire to support their local community. All of the interviewees referenced other peer leaders, often individuals who were older, who had led the way and represented what they would like to become.

These ‘role models’ provided an example of what a young woman could achieve through her participation in sport and through volunteering as a peer leader, allowing them to consider the potential of new possibilities for their lives, which often were not overtly visible within the broader community and outside of the sporting environment. This finding reflects those of Jeanes et al. (2018) who also found that participation in SfD programmes provided young women with “the space to consider alternative life courses” which “were rare in other aspects of the young women’s lives” (p. 156). When discussing their own desire to become a peer leader themselves, the participants regularly mentioned their aspiration to become a role model and to support other young people within the community:

*“I decided to become a peer leader because I wanted to help other girls in sport.” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*“My reason was for me, too, to lead those girls to take to help them. Yes, to help them in other ways like, at least to know what I know at least they should have an idea it at least.... yes, it has taught me a lot, so I want to help others have the same amount of knowledge.” – Esther, Mtendere*

*“I think at the end of this will be the result of me becoming a role model to them, and to become a better leader to those around me.” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“The reason why I wanted to come up a leader, I had a role model who inspired me and the empowered me to become one. Because of the work they were doing, at Sport in Action as a peer leader. I thought they were doing I wanted to be like them” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

The theme of wanting to become a role model was prominent throughout the young women’s accounts as to why they desired to be a peer leader. In their research on SfD in Zambia, Lindsey et al. (2017) highlight that the peer leaders they engaged with “drew benefits from their relationships in and with SfD NGOs, and this in turn helped them to provide appropriate role models for other young people” (p. 186). After being inspired themselves and finding a role model they held in high regard, the young women wanted to continue that by being someone their younger peers could look up to. This behaviour links into community oriented SfD approaches, with a key motivator for young people wanting to

become peer leaders being linked to a desire to give back and help within the community around them (Lindsey et al. 2017; Molassiotis et al. 2004).

## 7.7 Friendships and Safe Spaces

Through their involvement in sport, these young women had gained a community of peers that were like minded, providing a support network and a place where they felt like they belonged, becoming part of a sporting family. This finding links to Spaaij and Scholenkorf's (2014) research on how SfD programmes can create, sustain, and maximise positive social impact, which highlighted that the cultivation of safe spaces are a key element of achieving this. Through their research, Spaaij and Scholenkorf (2014) highlighted that a safe space is a multidimensional concept, with the sociocultural dimension referring to "a space where all can feel at home and supported regardless of their social locations" (p. 634). For the participants of this research, the safe environment they found in SfD gave them somewhere where they could discuss challenging topics, share their personal experiences and concerns, and navigate their adolescence surrounded by like-minded people; a safe space they were not able to find outside of sport. The senior peer leaders and coaches operating at each community site held a unique place in the landscape of the young women's' lives, serving as trusted adults outside of their home and school environment.

As this peer leader shared, through her involvement in sport she was able to learn about gender specific issues such as the menstrual cycle, safe sex and pregnancy, information she was unable to access elsewhere. These are elements which many interviewees highlighted were never discussed or taught at home, at school or elsewhere, with sport being the only place they could navigate their adolescence in an informed way:

*"But what they didn't know is that there was something I was learning through sport, something that they were scared of teaching me. They couldn't tell me about sex or condoms, I remember the first time I had my first period, I didn't know what to do and then I used to see pads of my sisters... But, when I was going for sports and all those sessions I was having, I learnt about pads, I learnt about sex, I learnt about condoms, I learnt about the things they were scared to tell me. The things they thought were a taboo to talk to me about I learnt through sports. So, when I had my first period I knew already what I am supposed to do, I knew how many times I am supposed to change" – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Without their involvement in SfD activities, these young women shared that they do not know where they would have been able to access this vital information about their bodies, and the changes they go through as they enter adolescence and how to navigate these changes safely. This is particularly

pertinent within the Zambian context, with some participants referencing a ‘taboo’ belief when it came to discussing topics regarding sex, sexuality and menstruation. The safe environment sport provides compensates for a lack of social structure elsewhere, particularly in their home life, where many of these topics were taboo to discuss.

These peer leaders also shared a similar experience, where they highlighted the importance of female-focused programmes such as Go Sisters in providing access to these safe spaces for young women to discuss a variation of different topics:

*“They would come to my school and teach through Go Sisters, and I just had that interest; I knew I wanted to teach my fellow youths out there. It is not everyone who has got the privilege of learning, but as we come from different homes, there are some people who can’t share their problems with the people they are staying with, and therefore, they find comfort in some of our peer leaders and programmes, so we like okay, I thought I could also do this, and I wanted to be that person for them. To be a voice for them” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*“The things like every day things changes, like today we talk about early marriages, tomorrow it changes, and we talk about abusing, women being abuse to their husbands, so every time things to change. So, every time we need to know how to talk to the peer leaders, how they can stay at home, how they can conduct themselves properly, not involving sexual intercourse when they are still young” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

The presence of these safe spaces for young women echoes Meire’s (2015) research on the value of female sporting role models in SfD, in which she highlights them as “transfer enhances” (p. 968), helping to transfer knowledge and skills to participants.

Rowlands’ (1997) work on empowerment can be useful in helping us understand empowerment as a consciousness raising exercise. Through her work, Rowlands (1997) emphasised that ‘power within’ refers to the transformation of individual consciousness, awareness and agency, which leads to a new self-confidence to act. Through their involvement in SfD programmes, the young women were able to build relationships and engage in dialogue, which when constructed upon acceptance, trust, and mutual recognition, can provide the basis on which to problematise, create knowledge and ‘give voice’ to the marginalised (Morgan and Parker, 2023). Through sharing their own stories and experiences, the female peer leaders are able to create collective knowledge and take steps and action towards positive change (Wallerstein and Bernstein, 1988), as expressed by this peer leader from her own experience:

*“So, it’s through sport for development that women get to understand about women empowerment programmes. Otherwise, if it was not for sport for development, people*

*would still be in the dark, like for me, I also had because I was raised also the tradition in cultures, but through sport for development I also learned to say that I'm a woman and I can be empowered, I can actually stand and I can do anything without being limited, no matter what society says" – Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

The opportunity to come together as a group benefited the female peer leaders as it provided them with a space to have critical collective discussion, whilst asking questions about their lives without judgement. More so, the space provided via SfD enabled the girls to engage in a critical conscious reflection on their own circumstances, unpacking the personal issues they were facing in their daily lives and in their local communities, seeking to identify potential solutions from their peers. This process of consciousness-raising builds 'power within' and 'power with' (Rowlands, 1997), expanding a women's possibilities. Whilst this form of education had helped raise the knowledge and awareness of the young women, the programme may not have developed a critical awareness. Questions around whether the SfD programmes were able to "promote authentic and lasting social change by fostering critical consciousness and facilitating transformative action in order to challenge broader social structures and power dynamics" (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013, p. 451) can still be asked, with the participants of this research demonstrating varying capacity levels regarding their ability to actually transform their own situation, and exert influence within their communities outside of sport. The broader environmental influences will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The delivery of SfD programmes provided the young women with an environment in which they could develop meaningful relationships and find a safe place through which they could discuss important life challenges that were occurring. Brady's (2005) research on the relationship between SfD and safe spaces argued that it is the characteristics of the local culture that matter rather than the physical setting itself, with the characteristics of the environment determining how that space is occupied. For the participants of this research, the safe space they found within the SfD programmes echoes Brady's (2005) findings, that sport can serve as a mechanism for creating safe and supportive spaces for girls and young women. As highlighted above, for some of the young women, they were unable to obtain important information relating to their menstrual cycle and puberty at home, and therefore finding this access through sport was a key provision for them. The participants talked about how they found this sporting family particularly important during their teenage years, as they navigated growing up and all of the physical changes that came with that. The friendships they were able to develop through playing sport provided a place where they could share their problems and seek accurate advice. This was unlike some of the friendships they observed in their local communities, whereby young people would make 'bad' decisions and engage in drinking and going out.

Beyond the safe space provided by these friendships, the participants also discussed how important the provision of this social network was, creating a place where they felt like they belonged. For girls and

women particularly, the forming of friendships, social interaction and group identity have been cited as important elements of their involvement in sports programmes (Brady, 2005; Saavedra, 2009); aspects that also resonate with this research. The young women gained a sense of social connectedness through their role as a peer leader as well as their involvement in SfD activities:

*“What I enjoy most is that when we get together as young people, we are able to interact, we are able to share ideas. Like it's our moment, we just feel special. If you love something and you have the people who love it, it becomes more amazing. So, I enjoy the interaction I get from other brilliant young people around me. And also, the support they give” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

*“Sport is the only avenue that people come together and share different things and opinions, because when we're doing sports together and you forget about all the bad things or, or the differences that you people have. So yeah, it's really a glue, a good platform for, bringing together different groups in society and teaching them things” – Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

The above two narratives are reflective of a number of interviews where the young women spoke highly of their sporting family, and how their involvement in the SfD programmes allowed them to come together with other young women to enjoy themselves. For the first participant above, sport provided a safe space in which she did not need to maintain her usual gendered performances to abide by social norms, because the norms of the sporting space were different to the external community. Within sport, the female peer leaders were able to just ‘be’, rather than feeling pressured to act in a way that aligned with traditional cultural expectations that construct gender roles, particularly ones that govern how a women should and should not behave in the Zambian context. The sense of belonging and social connectedness appeared to outweigh other friendship groups outside of sport, with some participants discussing the bond they built with other female participants:

*“... Cause mostly I have had friends but from far away so me, being with those girls from Sport in Action and Girls in Action makes me feel wanted. Then you get to enjoy yourself. Girls, you express yourself, it's more like a family” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

It is notable that these young women describe the importance of the sporting environment as a place where they feel they belong, they feel ‘wanted’ and they are able to ‘express’ themselves. The use of the language ‘express’ by the young women above highlights how within the SfD field she was able to drop her usual performance of gender (Butler, 1990), rather having the freedom to express herself in ways she could not outside of this space. All of this feeds into the importance of young people being able to access this space; something that is not readily available away from the sports ground. For young women in Zambia, the opportunities available to them were limited in comparison to their male peers,

where often their brothers and male siblings were afforded the opportunities over them. Through having a role model, and through becoming a role model, the participants were able to gain a connectedness with their peers, a social network that only came from their involvement in sport. Without this social network, many of the young people highlighted feeling ‘lost’, ‘isolated’ and not knowing where to turn at a time of need. Becoming part of a sporting family provided young women with strong friendships and a social network which did not exist outside of sport.

The findings presented so far in this chapter have related to young women’s experiences of SfD activities, and how their involvement in the programmes – as both a participant and a peer leader – have given them a range of benefits. These include the enjoyment they gained from participating, the way sport had become a regular feature in their daily lives, the connectedness they gained from being part of a sporting family, the importance of them having a role model but also their desire to be a role model to their young peers. For the majority of interviewees, their involvement in sport had become a central feature of their lives.

## **7.8 Sport for Development: A Variety of Learning Opportunities**

This next section will continue to focus on the young women’s direct engagement with SfD programmes, moving beyond their participation to explore the wider experiences gained. A key topic that emerged throughout the interview process and through the time spent in the field, was the extent to which the young women had been able to access training and development opportunities through their involvement in SfD programmes. This subsection will identify, analyse and categorise the different learning opportunities for the peer leaders.

As noted above, the participation as a peer leader was a voluntary role, but for many of the young women, through this involvement, they were able to access other education opportunities that they would not have been afforded would it not have been for the NGOs provision. The young women involved in this research all came from marginalised communities, particularly ones that are economically deprived, and therefore the prospect of accessing any education or training opportunities can be very important for these individuals. Through their involvement in the SfD activities, the young women highlighted how they had experienced a wide range of development opportunities and as a result, many indicated how sport had ‘changed their lives’ for the better:

*“Just like, primary and high school you get to learn a lot of new and different stuff. With sport I have learnt so much on how to communicate with people, how to socialise with people, I have learnt how to carry myself better and how to understand, leading young children and even the teenagers, and older ones. It’s really been a big platform that has*



*helped me know my country better because it has helped me move from places to places and learn more.” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*“So, it's actually had a huge impact on me, it really has developed me a lot. I was never like this, but through also the programmes, I have also had the platform to network with other young leaders, to travel alone to other countries. I was just recently when an exchange programme and I stayed in Norway for eight months. Being an international volunteer for me was like a very very big impact, because if it was not for sports for development I wouldn't have had that” - Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

The two narratives above are from two different peer leaders, who had come from different parts of Lusaka, but had been exposed to different opportunities as a result of their involvement as a peer leader. For these young people, their involvement in the SfD programmes had given them ‘better’ lives, through the provision of the opportunity to learn new things, the development of core life skills such as communication and leadership, and the chance to travel and see new places. As part of the interview process, all the participants were asked to talk about the support they have received, and the opportunities they have been able to access as a result of their participation in the SfD programmes. The benefits gained are not necessarily bound to either NGO, nor to either female-focused programme Girls in Action or Go Sisters but were opportunities the young women were able to access through their involvement in the SfD programmes and this varied from person to person. These opportunities will be explored further in this chapter but include educational opportunities as well as various forms of vocational training.

One substantial topic that emerged during the interviews was the access to, or for some the lack of access to, formal training opportunities to equip the young women to become peer leaders. The informality of approach to the selection, training and progression of peer leaders in Zambian SfD has been noted in literature (Lindsey et al. 2017) and the findings from this research were consistent with that. As discussed in Chapter 2, both Sport in Action and EduSport use a peer led model for the delivery of their programmes involving the young women in this research as volunteers who were responsible for overseeing the delivery of the NGOs sporting programmes within their local communities. To enable them to execute this role effectively, a number of participants discussed how the NGOs had provided them with the opportunity to complete formal training for their role:

*“It is called ToT, trainer of trainers. It starts with the induction, peer leader level 1, then finally ToT” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

*“I had ToT, platform induction before going to peer leader level 1, so we know about EduSport, that was in 2005. So, we know about EduSport and the programmes they do. After that, I completed peer level 1, I completed level 1 then trained as ToT, Trainer of Trainers” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“Like identify, if say its 10 peer leaders from the community then we will have the workshop from there. They'll be taught on how to do the first session and everything. That's the induction labouring here. Then from induction, Peer Leader Level 1 where they'll be trained then from Level 1 the last one is ToT, which is trainer of trainers” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

It is worth noting that the three insights shared above are all from peer leaders who were working with the NGO EduSport. The mention of an induction, different peer leader levels and trainer of trainers was frequent from the peer leaders from EduSport sites, suggesting that this NGO did have a formal training programme in place for their peer leaders. For those peer leaders working with the NGO Sport in Action, there was no mention of ‘formal’ peer leader training during the various interviews, with some participants highlighting how they never received any specific training to take on the role of a peer leader:

*“I feel like peer leading itself. Like they should provide a training for that because not many people really know how to peer lead and they just jump into the world. Like for instance, myself, I used to be under coach [name of male coach]. Yes. And then I crossed over to the office. But then because I had stopped playing soccer for like some time cause of exams. And then one of my friend, she told me saying, oh you can actually like if you want to start peer leading. And I didn't know much of it all. I just came and talked to [NGO staff member] and said I would like to be involved. Oh, okay I think I can do this, and I would love to do it. And I wasn't really given, you know like training, this is what you do, this is how you become a peer leader, this is what you are responsible for. It was more unguided learning. I would see [another female peer leader] and [another male peer leader] and others do stuff and would learn that way. So, I feel, you know, they should really get some sort of knowledge and training indicating what they are supposed to do this. You're supposed to behave in this way” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

As this comment shows, some of the participants desired to be formally trained in their role as a peer leader and felt as if the NGOs should have done more to support them. This is not to say that they did not receive any training, but the young women wanted specific peer leader training that would equip them to effectively do their role, but it became apparent throughout the interviews that many of the participants had not received this:

*“I think Sport in Action should help in terms of some of us as peer leaders, they're [peer leaders] just at home if they're not out peer leading, so we other peer leaders are just looking at the kids that we teach yet they don't really think about us as the peer leaders. So, I think they should help in such a way, that maybe they, if there is a skills training we want to do they help us” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

*“I have never really been given guidance on how to be a peer leader and what that means”*  
– Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope

Through the research it became apparent that the gap in training varied from individual to individual but was in relation to both sporting content and non-sport educational topics. For some of the young women, the responsibility fell on them to recognise and identify their gap in knowledge, studying independently to ensure they were able to learn about the sporting and educational topics they were due to deliver as part of the programme.

It could be suggested that this behaviour links to Rowlands’ (1997) concept of power, which was explored earlier in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.4.1) and the ‘power within’ form, which relates to a person’s sense of self-knowledge. According to this concept, the female peer leaders’ gained awareness of their situation, and their lack of knowledge, and realised they had the opportunity to act to do something about it to change, becoming empowered in the process. The evidence of this form of power is shown below, where some of the participants explained that they had to research particular topics to develop themselves and enable them to be in a place where they could effectively deliver that particular workshop:

*“For me, I go to do the research for those topics, for myself. When, for example tomorrow if I am having a session then I can come up with that topic which I am researching for, then I can practice and look into what I can teach”* – Female peer leader, Mtendere

*“I then also on my part, you know when you are facilitating, it calls for you to research on certain topics, whether you facilitated them before or not, there are other topics we have one which is called ‘Kicking Aids Out’, you don’t just need to dwell on the past information you have, because there are new developments and things change, so you also need to research”* – Female peer leader, Chawama

There was a strong theme throughout the interviews about the level of responsibility that the young women had to take on in their roles as peer leaders, often assuming accountability for the delivery of activities at a particular sports ground or community site. The training these young women received varied considerably, with some being supported through a formal learning structure where they progressed through the levels of being a peer leader, whereas other were only given the opportunity to engage in informal and ad hoc workshops. Both Sport in Action and EduSport offered a range of roles for their young volunteers, from peer leader to sport specific lead to site coordinator and provincial coordinator. Whilst the official titles of these roles varies from NGO to NGO, the most diverse role that emerged through the interviews was that of a peer leader, where the responsibilities the role assumed differing greatly from person to person. For example, as discussed by the participants during the interviews, the Go Sisters programmes offered a hierarchy of roles which was supported by a range of training activities to support the young women as they progressed through the ranks. The structure of

training for the other SfD programmes appeared a little more flexible, with training provided on an ad hoc basis, where opportunities were given as and when they arose.

Despite the apparent lack of formal peer leader training opportunities for some of the participants, where they desired more support in how to effectively fulfil their role as a peer leader, a variety of other training opportunities were provided for the young people, enabling them to develop their knowledge and skillset. Some of these training opportunities included:

*“They took me for volleyball coaching course. Let me see if I’ve forgotten but mainly coaching courses. So, we were also trained as the programme goes, Girls in Action. We had specialist training for that” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*“I was trained by the previous facilitators. So, it was more like they tried to meet you with facilitation skills. They expose you to different types of people, groups to challenge you go and talk about this and stuff like that. By the former facilitators” – Female peer leader, Munali*

*“Yeah, I have done a training at OYDC in 2014 with [NGO staff member]. That helped me to be a peer leader, because I went there, to like, it was like how you become a peer leader, he was teaching us how to, how to lead by the example to young children, when you are coaching them. That helped me a lot” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“I learnt so many things, so many things I have done, so many workshops. I have done, talent identification, I have done networking and leadership, I have done first aid, I have learnt so many things, too many to mention. I have so many certificates, a lot of things - Female peer leader, Munali*

There were varying accounts shared which provided an insight into the range of training opportunities the young women were exposed to as a result of their involvement in the SfD programmes as a peer leader. The training opportunities, or for some lack of training opportunities, were variable in quality, specificity, and number. Whilst some young women engaged in formal, NGO provided training, others developed via a more informal approach, where they gained knowledge and enhanced their skill through their peer leader network. During the interviews, the young women discussed the importance of their peer leader network and how being surrounded by other peer leaders allowed them to share ideas, discuss content, and gain new knowledge. This included both female and male peers, and as highlighted through the interviews, this allowed the young women to learn the core components of the workshops that they were expected to deliver:

*“Mostly if we are having programs here at EduSport, that is when they will call us, maybe give us a topic which we then go and teach to other girls... like you see with my fellow peer leaders, we sit and discuss about the topics, we share ideas, and how we are going to go about it, and how we*

*are going to deliver. Some sessions, we share ideas which help us learn” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*“Having fun, having new ideas, sharing things with my peers so we learn from each other” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“Yes, I do. Even me, I have got fellow male friends who are peer leaders. They support girls in sport because most of the times we are found together, we share ideas, if there is something you are talking about they say okay, they give their own point of view, and you also give them your point of view as well. We share ideas, it isn’t men and women but just peer leaders” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

These informal networks allowed young people from different places to come together, to share, learn and teach each other. It was evident to hear that learning aurally this way did not just include life skills, but also gaining a better understanding about other people, a range of topic areas, and the way life is different across Zambia:

*“I have learnt we come from different places, so the way I live, it is not the way others live. Because the different parts of the city and communities. Others they have this, she has that, you know, all these and that, we start to learn about learn from each other. By sharing” – Female peer leader, Munali*

*“I do think sport is good, because we come from different places and then when you meet here, it is the chance to share, explain, to teach each other. It is not that I am the only who teach them, they also teach me, we learn from each other” – Female peer leader, Munali*

This informal sharing and dissemination of knowledge not only occurred between peer leader and peer leader, but also between peer leader and young person who was participating in the sessions that were being delivered. The participants spoke of how their sessions created a space in which young people were able to come together to discuss important topics, and how the female-focused Girls in Action and Go Sisters programmes, provided a safe space in which young women could do that specifically:

*“Go Sisters, there was some topics we learnt about empowerment, empowering youth and girls in society. And there were some sessions whereby we just have like girls talks, a chat, to share ideas and views, you know where your friend is coming from, what that person is going through this. And other days, it would be sports” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

As detailed above, the learning and development opportunities the young women were able to engage in, both formally and informally varied greatly. Whilst some young women had progressed through the stages of peer leader training, others had only engaged in informal opportunities. Furthermore, some of

the interviewees discussed how they had received ongoing support from the NGO staff as well as site coordinators, who were sometimes present in the field to support:

*“Actually, I only had an idea on it. I never went for training; I only had an idea on it. Why we were starting our training here, we used to have sort of life skills, so I learnt some of it from [female NGO programme lead], the way she did things, that is how I got an idea on it” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“I would say, if it wasn’t for [male site coordinator] I wouldn’t have known Sport in Action. So, he really contributed most, I would say he really helped me and empowered me. I’m happy to see, that at the level I’m at, I work with him, and we share common grounds as to what we can do best. It’s no longer just a peer leader and coach. It’s a colleague kind of relationship” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

The informality of the training provided, and the ongoing development that occurred within the field, is something that should not be overlooked. Whilst some of the young women did not hold ‘formal’ peer leader qualifications, nor had progressed through a standardised training programme, they were able to acquire knowledge and develop skill through ‘doing’. The young women discussed the level of responsibility they held in their role as a peer leader and how there was an expectation of them to do a lot in their voluntary capacity, and as such they often had to learn through the process of doing, leaning on their peer leader network to share ideas, challenge each other, and develop further. It is important not to overlook the significance of this informal learning, especially given how vital the young women identified this network to be in their personal development:

*“We done it all together so there was a group of us. There was me, [names three other female peer leaders in her community]. It helps me, because we have had to model it for each other before we teach them. At least way, as a group we would sit and talk about the topics, so we will be ready to go and teach the young girls” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“In terms of my whole life, I think it is [name of other female peer leader], as we have always been there to support each other, since ever since, I started working as a peer leader at the same time as her. So, she is my closest friend, and we do this together.... We have a lot in common. We share, even like, we have a topic to teach for Girls in Action, we can help each other, we research together so we can share with the kids together” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

Beyond the informal peer-to-peer learning, the female peer leaders were able to develop themselves across a number of topic areas through more formalised, sport specific training opportunities. For some of the young women, they received sport specific training which consisted of learning about the basics

of coaching and how to deliver a sport specific session to their peers. This sport specific training occurred across four main sports; netball, football, volleyball, and basketball, where the peer leaders coached sessions and taught their peers the rules of that sport, the skills needed to play and how to compete as a team. In addition to this, some of the young women were able to access more specialised training workshops, such as how to coach young people with disabilities as well as more broader topics including child protection and safeguarding. The opportunity for the young women to attend these workshops was only available due to their involvement in the SfD programmes as a peer leader, and as such highlights one of the tangible benefits of becoming a peer leader.

Both Sport in Action and EduSport provided some peer leaders involved in their programmes an education scholarship, enabling them to either return to education or for those already in school, the opportunity to complete Grade 12, which marks the end of compulsory secondary education in Zambia. The provision of a scholarship was not an opportunity every peer leader was afforded, with some participants sharing their frustration and concern that this was not something that they were offered. From my participants, there was no emerging pattern as to who was offered a scholarship and who was not. One participant from Kalingalinga noted that *‘there are many kids among the ones who are being sponsored’*, yet another from Mtendere highlighted *‘a lack of school fees, and lack of support. Because I don’t have that’*. Additionally, a couple of participants shared that they had received partial sponsorship, with the NGOs offering some but not full support: *“They used to give me at least a certain percentage, and then I topped the rest up”*. The absence of a consistent pattern amongst the female peer leaders regarding who was offered a scholarship, and who was not, suggests that there was not a set criteria from the NGOs as to who were eligible, and if there was a criteria, this was not made known.

For those who were offered the chance to complete their education, they highlighted how valuable this provision was to them:

*“I get support for my school. For me being a peer leader, they are paying for me, they [Sport in Action] are paying my school fees so that is my benefit” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“EduSport support me with my school fees, they do, with sponsorship, we have got some kids who are sponsored. We really appreciate that because it's not everybody is willing to go to school with the money that comes from their parents. So, we really are grateful that they are there” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“Yes, it's really helping [being a peer leader]. Like, I'm sponsored. But people who are not stable financially, let's say that maybe you're from a very big family and then your parents can't afford to take it all to school. But through sponsorship I got from Sports in Action, and being a peer leader, I got to go to school” – Female peer leader, Chilenje*

The SfD NGOs female-focused programmes, Girls in Action and Go Sisters, were both programmes which supported access to formal education opportunities through the provision of funded scholarships. The opportunity for young women to attend school was a central component of both programmatic frameworks, where their engagement as a peer leader was rewarded in return through the provision of funding to allow them to go to school. The valued nature of this scholarship enabled some of the young women to attend secondary school, individuals would have otherwise been unable to access this provision due to the constraints of the cost of school fees, and other contextual factors as discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3.3).

As shared by the participant below, the hope of being offered a scholarship was an important aspiration in her continuing her role as a peer leader:

*“I have been a peer leader for less than a year, I am new to this. I spoke to Sport in Action about sponsorship, and that's what they said, but they told me I should just wait, and they will give back to me” – Female peer leader, Munali*

The above is important to highlight as the use of the language ‘give back to me’ suggests that for some of the SfD NGOs, the provision of scholarships or sponsorships to enable peer leaders to access formal education was provided in return for their services. Through the hope of receiving funding for their education, the aspirations of young people to want to become a peer leader could be raised, providing these young women with opportunities they might not be able to access outside of sport. Other stakeholders also recognised this, with this male site coordinator highlighting how important access to education is for young women:

*“Barriers, one is them getting a good education. Usually, they drop off from school. Reason being that one they have got no support; school support is not there from the homes where they stay. Remember because some of these girls are orphans, some of them are not orphans but they are just vulnerable because even for them to afford a meal, it is very difficult and a challenge. So, because of those, they find that they drop out of school, if you keep a lot of girls who are not educated enough, we are not helping them, and it is not good. We are just creating more problems for the future. It is those are the people who start now maybe become sex workers, or if not that they become drunkards, not because they want to, but it's because they are frustrated. There's nothing else for them. They do it to impress everyone, and then help where we can. Just look at it, other people can come in and help through helping them go to school and get money to pay for school fees” – George, Site Coordinator, Mtendere*

For a lot of these young women, the opportunity to attend or complete school would have otherwise been limited, with factors such as lack of funds, prioritisation of their male siblings' education, and



responsibilities at home being discussed in the interviews as reasons preventing this. However, it is important to note, that not all participants involved in this research received full sponsorship or scholarships to attend school, and sadly for some, whilst funding was offered, this was not sufficient to pay their full school fees. In this situation, it may be possible that false hope was given, with some young women volunteering on the assumed basis that funding for their education would be provided at some point. This reality could potentially lead to the peer leaders becoming disengaged from the programme and ending up in harmful situations as a result of attempting to seek funds from alternative avenues.

The theme of financial support, or for some lack of support, was a frequent topic which emerged during the research process. It was apparent, based on the information shared by the participants, that their experience of financial support varied greatly. Whilst some young women received full sponsorship to attend school, others received part funding, and for others no funding at all:

*“I just want to say maybe they just want their organization to increase to increase our sponsorship. Okay only give us maybe 500 [kwacha]. So, if they were to increase then maybe they can pay all of it” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“I got school sponsorship, but EduSport don’t sponsor us for colleges. The only sponsor for secondary and primary school, and it’s only half of it not all of it” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

Outside of the provision of school fees, some interviewees discussed receiving a monthly allowance as part of their role as a peer leader, where financial support was provided by the SfD NGOs in return for their services:

*“At the end, I at least get an allowance. A monthly allowance... It will help my family and me a lot. It’s a really good thing” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“I get a stipend and I also get transport refunds. It covers enough for my transportation.... It is just a little help. It isn’t enough to fully sustain me, but they say as long as I have enough to buy pads then I am okay” – Female peer leader, Munali*

*“Yeah we did [receive a stipend], Yeah it helps a lot at home, because when I get the allowance I have been given, I can take 100 kwacha and I can give some of it to my Mum to help at home” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“They [SfD NGO] give you an allowance to allow you to go and coach at your placement site” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Although there were varying accounts as to what this allowance was for, the participants who received a stipend discussed how it helped them financially and provided them with an income, which in turn able

to use to help their families at home. This allowance was valued greatly by the young women as it provided an income source which many indicated they were unable to access elsewhere, and further highlights why they saw their role as a peer leader as their job.

Funds for transport were also provided in addition to, or for some included within their allowance, which enabled the young women to be able to travel to their placement sites, or to central venues for competitions and event days. The provision of funds to travel was something that a large majority of the participants highlighted, indicating how their role as a peer leader had increased their spatial mobility. Prior to becoming a peer leader, a lot of the participants had never left their community and had only ever spent time within the close proximity of their home. However, since becoming a peer leader, they have been able to travel to different communities, and for some different countries, and be exposed to different parts of Zambia, and the world, which previously had been unattainable:

*“... because through sports I have moved to different places, I have met different people, I have learnt different things from different people, it is such a good experience. Sport has allowed me to do this, it has given me a lot of space where I have been able to learn a lot and lots of opportunities” – Female peer leader, Kamwala*

*“I have travelled to all of the provinces because of sport, it has allowed me to travel. Without sport I wouldn’t have been able to see so much or go to new places” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

Brady (2005) notes how the disparity between girls’ and boys’ access to public spaces begins in childhood and is exacerbated in adolescence. This disparity is determined by cultural norms which curtail girls’ physical mobility by determining when it is acceptable to go out in public. For the young women, being involved in SfD as a peer leader has often given them the opportunity to increase their spatial mobility, which in turn has increased their ability to participate in public life. However, for some of the participants this did impact negatively on the way their performance is perceived as a women within their own communities. As shown in the narrative below, some of the peer leaders had to be discrete about their movements beyond their own neighbourhood in order to keep up appropriate appearances. During various conversations it was noted that they had to hide, particularly in front of different community members including those from their local church, due to the stigma that those individuals associated with women being involved in sport:

*“A while back, it used to affect my performance to be honest, because there’ll be times where I have matches on Saturdays and I would try to hide where I am and you know when you are at a match and outside, you cannot hide. I used to worry what if someone sees me*

*from a church, and what if they report me. So, I was always like be afraid to be caught and don't perform to my best” – Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

As such, whilst involvement in SfD has increased the spatial mobility of the young women, potentially leading to greater independence, this increase do not come without its challenges.

For the occasions where the young women were unable to fulfil their role as a peer leader, regardless of what the circumstances were, the provision of school fees or an allowance was withdrawn by SfD NGOs:

*“It's really hard because when my schedule clash the first thing they took away was my school fees and it was [name of sponsors] who was sponsoring me to go to school. But for me to receive that money it was through [SfD NGO], so they have control over whether I got the money or not” - Esther, Mtendere*

For this young woman, whose journey as a peer leader was discussed in the previous chapter, a clash in her schedule as a result of increased home and education commitments meant she was unable to fulfil her role as a peer leader and attend all training sessions. As a result, her scholarship was withdrawn, and in her perspective, there was limited willingness from the NGO to understand her personal situation. This particular interviewee explained that consequently she was unable to finish her studies and at the time of her last interview, she had been unable to return to school. This peer leader shared that the reason she stopped being a peer leader was due to her financial difficulties. Given the trajectory of her life after her involvement in sport halted, it appears the removal of her scholarship may have been a pivotal factor in shaping the non-sporting activities she subsequently engaged in, and the decisions she made as she was seeking alternative source of funding.

Despite attempting to attend the sports venue for at least an hour a day, Esther was unable to complete all of her lessons at school as well as deliver all of the workshops she was being asked to facilitate:

*“It was really hard, I couldn't do both. So, it was hard, most of the time I was just being chased, I was just being chased at school, when I tell them they want money for school fees, I get told that because I don't go for trainings, when I explained them and tell them why, They just said no they can't do nothing” - Esther, Mtendere*

Esther's situation was one of a handful of participants who discussed challenges in their peer leader timetable with their wider life, whether this be educational, employment or at home. The concerning nature of their remarks are indicative of a broader challenge to SfD NGOs. As discussed earlier in this chapter, SfD NGOs rely on the capacity of peer leaders to deliver their sporting programmes, including

the life skills workshops and female focused sessions. When an NGO becomes heavily reliant on this volunteer workforce, challenges arise when the workforce can no longer provide the service they previously did, as without them, the programme would not function.

## **7.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the ‘Sporting Life, examining the way sport, and SfD programmes feature in the lives of young women who are peer leaders. This chapter has drawn on the accounts of Zambian young people, providing insights regarding their firsthand lived experience of SfD. The above narratives reveal the wider significance that sport and SfD has in the lives of the participants, indicating the valued contribution Sport in Action and EduSport can offer young people through their peer leadership programmes. Throughout the interviews, the significant influence and impact of sport on the everyday lives of young women was visible, and the participants attributed who they are today to the opportunities they had gained through the SfD programme as a peer leader. This includes various tangible development benefits such as financial gain, access to an education, and exposure to different cultures, but more so, how they had developed personally. A large proportion of participants cited that through their engagement in SfD as a peer leader, this had led to a greater awareness and a desire to want to make a change. Through going through a process that they considered as empowering, the young women wanted to empower others. This process of change links to feminist conceptual work on the empowerment process that views power as a capacity or ability to empower themselves or support others to do the same (Rowlands, 1997). The creation of a social network and a sporting family in the SfD setting provided a safe space where the young women were able to problematise and engage in dialogue, which in turn helped develop raise their consciousness which enabled them to reflect upon their lived experiences (Vaughan, 2011). This chapter has highlighted how participation in SfD programmes can have a significant impact on the lives of the young women, enabling them to feel valued and empowered, offering a safe space for the time in which they occupy it (Jeanes et al. 2018).

As Lindsey et al. (2017) indicate, whilst involvement in SfD activities may support young people in developing their leadership skills, self-esteem, and aspirations, as supported by the participants of this research, these are “of little use if the broader constraining factors within their families, communities and Zambian society prevent young people from using these qualities” (p. 179). The next chapter will explore this further, by examining ‘Beyond the Sporting Life’, exploring the role the environment has had on the lives of the peer leaders. Through analysing the influence of non-sporting factors, the next chapter will attempt to gain an understanding of how community, home life, family, friends, and economic factors influence young women and their involvement in SfD programmes, which in turn influences their experiences.

## **Chapter 8: Beyond the Sporting Life**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter continues the exploration of the experiences of peer leaders on their individual journeys, but this time looking at their experiences beyond sport-related spaces: that is, exploring peer leaders' experiences outside of sport and the different environments within which they find themselves. The chapter will analyse the influence of wider, non-sporting factors on the peer leaders' journeys: the role that community, home life, family and friends have on their engagement with the SfD programmes.

To understand the environment which surrounds each of the young people in this research, it was important to explore the practical conditions within which they live (see Section 4.3 more information regarding the wider socio-cultural, economic and institutional contexts of young people in sub-Saharan Africa). By exploring their backgrounds, including factors such as socioeconomic status, household income, level and quality of education, place of residence and household make up, an understanding of the practical conditions of their everyday lives could be gained. This in turn, informed the context within which they were a peer leader, and how this had influenced their individual journeys, for better and for worse. It is important to understand this because the impact of socioeconomic status on the development of young people in Zambia has been covered in the literature (Hoffman et al. 2017; McCoy, Zuilkowski and Fink, 2015; Zuilkowski et al. 2012), and has been identified as a determining factor in the trajectory of a young person's life.

### **8.2 The Immediate Context of Peer Leaders' Lives**

The research was undertaken in the compound communities in which the female peer leaders were based across Lusaka. As discussed in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3.1), these research sites were low-income neighbourhoods that existed on the outskirts of the city itself, densely populated and composed of small breeze block homes tightly packed together and inhabited by large numbers of family members (Lindsey et al. 2017). Sport, and access to sporting programmes for women and girls, have traditionally only been available to more privileged communities, with socio-economic issues alongside the availability of leisure time being directly link to sport activity and games (Meier, 2000). Aspects such as a lack of time and a division of labour have been recognised as major barriers for women and girls in developing countries, particularly due to the responsibility around production and reproduction (ibid). These specific barriers were acknowledged by the participants in this research, mainly when delving into the influence of family, and the expectations that were placed upon the young women when it came to fulfilling household responsibilities. For some, they recognised that their level of wealth was a dictating factor in their friends' and their own success in life:

*“Because it just depends on where you come from and what do you do... It does because the most things that affect us when it comes to where you come from, like nowadays the economy of Zambia is going down and it becomes a problem because it affects most of us like. Like girls, would just drop out from school, won’t complete their education because of those challenges” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

Wealth, or more so lack of wealth, was an apparent barrier for many of the young women and their peers, with where they come from shaping the general extent of empowerment and dictating what they can do. For some of these young women, everyday survival was the priority, with few considering engaging in recreational activities outside of their involvement in sport and being a peer leader. For those who were able to engage, that engagement was heavily impacted and limited by their home life and the role they had to fulfil. Often the peer leaders cited responsibilities at home, including the provision of food and caring for their siblings along with elderly relatives as obligations which prevented them from fully engaging in the SfD programmes, and for some, this was the reason they had to stop participating altogether. When explored deeper, their engagement with the SfD programmes was not a reflection of their desire to be involved, but more that they were balancing varying demands, which meant that the level at which they could fulfil their role as a peer leader was dictated by the home context amongst other factors. For those peer leaders who were not able to fully engage in the SfD programme, they openly shared how they had to balance their various commitments, and how this meant at times they could not commit to the role of the peer leader as much as they would have liked. When discussing how women are impacted by the division of labour within a household, Meier (2000) refers to domestic obligations as “innate, regularly delivered and socially engrained” where women are expected to be “providers of food and carers of the family” and as a result “do not seem to deserve leisure time” (p. 11). Although the sentiment of ‘not deserving leisure time’ was not one expressed by the peer leaders themselves, it was something that many mentioned their families vocalising. The specific influence of family will be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 8.4.1).

Some peer leaders had managed their time to enable them to engage in the SfD programmes in the afternoons, but their ‘leisure time’ was still limited by their responsibilities at home. This was an essence expressed by many of the participants, where their household responsibilities were the priority due to the expectations placed upon them, and their role as peer leader came second:

*“Yeah, I need to cook, clean, and make sure my sisters’ uniform is clean and all of that. I have to do it. it’s because I am the oldest daughter, it is something I ought to do, it’s in us from the time we are younger that we have to take care of people. That’s culture.” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

This differed greatly compared to her male siblings, who were able to prioritise their sporting commitments, and their time spent at the sports ground. Such a narrative relates to Butler’s (1990)

concept of performativity, which suggests that gender norms are so engrained that the female peer leaders simply act and fulfil domestic obligations without questioning them. Unlike the young women who had to be seen to prioritise the home and perform gender to meet societal expectations (Butler, 1990), the young men interviewed as part of this research, but also discussed more broadly amongst the participants, were able to choose to spend their time at the sports ground freely. This ‘freedom of time’ for men was aided by their families, who placed expectations upon the young women to take on household responsibilities, freeing up their male siblings to pursue other interests which included their education, career-focused pursuits, and sporting endeavours:

*“...Gender norms, that’s number one, the tradition itself, they would tell you that the girls place is in the kitchen. If you say the girl is supposed to be in the kitchen, and her brother’s supposed to be the hard-working person who is supposed to bring an income into the home. So, my family would rather educate my brother as opposed to me” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“...That’s what you are told, in our families. Like the gender roles. Before we even were even born like, they believe us women are vulnerable. In such a way that, there is a belief that what a man can do, a woman can’t do.... So, if a woman can’t work in the mines because that is only for men. So, most jobs that we had mostly in Zambia, they were hard manual labour. So, they’re like, no, the man has to do this, and the woman has to be working at home and looking after children” - Female peer leader, Chilenje*

During the data collection process, the peer leaders’ often spoke about their friends outside of sport and the perspectives shared by the participants indicated a belief that their friends often accepted life for ‘how it is’. The peer leaders, however, spoke about how as a result of their involvement in SfD they had gained an awareness of their own circumstances within broader society, becoming conscious to the problems they were experiencing. Furthermore, some of the participants questioned their own reality whilst recognising how it connects to the broader societal structures and developed a sense of agency to address these. Through expanding their levels of consciousness, some of the female peer leaders had increased their capacity to act to transform their world, increasing their sense of their own possibilities (Cornwall, 2016).

When discussing the circumstances within which they existed, including the impact of their socioeconomic status, some of the peer leaders highlighted the social inequalities which had led to their place within broader society, but also a desire to act to address these:

*“For others, they are limited because they think they are poor, and they think they won’t achieve anything... Whereas my parents can’t afford to provide me with three meals a day, so I have decided I am going to work hard and give them better and take my mother for dinner one day at a very expensive restaurant. So, to me it all starts in the head, in*

*your mind, the type of friends that you have, and what they influence you” – Female peer leader, Munali*

This specific peer leader clearly had awareness of the challenges of her life at home, and how her family life was shaped by her socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, she made the decision that she wanted to work to address these, proactively seeking ways to help her family. Others had also found themselves in similar situations where, despite the conditions in which they had been raised, involvement in SfD programmes had built their critical consciousness and agency, and thus they sought to develop strategies to overcome oppression and change the situation they, and others, were facing. This particular peer leader spoke about how her place in society had been shaped by expectations around her gendered role:

*“I would like to change the mindset of girls like me because if you asked me, there not any biological or scientific reason where it is written saying a girls’ place is supposed to be in the kitchen, cooking for the family or producing babies and all those things. I think our mothers should, our parents rather should raise us different and tell us how many things we can achieve before we get married, instead of just settling down. Because I tell you there are so many girls who are not doing anything, they just sit at home and say I am going to get married, and my life is going to be okay because I have a man who is going to be providing for me” – Female peer leader, Munali*

The critical consciousness expressed by this peer leader highlights how she has gained an awareness of her own situation and now wants to use her own experiences to challenge and change other families’ consciousness about what girls and women are capable of achieving. As such, consciousness plays a vital role in achieving social change, and this peer leader wanted to develop this at an individual and collective level, supporting young women through their families.

### **8.3 The Influence of Gender Norms**

In Zambia, the participation of young women in sport contradicts the dominate gender norms that permeate impoverished communities (Spaaij et al. 2014). All of the young women interviewed as part of this research, recognised that their participation in sport either as a participant, peer leader, or both conflicted with broader accepted gender norms. As such, it appeared that the gender norms and ideals that underpinned society in Zambia ran through into the community, and in turn into the sports field. For some of the peer leaders, they were prepared to challenge gender norms, despite what others said around them:

*“Most people say that is very courageous because not many females would actually take a key interest in sport. Yes, they [friends outside of sport] really applaud me most of the*



*time, they are like oh my god you do sport, you don't look like someone who does sport."*

*- Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*"But I have met people who don't think I should play as a girl. Sometimes, they say they can't play netball... They say the same to me, that I could start looking like a guy, but it is not everyone, it depends, it is up to you, it is your mindset. if you don't want to change yourself, your body, what, you can still look like a girl. Do I look like a guy? And she said no... It is the same in Zambia, some even say you should stop, it is too manly, but I say no, I am not doing that" – Female peer leader, Munali*

These two quotes indicate that, from the perspective of these peer leaders, they were surrounded by some people who viewed the involvement as women in sport as something out of the ordinary, with them holding a preconception as to what a 'sports person' should look like. Furthermore, the people around them also held the belief regarding the nature of sport, with terms such as "manly" being used to describe the masculine perception that surrounds sport.

Unlike these two young women who chose to engage in SfD programmes despite what members of the communities around them thought, many of the female participants spoke of people they knew who would not even consider playing sport or becoming a peer leader because they unquestionably viewed sport as a masculine space and one that they were unwilling to occupy. Even though some of the interviewees had managed to navigate this initial resistance, and contest the notion that girls are not welcome in sport, they recognised that their involvement in SfD programmes raised concerns more widely in their local communities, with others questioning their participation and whether the sports ground was where women should be spending their time:

*"Yes 100%. They weren't interested because I am a girl, they [community members] used to question where I was going and tell me that I should be doing house chores instead. They used to think that going for games was a waste of time, they used to question when I left the house" - Esther, Mtendere*

This peer leader talked about the wider community members who often surrounded the community ground, and who she would interact with daily on her way to the sports pitch. These wider community members included local vendors operating at the market near the sports ground, people who walked past the pitch and observed the sessions taking place, and other young people who were not involved in sport. Esther's insights regarding the questions she faced when she 'left the house', suggests that for some young women, the ability to leave the home where they reside to engage in external activities is something that not all are able to do, and when they can make this decision, it is one that is often challenged. This suggests that 'leaving the house' is a contested performance that does not align with assumed gendered behaviour, where young women have to grapple with being present at home to fulfil their domestic duties and household chores alongside their desire to strive for independence. Along

with facing questioning, some participants referenced moments where they had received verbal abuse, being quizzed about their behaviour, and being made to feel as if they were acting out of line, engaging in activities that brought shame on them, their family, and their community. One peer leader reflected on an experience she witnessed, where male community members bullied some of her female friends because of their involvement in sport, focusing on their gender and physical features, and why they believed sport was not a place for women:

*“Even in sport you find that boys will be bullying girls telling her she can’t play football because she is a girl. She has got breasts; they will be heavy when she is running and all those silly things. It is because they don’t understand, and when you tell a girl that it will stick in her head and no matter what is said she will think about it over and over and stop playing sport because of what a boy said to them” – Female peer leader, Munali*

For this young woman, her male community members made her feel that she was not welcome in sport. She also talked of being made to feel ashamed, that her male community members made her feel that she was not behaving how a women should act and that she was being disrespectful of the expected behaviours, traditions, and values. This experience links to performativity (Butler, 1990), and the complexities associated with gender performance. As this female peer leader failed to adhere to the prevalent gender norms, the binary performance of gender was reinforced by the reactions of others (Morgenroth, and Ryan, 2018), and this was evident in the way the male community members made her feel as a result of her performance. These interactions highlight the underlying culture and traditions that permeate the community, particularly in relation to the differing perspectives of masculinity and femininity:

*“Because they [young women] feel they get pressure from their parents and friends mostly because they're an age that society expects you to have a child. Many families don't care how they get pregnant as long as they have a child. So those traditions, I'd say they, they affect girls in a, in a negative way because girls don't get to pursue their dreams or know what they can do, identify their capabilities because of that” - Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

For the peer leaders, it is a fine balance as they navigate life as a young woman in Zambia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century alongside their desire to be involved in sport and be a peer leader, sometimes managing conflicting demands. On one side, some peer leaders felt pressured from their family, friends, and community to follow societal expectations by getting married and having a family, regardless of what their personal desires are. On the other side, some wanted to chase their own dreams, make their own decisions, and live their own life. For several of the participants, this desire was reflected through their

engagement in sport. For others, their own life meant living one that was opposite to the life that was expected of them, and one that sport had exposed them to:

*“So, I have been exposed to so many new things because of sports, which is amazing. If I wasn't in sport, I tell you right now I'll be in the kitchen at home cooking for everyone” –  
Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

Whilst this specific peer leader acknowledged the role sport had played in broadening her horizons, allowing her to see what life could hold, another recognised that her exposure to sport also enabled her to question the gender roles that were placed upon her. Whilst previously she may have felt compelled by social sanctions to perform in an expected way that linked to her gender identity as a woman (Butler, 1988), her experiences through SfD raised her critical consciousness, and gave her the agency to decide her own actions which were different to those Zambia society had placed upon her:

*“Gender roles these are roles that both a man and women can do. And that society says we should act a certain way, but I have learnt differently through being a peer leader” –  
Female peer leader, Chawama*

Whilst the latter desires could be attributed to a number of different factors, it was evident that the young women who had either been involved in sport as a participant or had actively taken on a role as a peer leader in their community, held very different perspectives of what their life could be like as a young woman in Zambia to those suggested to their peers:

*“I think it was because of the interest, when I was a player, they would teach us different thing, through what they were teaching me, especially, with what they were teaching us on the girls, because growing up a Zambian typical girl, we are told marriage is the most important things we can ever achieve in life. And, well not, we are not considered to be people who can be in sport” - Female peer leader, Munali*

This quote highlights the awareness of the participants as they contend with cultural expectations alongside the different perspectives they were being exposed to through sport. Choosing to pursue a different route outside of societal norms is not an easy path for peer leaders as their choices do come with consequences. In their research, Meier and Saavedra (2009) outlined some of the dangers faced by African women who openly contest the gender regime around them through their participation in sport. Using the experiences of Eudy Simelane, a South African female football player, and Hassiba Boulmerka, an Algerian middle-distance Olympic athlete, the authors highlighted that they received death threats, being brutally beaten or were gang raped as a consequence of choosing to pursue their sporting endeavours in a society that does not accept that course. Whilst none of the participants in this research discussed receiving these threats, a number did allude to the need to hide their whereabouts when they were at the sports ground from those around them, due to the awareness that their decision

to be involved in sport was not welcomed as it did not meet expected gendered behaviour, and as a result, they preferred to lie about where they were.

When questioned about what a good life would be, one of the peer leaders specifically noted the importance of living in a community where she was supported, which was the opposite of how she felt things currently were:

*“I think a good life for me, would be, living in a community where I am being supported. A community where we are being valued for our hard work, because a patriarchy society should be challenged because we are women can also explore some opportunities which men like are given chance to do. I think we can do much better. So, if only we are given a lot of opportunities, and if us women are being supported, like being serious, and changing our mindsets, because we are being looked down most of the time, so we find because of that a lot of young women don’t want to do more to challenge them. So, I think that would be good” – Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

This comment is particularly powerful and illustrates the desire of many of the peer leaders to live within a community that accepts them for who they are, that champions them as women and that affords them the same opportunities as their male peers. However, the current reality of these young women is the opposite, with many finding themselves in a patriarchal community outside of sport, operating in spaces where they do not feel welcomed in the way that they are at the sports ground. Becoming a peer leader and being involved in sport is not only a challenge for these young women, and often results in abuse and bullying, but they also feel as if they are constantly fighting a losing battle. These experiences are not unfamiliar for young women in the sporting field, with Ogunniyi’s (2015) study of female footballers in South Africa producing similar findings. Ogunniyi’s (2015) research highlighted that whilst the participation of black women in football in South Africa has the opportunity to challenge hegemonic masculinity, it also can contribute towards the ostracization of women and further entrench male hegemony, where their involvement led to questions and concerns about their behaviour and how they were transgressing from traditional gender ideologies.

For many of these peer leaders, they wished to live in a community where they were supported, where their sporting endeavours were valued and where they could fulfil their potential, if only given the opportunity to do so. When the participants were asked to describe what a ‘good life’ meant to them, an overwhelming majority referenced getting a job, earning their own income, getting married, having children, and attending church. As such, to some extent the peer leaders were transgressing community norms due to their involvement in sport, but in other ways, they were abiding by them, by expressing a desire to live their life in a way which reflects the broader gender norms prevalent in Zambian society. Much of the above speaks to the gender norms that underpin and shape many of the communities where

this research was conducted, where young women are raised to believe that their place is in the home, attending church as a family and being supported by their husbands:

*“They don’t teach about this at school, but they teach about culture and the culture says women should get married, that is their place. And that usually happens young, maybe 20 years” – Female peer leader, Kamwala South*

*“Like traditionally for a woman in Zambia, a good life would be like get married early, as early as you can above 20 obviously. Not have some, be educated more but you have to be less than your husband. And have the home and kids. That's it. You could be working but you don't need to earn a lot, that's your husbands' job” – Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

Many of the participants spoke about the cultural and community expectations that were upon them, which influenced what they could and could not do. However, despite many expressing these beliefs, some of the participants did also question the things they were told by those around them, explaining that they wanted to stand on their own two feet, live an independent life and succeed beyond the cultural expectations that had been placed upon them:

*“For a young woman in Zambia, the signs you would see that they have a good life. Most of them are, how you would know, is where you see them making decisions for themselves. Also, when you see them standing firm, and no relying on men to lead them, just being independent. Not relying on a man which society says you should do. I have a friend who always says, look a man is a provider of the house, and a woman needs to be submissive and obey everything. We are always having conflicts and we quarrel about that, because that just at that statement shows that okay this man who is that a woman cannot be independent” - Female peer leader, Kaunda Square*

*“I think for a woman in Zambia, to be having a good life, you will need like to complete your studies, and then start working. And you have to be working to have that good job. A good education. In Zambia there is also an expectation you get married, as a woman if you are working and then you have everything then you get married because everyone like, even your husband can be like you just have to go back, I don’t want you to stay and work. Even if the women is the boss because you have everything now, but if you are not really educated, and then that husband of yours comes to you and says like, no what today we have to get a divorce, and by that age, you maybe already have like two kids. And then how you are going to be helping those kids if you don’t have any like, no wages, you haven’t completed your studies, so in such life it is really hard for a woman. But for those women, who are working, who have completed their studies, it is fine for them.” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

These are just two examples of various conversations I had with the participants where they expressed a desire to create their own successful life, regardless of what expectations had been placed upon them. For some of the participants, they explained how they wanted to live their own life, irrespective of needing to rely on a man or husband, and regardless of cultural expectations, by gaining a good education, earning an income, and becoming independent; despite the differing views of those in the community around.

Many of the communities where this research was conducted had a ground or school which was the hub of sporting activity for that community. The limited amount of leisure spaces within the local communities, meant that each programme delivery site had adopted either a piece of sparse land, a school facility, or on the margins of fields, sharing their space with other sports, or in many cases, playing on hazardous surfaces containing glass, rocks, and concrete. It was rare that these sporting activities ventured away from these ‘safe’ spaces, but for the majority of these sites, they were located in the heart of the community. For one site, Mtendere, the school was positioned alongside a popular commuting route, which meant that the wider community would regularly see the activities taking place. This was of particular importance, as it resulted in the broader community members seeing young women engaging in sport in public spaces as well as actively taking on leadership roles for their peers. Similar to other studies that highlight how repressive gender stereotypes are challenged through the public exposure of young women engaging in sport in public spaces (Jeanes et al. 2018); many of the young women believed, from their experiences, that the greater exposure the broader community had to women involved in sport, the better, as this began to challenge perceptions, and in time hopefully change them:

*“It is going to take time, and the more people in the community see girl child playing sport the better” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

Whilst for some of them, their participation in sporting programmes is outrightly condoned, as highlighted above, for others it is merely tolerated by both their family members and broader community. But, for many peer leaders, they live in hope that through increased visibility and exposure, the perception and beliefs of the community around them will change and become more accepting and receptive of young women being involved in sporting space.

#### **8.4 Social Relations and Support Networks**

Support networks which surrounded the young person emerged as pivotal components in the journey of the peer leaders. Such support networks commonly comprised a number of dimensions, which included their family, peer groups, friendships and associational life, alongside their home environment

and community surroundings. All of these facets contributed towards the experiences of the peer leaders on their own journeys, both positively and negatively.

#### **8.4.1 Family: The Role of the Family in Regulating Participation**

In Chapter 4, the role of family as a central social institution was discussed (see Section 4.3.1), highlighting its presence as the most widespread institution, playing an importance role in human development (Mwale, Libati and Khan, 2018). Within the African context, family are traditionally viewed as the social security system, being responsible for passing on traditional social values and education, for caring for the poor and sick and for protecting the vulnerable (Strobbe, Olivetti, and Estheron, 2013). For many of the participants within this research, their family were referenced strongly during the interview process, with different insights being shared about their home life, their family set up and structure, and the support received. The role of family was also often referenced in relation to how they regulated their participation in sport and their involvement within the peer leader programme.

For those peer leaders who came from a supportive home, with parents who were encouraging of their involvement in sport, this contributed towards a more positive experience with these young women discussing the importance of parental and familial support in their ongoing involvement and participation in sport as highlighted here:

*“Yes, very much happy [parents] because whenever I am having a programme here, and I have to tell my Mum tomorrow that I have to be at Fountain around this time, she will be like you don’t even have to work here, you go there then I will do the work for you... They encourage me a lot when it comes to sport.” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope, lives at home with both parents and three siblings*

*“Yes, they are, they support it. They allow me to go and learn things from sport and they also sometimes, my brothers come to watch and also teach you more where they see you do not have knowledge, they educate you” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga, lives at home with both parents*

*“Yes, they support very much, they see the benefits that it gives me, it's really good.” – Female peer leader, Chipata, lives at home with her mother*

For these young women, the support of their parents and wider family units was important in enabling them to pursue their sporting interests and their life as a peer leader. Research has long acknowledged the significance of families in influencing the behaviour of young people (Spaaij and Anderson, 2010), particularly relating to sport, where families play a central role in shaping female participation (Kay and Spaaij, 2012; Chawansky and Mitra, 2015). Quite often for the individuals in this research, they

discussed coming from a home environment where there was an interest in sport, such as one of their parents had previously played sport or were currently involved. Others mentioned having family who saw the benefits of their daughter's participation in the SfD programmes provided by the NGOs, and therefore, were supportive of this involvement. This 'buy-in' from their families enabled these young women to engage fully in the programmes and to excel in their role as peer leaders as they had parents who were supportive and encouraged them to spend time at the sports ground and involved in these activities.

This 'buy in' is important to note, as family patterns in Zambia are shaped by poverty, patriarchy, and sharply defined by gender norms (Kusanthan, Mwaba and Menon, 2016). Furthermore, family composition, practices and ideologies have all been recognised to significantly affect young people's lives (Kay and Spaaij, 2011), and therefore the make up within which a young woman finds herself appears influential in shaping their life decisions and the activities they engage in. This was highlighted by a number of participants who reflected that other young women may not be in such a lucky situation as they are:

*"Again, it depends on what type of family you come from. A lot of ladies get involved in different things, others will nurture their talent in hair platting, others will just do school and then it's done" – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

*"It depends on the person and the challenges they face, including their families and circumstances on whether they stay in sport or not... It will depend, life is a challenge, some families say that when you do sports, sports can make you fail at school, and it is a bad distraction. For some families stop their children do sports and don't allow them. I am not sure why but maybe it is due to their culture or their religion." – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*"I was very lucky, as I know others don't have that support. For those who don't have supportive family they might end up missing a lot of opportunities to participate in sport, since if you find that the parents are not there to support you in sport, it is very difficult for the peer leaders to participate. You just need to convince the parents, to talk to them one on one, to help them understand EduSport and the programmes you are doing, and the benefits of sport, and who you are as peer leaders." – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

Without the 'buy-in' from their families, some young women found resistance when wanting to partake as a peer leader. For some of the peer leaders, their family reaction to their participation in sport was contrasting, with some speaking of their families' disapproval and how this caused challenges to how often they could engage and participate in the programme. SfD literature highlights how parental attitudes can be a barrier to young women's participation in sport (see Section 3.5.5), where the family is regarded as a "crucial influence on young people's involvement with sport" (Kay and Spaaij, 2011,



p. 79). However, as shown through this research, young women can be involved in sport and therefore, parental attitudes have not precluded their participation entirely. But the extent to which young women can engage in the SfD programme, and the frequency of that involvement does appear to be significantly influenced by their families. This could have implications for some young women, as limiting a young woman's involvement in SfD, a programme which has broader social aims, may consequently impact the outcomes that individual may experience. The position of family as central to this process is pivotal, where they can become an obstacle to the processes of social change that the SfD programmes are looking to bring about.

The participation of women and girls within the sport sector in Zambia is, therefore, influenced in a multitude of ways, positively and negatively, internally, and externally, directly, and indirectly and intentionally and unintentionally (Tamela and Banja, 2021). Families may foster participation in sport, providing the support which allows young people to participate and progress (Kay and Spaaij, 2011). Conversely, families have been shown to constrain the participation of their offspring in sport through withholding support, occurring through both choice and necessity (ibid). The expectation to live up to traditional gender roles in mainstream society has impacted the involvement of women in the sports profession, in roles such as coaches, administrators and physical educators (Tamela and Banja, 2021). As many of the research participants attest, the struggles they experienced when partaking in the SfD programmes, and as a peer leader, often stemmed from their home environment:

*"I think for those people whose family support it yes. because doing sports, makes me so busy, and keeps me focused. whereas if I was not doing sport, I could have been found myself in a bar, taking alcohol, but sports made me forget about all of those things, and gives me something to focus on. Sport has helped with that, and my family understand that. I find sometimes though they don't understand, the only person who understands me when I am doing sport is Dad. Yeah because mummy she is like, ever since I started doing sport there is nothing I bring at home, you don't even like, you don't have a passport, like no Mum I am going to South Africa. No there is nothing like that, so she says to me she thinks I should stop doing sport and then start, maybe like find a job, but I tell her, no sport is fine for me" - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

This narrative is one of several participants who referenced conflicting views at home when it concerned their involvement in sport, and their subsequent role as a peer leader. Through demonstrating resistance to her mother, the above female peer leader is evidencing elements of the 'power to' aspect of empowerment (Rowlands, 1997), by informing her mother that sport is something she wants to pursue. Through this account, this female peer leader shows how her time in SfD has empowered her to act, gaining the resources and agency to resist in the face of domination by her mother, asserting her capacity to make her own decision.

Whilst some individuals were empowered through their involvement in SfD and were able to stand up to their parents, others had to rely on the support of their coach, and wider sporting community to help change the perspective of their families to get them begin to see sport in a positive light. This experiences refs to the ‘power with’ type pf power (Rowlands, 1997), highlighting how the SfD programmes were able to empower the young women in different ways:

*“Back in the day my family used to stop me playing netball, but my coach tried to convince them for now that is it beneficial, so they do support me” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

During a follow up conversation with the above peer leader, she divulged that previously her family resisted her participation in sport due to their beliefs around how as a woman she should not be participating in sport, and she should be at home supporting the functioning of the household alongside completing her education. In addition to this, she also explained how her family were also concerned that her involvement in sport disturbed her development as a young woman. Her family expressed concerns that sport would take up all her time, and as a result she would not focus on school. She openly discussed how her family believed she was going to fail her Grade 9 exam because her commitments as a peer leader was consuming her time, but through perseverance and determination, she wanted to *“convince them by passing my exam and it made them change their mind”*. As a result, her family now *“see sport as a good thing”* for her, something that was only possible with the support of her coach, who petitioned the family to allow her to take part. This experience links with the ‘power with’ dimension of empowerment (Rowlands, 1997), whereby the solidarity of this female peer leader with her coach enabled a process of collective empowerment which positioned her to be able to act to address the concerns of her family; something she had previously been unable to do on her own.

This peer leader now explains that her family understand the benefits of her participation in sport, and how she now *“knows more about life skills because of sports compared to my sisters who do not play”*. This conversation reflected a situation a few of the female peer leaders had experienced, where only through the support of either their coach, another male peer leader or site coordinator, had they managed to convince the family that the participation of their daughter in sport was not a negative thing:

*“So last time last time I had a chat with one of the girl parents as the daughter wanted to play football, but the mother was unsure. So, I had to explain, as I think she was confused but she understood [in the end] that it was good stuff. I was very happy, I like was okay, that at least we have a few parents who are open and supportive. Allowing their girls to come along and participate, which is good. I think it is changing” – Male peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

Whilst research has indicated that notable progress has been made in women holding leadership roles in the public sector and business corporations, little has changed regarding women in decision making and management roles in the sports sector in Zambia (Tamela and Banja, 2021). This, coupled with the

discussions during the interview process, resonate with Forsyth et al.'s (2019) study that found that deeply rooted beliefs regarding the place of women and girls in sport reflect culturally inspired role and gender identities which view women as primary caretakers and men as dominating the public domain. Young women in Zambia are expected to live up to traditional gender roles that, when opposed, are viewed to be in defiance of traditional Zambian culture (Thelma, 2024). This conflict between gender norms and expectations was something that a number of the peer leaders talked about, highlighting how the lack of approval stemmed from the feminine cultural expectations that were held by the families of young women:

*“Many families do, it is common here. They believe the women should be home, doing their house chores. Here in Zambia, they believe these women should just focus and stick on learning how to do house chores, how to become a good wife instead of learning a lot of things. So, they can't allow them, they think as sport are only for men.” – Female peer leader, Kabwata*

*“Its culture beliefs in everything; they have very set beliefs about how men and women should be and especially who should be allowed to play sport” - Female peer leader, Munali*

*“So, tradition is that guys are not supposed to do the house chores. Girls they are supposed to do. Whereas boys play sport instead. Boys aren't supposed to play netball, only girls are, and girls are not supposed to play football that is for the boys. But it is changing a bit. That is tradition in Zambia” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

Such quotes demonstrate how many of the participants were aware of other young women who had faced conflict from their family when wanting to engage in SfD programmes due to underlying beliefs about what a role of female is and what a role of male is, both within the home environment and more widely in relation to sporting endeavours. Some of the peer leaders themselves had also faced similar challenges from their own families, with resistance to their involvement in sport being expressed because of a variety of reasons. These findings echo broader SfD literature, where Spaaij et al.'s (2014) analysis on the mediating influence of gender on the participation of women in sport in Zambia highlighted that “families constantly use the idea that women will not be able to pursue their expected path into marriage as a way of discouraging women's participation” (p. 77). As such, young women who attempt to play sport, are constructed as abnormal or deviating from the expected norms (ibid).

Traditional perspectives regarding gender are deeply embedded across Zambian culture, with families being an influential source of strong gender norms that characterise the private and public spheres in Zambia (Day, 2015). For female peer leaders, traditional views of gender have meant that their involvement within sport, and as a peer leader has been limited, and they have had to assume far greater responsibilities in their households compared to male family members:

*“Because, here in Zambia, they believe that a boy shouldn’t be found in the kitchen. Yeah so, ladies are the ones who are supposed to be found in the kitchen” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“They think traditionally the female child should do all the house chores, the male child will only sit, wait for the food to be prepared and maybe even go to school. But girl child is only special for the house chores.” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

Similar perspectives were given by other female peer leaders, who identified that culture and tradition play an influential role in how they were brought up at home, the responsibilities they assume, and how this differed compared to their male siblings and male family members:

*“Yeah, there are times when I can’t be home on time to do that so, in the African tradition, we normally train every girl child and now to know how to cook, how to clean, so I have trained my sister how to do that. For whenever I am not there, they [my sisters] have to do that. Because the whole emphasis of that culture is that one day you are going to get married and you have to take care of your own family so if you can’t cook, you can’t clean, it becomes an issue. So, we normally train from younger age, and they can do it when I can’t be there” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

Families are significant factors in underpinning gender relations, with gender roles being strongly differentiated and females, in both the Global North and Global South, assuming a lower status (Kay and Spaaij, 2011). These widely-spread, and deeply-rooted gender norms may present an obstacle to SfD programmes that are trying to promote gender equity, with these being reinforced continually through daily interactions and social relations in the family life (ibid). For many, their experiences, and the responses they faced when trying to take part in sport, felt that they were given it was an either-or approach when it came to engaging in SfD and fulfilling household responsibilities. Some of the peer leaders spoke about their families being unsupportive of their involvement in the SfD programmes and the time they spent at the community grounds because they are concerned that it would lead them to neglect other expected roles within their home:

*“Because the boys would ask me when we were supposed to play sport, that girls should be doing the housework, we need to sit, we need to wash, we need to do this, we need to cook for them etc. The belief was that we should be either at work or at home whilst they went to play sport” – Female peer leader, Kalingalinga*

*“Some people still think that. Even the sports academy where I am. It's not easy to like get back a female child into school. Because they still think education is not for your child, education, and sport. They still think the kitchen belongs to the girls, education and sport belong to the boys. So, you were trying, by all means with our coach, called Sharon, to at*

*least educate them. The parents. And at least when we sat with the parents with the children, it's much easier" – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

For these young women, their wider family members expected them to perform domestic chores, often daily, with their parents' raising concerns that spending time at the community sports grounds meant that had less time to fulfil their responsibilities at home:

*"...My mum she had find it so difficult because I had once failed my duties because of only concentrating on sport. It was my fault that I failed once and then she was like, maybe you might fail again so probably she was protecting me to say that you stop playing" – Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

Often these young women were the oldest female offspring in the family, assuming responsibility for their younger siblings, until it is time for the next female sibling to take this role on. This household responsibility was not a choice, but an expectation because they were female, and they were the oldest daughter:

*"I have to yeah be doing all of them, because men don't do anything. Men don't do anything, don't cook, don't clean. If he is young, then he can just sit but no nothing. But then as a girl you can never sit no, my niece is only 6 years old, but she helps wash the plates, she helps clean. And when she's older she will do all of the jobs, it will be passed on to her" – Esther, Female peer leader*

Such perspectives echo the majority of the interviewees and align with a wider recognition that young people in Zambia have had to take on significant responsibilities within their family to contribute towards the functioning of the household, including earning money to support their families, taking on responsibility for other relatives and younger siblings and fulfilling household chores (Lindsey et al. 2017). These experiences link with the 'power over' dimension of empowerment (Rowlands, 1997), whereby female peer leaders are oppressed as a result of their parents and families having a social relation of domination over them, and as a result, they are unable to exert influence and have a say in the household duties and domestic chores.

All of the peer leaders cited someone in their family had expressed a belief that it was the girls' job to stay at home and help with the maintenance of the household, a role that many were taught from an early age, and one which impacted their time available to engage in the SfD programmes:

*"To cook, to fetch water, and just the chores of the house. You switch, you wash the plates, for the whole house. Like, we are given a shift, like shift like you're cooking for one week and they choices therefore when it's one week again, you are, another one has started doing the choices. Like for me, I only do chores in the morning, as in the afternoon, I*

*always goes for training. So, I don't find time in the afternoon to do chores, so I do morning shifts” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

These daily accounts are similar to those evidenced by Gough (2008), whose research on youth in Kalingalinga and Chilenje South in Lusaka, found that young girls and women often have to wake up early to actively engage in housework, spending their mornings preparing food, cleaning the house, and washing clothes. For those who have siblings, their time was also spent looking after younger family members, and as a result, these additional duties constrict their leisure time. It is interesting to call it ‘leisure time’ as this refers to free time when an individual is not spent working, whereas for many of the participants, peer leading is thought of as work and therefore, questions could be asked as to how much leisure time they actually have, if any at all. These responsibilities, when coupled with those who had education commitments, left the young women with little time to engage in their own interests, including sport and the SfD programmes. Some of the participants spoke of friends who had dropped out of the SfD programmes to fulfil household responsibilities, and others whose families had banned them from participating in sport due to the assumed belief that sport was for men, and their place was at home. The latter implication derived from a broader belief that through engaging in sports-based programmes, these young women were challenging the widely held norms of what femininity was, and how it ‘should’ look, by engaging in more masculine activities. This implication can be understood through Butler’s (1990) view that gender is a performance in which people repeatedly engage, and those “who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished” (Butler, 1988, p.522).

Through this research, as shown above, families have been recognised to play contradictory roles in relation to the influence they have on how young people respond to sports programmes in Zambia. It is shown that, on one hand, a minority of families are supportive and can even play a role in extending the positive impact of SfD programmes. On the other hands, other families, or in some cases, certain family members, have been shown to equally resist the involvement of young people in programmes and in some situations, may even be the source of the problems that such initiatives seek to alleviate (Kay and Spaaij, 2011). Whilst this resistance was shown to come from a variety of family members, it was apparent that greater resistance was faced from male family members, or male relatives, who opposed the involvement of women in sport. For example, the following female peer leader from central Lusaka discussed how her boyfriend prevented her playing football, and expressed concerns that a girl should not be found in sport:

*“I actually had my boyfriend that never wanted me to play football. He had stopped me... At the time that he did not understand a girl playing sport in that was hard for him too. Because he was like you're a girl, you're not supposed to play football” – Female Peer Leader, Central Lusaka*

Similar resistance was shared by this peer leader, who highlighted that her dad didn't like her spending time at the sports ground and questioned what she was doing:

*"Oh no. No, they never like sport. I'm not sure why they didn't like it but because my dad he used to see how we were growing as girls but for him every time he was coming home, he didn't like what we were doing"* – Female Peer Leader, Munali

Whilst all peer leaders had different experiences, it was evident that the way a young woman was brought up shaped her access to, and involvement in SfD programmes and more so, whether she was able to pursue being a peer leader. Some peer leaders did face resistance, or opposition from wider family members who questioned their involvement in sport. These 'concerns' arose for a variety of reasons and some shared through the interview process, which have been discussed above, include: a belief that a women's place should be in the home not at the sports field, a belief that sport is a male domain, and not a place for women, a belief that being involved in sport can act as a distraction from education and other commitments. There were some commonalities emerging through the interviews, but also some unique situations, and the experiences of each young woman was shaped by their own situation, their household make up, and the views and perspectives of those family members she was surrounded by. Those who came from a non-sporting family: that being a family where neither parents, siblings, or anyone else in the household were involved in sport, or from a predominantly male household appeared to face more resistance, than those who were surrounded by a sibling, male or female, or a family member who participated in sport.

Family members, both male and female, who had grasped the benefit of their daughter participating in sport and understood the positives of their involvement as a peer leader, were more supportive, even if at the start they expressed concerns. The following peer leader highlights the challenges of being brought up by her dad:

*"Being brought up by just a dad, it is not everything he can tell us. Well like, we are like three girls and one boy, so you might find that there are certain things you might want to be learn and know but by him being a man he cannot tell you these things or share these. He had very particular views around sport, and why I shouldn't play, and how I should behave as a young woman"* – Female Peer Leader, Kabwata

Similarly, this participant shared the resistance she initially faced from her grandmother when she first engaged in sport, and how she had to explain the experiences she was being exposed to through involvement in the SfD programmes so that her grandmother to understand the benefits of her involvement:

*"Like, with granny, in the first place she was like no concentrate much on school [rather than sport]. Then later after, I had to explain no grandma what you go through as well as*

*peers we go through a lot, like peer pressure from our fellow friends. But because of sports at least I am managing both school and my leisure time. Like then she was like, okay I can see and now she really comforts me and really tells me you should continue helping out there with the young ones. Because young ones were saying how much they wanted me to coach them, so grandma told me to continue in the same spirit and keep helping the kids”*  
– Female peer leader, Chawama

As detailed by this peer leader, the presence of a female relative – her aunt in this situation – was pivotal in enabling her to learn about life as a young woman:

*“But my aunt was like okay, she taught me how to behave as a young woman, the things I needed to know and do, so thankfully I had her to teach me about life in Lusaka”* – Female Peer Leader, Kabwata

The above peer leader further went on to talk about how having her aunt playing a more active role in her life as she grew up was important in enabling her to learn about life as a young woman, but also her aunt became her role model and someone to look up to. For this participant, time spent with her aunt allowed her to experience different things and realise that wider gender norms were not an insurmountable barrier for her. Such quotes indicate the influence of family members as significant motivators but also hinderances to participation in sport and SfD programmes for young women in Zambia.

#### **8.4.2 Peer Groups and Friendships**

For young people in Zambia, friendships, and networks with peer from their communities are also important influential factors in their lives (Mburu et al. 2014). Peer groups and schools have been recognised to be key agencies of socialisation for young people, influencing their outcomes within the international development context (Kay and Spaaij, 2011). The concept of being connected and having a network of friendships is an important determinant of healthy experiences for young people in Zambia (Mburu et al. 2014), and this was evident from the interviews. For those peer leaders who were surrounded by a group of friends or peers who were *also* involved in sport, their experiences were much more positive as they engaged in similar activities:

*“I spend a lot of time with people who love sport, because where people don’t love sport, especially those ones at school, I have one friend who doesn’t love sport. But now she has turned out to join our team because there is nothing to do. So, most of the weekends when I am off to watch a match, she offers to escort me because there’s nothing she can do, I can’t stay in my room all weekend. Most of my friends are sports people”* – Female peer leader, Chawama



Associating with ‘good’ friends, and spending time with others who were also involved in sport, either as a participant or peer leader was evidenced as a pivotal factor in influencing what activities the peer leaders engaged with outside of the sporting arena. Those who spent more time with like-minded individuals talked about the positive influence these friends had on them and the choices they made:

*“In terms of education like so when you go to most school, mostly people are being influenced by their friends, maybe to be out of school. But because of sport, I used to have that in mind, I was like after class, I need to be at the ground and have sessions with my fellow friends. So that kept me in school, rather than being away from school” – Female peer leader, Chawama*

*“So, there are, about three girls, they are all leaders here [at the community ground]. They are like my closest friends. And also, they are like my sisters. They are very supportive; I would say because like we tend to do most of the things together” – Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

This is in stark comparison to the influence of friends from outside the sporting space. The interviewees offered nuanced accounts of the positive influence of their peer groups but also the dangers of associating themselves with the wrong crowd. This was particularly pertinent to the negative influence the wrong friendship group can have on their participation in sport, the activities they engage in within their own time and the path they ultimately follow in their life. This highlights the important influence that peer groups have on the decisions young people make:

*“...Because like, when you are, when you are six, there are six in our group, when me I am not taking alcohol, they must beat me or remove me from their group. So, I should take the things that they take.” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“Sometimes yes [in relation to drinking alcohol and doing drugs], other young people start to do it because of peer pressure. Like where they live and who they spend their time with” – Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“I do feel that there also is still a lot of women who feel like if the peer pressure is too much, they kind of messed up” – Female peer leader, Lusaka Central*

Exploring the language used by the participants above, the first quote appears quite distinctive, and reflects how some of the young women felt pressured to engage in certain behaviours because those around them were doing the same. This specific young person highlighted that she was part of a group of six friends, and that at times, she felt pressured to engage in the activities they were doing, which included drinking alcohol. Further conversations revealed that despite her being opposed to such behaviour, at times peer pressure led to her engaging in these activities as a way of remaining within her group of friends.

Friendships and networks with peers from their communities were key influences in the lives of the peer leaders, many of whom recognised the need to stay away from those they believed would be a bad influence or detrimental to their journey. Many of the interviewees talked about having a close-knit social network of peers, one which was formed of other peer leaders that provided them with a different identity from those conventionally assigned to them (Brady, 2005), and as a result allow them to pursue a path different from their peers:

*“It is very common, so it has become normal [young women getting married]. Many do it because of peer pressure, others because their parents and other situations they can be found in. Sport can be a good way to keep them out of these situations. As in for me, the best example I can give is with my cousin. She quite alright, she goes to school, when she comes from school she doesn’t do anything. Like the time we close school, the only thing she will be busy with is moving up and down with her friends, doing all sorts of bad things and at the end of the day she involves herself in the things her friends are. So for me, I think, being found in sport and immersing yourself in sport is a good thing because those time when are you supposed to be doing bad things in the community you can busy with trainings, maybe a tournament and travelling there, so you can be kept busy with sports to keep you away from those things” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

A number of the narratives presented above mention that, without being involved in sport, young people were often left ‘doing nothing’ and ‘sitting around’. This perspective links to a negative stereotype of youth that views them as idle (Locke and Lintelo, 2012). As discussed in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.2.3), this language links into the way the participants viewed the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, where without being involved in sport, some of their friends were left in a period of ‘suspension’ and ‘stalemate’ (Honwana, 2014). Locke and Lintelo (2012) highlight that in Zambia the difference between ‘just sitting’ and ‘waiting’ is “expressed in terms of orientation and ‘working towards’ moving forward in the future” (p. 788). For those involved in SfD, it could be suggested that they were on an identifiable pathway, doing something that was of value with their time and working towards the future. By contrast, those young people who were not participating in SfD programmes could be viewed as passive and with the possible connotation - as some of the peer leaders themselves narrated - that this was connected to engaging in immoral activities to occupy their time instead (Locke and Lintelo, 2012).

Friendships and peer groups were not only important in terms of the influence they had on the peer leaders, but also provided a safe space to discuss challenges, to share knowledge and skills, and to seek advice and support for problems. This was of particular importance when discussing gender norms, as gender norms have been shown to regulate the behaviour of women and girls in Zambia, framing their lives and making them particularly vulnerable to practices such as sexual violence, pregnancy, and child

marriage (Svanemyr, 2020). Without the support of their fellow peer leaders, many of the interviewees would not have had a support network and would have found themselves isolated, pursuing an unknown course in life whilst fighting against the traditional norms that were placed upon them as young women in their community:

*“In terms of my whole life, I think it is [a fellow Peer Leader], as we have always been there to support each other, since ever since, I started working as a peer leader at the same time as her. So, she is my closest friend, and we do this together.... We have a lot in common. We share, even like, we have a topic to teach for Girls in Action, we can help each other, we research together so we can share with the kids together.” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

*“It is a learning process, and we get to help each other understand things, teach each other here and there, so yeah we work together” – Female peer leader, Fountain of Hope*

Whilst being involved in SfD programmes allowed the young women to gain a group of likeminded peers, for others it caused challenges amongst their existing group of friends. The following peer leader spoke about how she no longer associates with her ‘church friends’ as they are not supportive of her involvement in sport, with her articulation of this being particularly interesting given it suggests a perceived hierarchy of goodness:

*“Because I changed circles of friends after I joined sports. Cause there were some, who I had who were church friends but then they don't associate with me anymore because they don't understand nor are they in support of what I do. So, so most of my friends around sport, yes. I reconnect them when they understand me, they understand everything” – Female peer leader, Munali*

Unlike the other participants, who often referenced distancing themselves from friends who were involved in problematic behaviours, this young woman has a different problem. Through the interview she discussed how after attending the SfD programme and getting involved with sports, she had to change circle of friends because her current circle, who were formed of friends from her local church, did not understand nor were supportive of her involvement as a peer leader. She further proceeded to explain that much of their resistance emerged from their preconceptions of what a young woman should be doing at her age, including finding a man to marry, whereas they believed sport acted as a distraction from that and prevented her from fulfilling what those friends believed she was supposed to, namely as a woman in Zambia. Within this interaction, in this case it is the young people themselves who were mirroring elders’ beliefs (as highlighted elsewhere), perpetuating traditional views which may be connected to the influence of religion and the church. As discussed in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.2.3), Christianity has been central to Zambia since its introduction (Njelesani et al. 2015) and has operated as a means through which the idealised patriarchal gender order has been instilled in the dominant

culture (Meier and Saavedra, 2009). It was apparent that, for some of the peer leaders, the influence of religion was a prominent feature in their lives, with them speaking of the way Christianity has influenced Zambian culture and tradition with a belief that a woman should be submissive to a man. However, despite these beliefs permeating culture, some of the young women spoke of a feeling of conflict between what culture says, and what their own beliefs were:

*“Because most of them like you are at this age where you are supposed to find a man to marry you, you know, sport is not going to take you there. And then they describe and think that sport in Zambia, in Africa for women isn’t right. So, look now you are not going to benefit anything. So, it’s kind of like being so hard. It’s really hard” - Female Peer Leader, Munali*

Whilst some of the interviewees did have friends from outside sport, they were clear in identifying how they managed these dynamics and ensured they were not influenced negatively by these individuals:

*“I do have friends who are not doing sport, and their thing is to concentrate on school. So, they say to me, I always concentrate on sport and spend my time at the grounds, they don’t understand. They question why I can’t stop doing sport and concentrate on school. Like one day, me doing sport I will find a benefit because of it, it may even help me going to school, like finding sponsorship to go to school, yeah so I am in a better position” - Female peer leader, Mtendere*

The quote above highlights some of the pressures the peer leaders faced from friends who were not involved in sport, with a lack of understanding around ‘why’ they would be a peer leader, why they would play sport, and why they would choose to spend their spare time at the sports ground. Some of the above links into wider cultural norms about what a young woman should and should not be doing, with some seeing sport as a waste of time.

Outside of those who were deemed ‘bad friends’, and involved in problematic behaviour, there was a trend emerging in the findings when discussing ‘other’ friendship groups whose interest was not in sport but another endeavour such as religion or their education. These ‘other’ friends showed resistance and opposed the involvement of the participant in the SfD programmes and as a peer leader due to a belief that their involvement in sport would act as a barrier to them progressing in life. Similar to the active resistance from ‘church friends’ expressed earlier by one peer leader, others experienced disapproval from groups of friends who chose to prioritise school. More generally, peer leaders commonly perceived that others who could otherwise be in friendship groups either did not understand, nor believe in the (potential) benefits that peer leaders may gain from sport, expressing a concern that their time as a young woman is better spent on other endeavours. For example, one peer leader expressed that:

*“Some, it is just they don’t believe, they think, the culture says that it is a waste of time, and sports is just for fun. That you can’t get a job through sports, so they are just wasting their time, that is what they believe in” – Female Peer Leader, Kamwala South*

For many of the peer leaders, not only were they having to manage the negative impacts of peer pressure, with friends and family questioning their decision to become a peer leader, they were also navigating unfamiliar territory, as a woman in a male-dominated sporting space, which further links into the position of women in Zambian society. In contemporary Zambian society, women are largely confined to roles within the home, particularly women from low socio-economic backgrounds (Hansen, 1997) (see Section 4.3.1). The opportunities for young women to participate in sport in Zambia are available, but these are not always encouraged or prioritised within the home and wider family, which for example, leads to the dominant masculine values considerably restricting women’s involvement in some sports (Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes, 2014).

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the influence of non-sporting factors on the female peer leaders, building on Chapter 7, to explore the impact the environment has on their involvement in SfD, and, more importantly, on their journey as a peer leader. Building on the background outlined in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3), this chapter has examined the factors that shaped the experiences of young women in SfD programmes against the wider socio-cultural, economic and institutional contexts in Zambia. By drawing on the first-hand perspectives of young people, this chapter sought to capture and understand the significance of the environment which surrounds the young women. It was important to place the local accounts of young people at the forefront, giving priority to, and valuing their first-hand perspectives of their own experiences. Through this process, the importance of community, social relations, and support network, including family and friends was clearly identified, recognising these groups as key influential elements in the way young women experience SfD. Furthermore, the historical and ongoing influence of gender norms was also evidenced, highlighting how the young women struggled with navigating their desire to be involved in sport and SfD programmes, which transgressed the expected roles of a women, alongside evidencing a desire to live a ‘good life’ and one which reflected many assumed gendered behaviours, such as marriage and a family.

However, as this chapter has shown, the extent to which these environmental factors foster or hinder the involvement of young women is dependent upon the individual themselves, and the environment within which they reside. This environment is pivotal in shaping the way Zambian young women view, engage in, and experience SfD. As such, if SfD NGOs are able to work to make changes in the community where the SfD programmes are delivered, this may enable young women to engage more.

However, it may not necessarily change the broader circumstances of the young women's lives more generally. For some young women, SfD provided a space in which they were able to reshape their self-image through various empowerment processes, and as a result they were able to consciously adopt a different performance, discarding past gendered performances as inferior beings. These performances can be understood through Goffman's (1979) work (see Section 3.3), in which the young women may have previously performed gendered displays which link to prevailing social norms, but through their experiences in SfD programmes, they were able to change the way in which they 'do' their gender, even if this goes against social norms in Zambia. For others, gender and issues around performativity appeared so embedded as a behaviour (Butler, 1990) and continued to prevail due to wider social norms which existed in the environment beyond SfD, despite the value of SfD programming and learning. The extent to which the various processes of empowerment was experienced will be discussed further in the following chapter, where this discussion will help draw conclusions regarding the lived experienced of female peer leaders involved in SfD programmes.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This thesis has explored the lived experiences of female peer leaders in SfD programmes in Zambia. It has sought to uncover the factors which contribute to the experiences of female peer leaders through sport, and within the SfD programmes. Given the growing recognition of sport's potential to empower poor and marginalised young women (Giulianotti et al. 2022), this thesis adds to the body of knowledge within SfD literature by highlighting the extent and varied scope of contextual factors in influencing engagement with, participation in, and the impact of SfD programmes in Zambia through the lived experience of female peer leaders.

The chapter will begin by exploring how each of the three following research questions have been addressed:

- What consequences do sport-for-development programmes have in the broader trajectory of a young woman's life in Zambia?
- What are the contextual factors that influence the participation of young women as peer leaders within SfD programmes?
- What are the influences of gender norms on young women as peer leaders?

To answer each question, the empirical data has been connected with different theoretical contributions to make sense of the findings. Through this synthesis, the data has been interpreted, and the findings have been discussed in relation to the broader SfD literature and field, ultimately enabling the original contributions of this thesis to be identified. The chapter will also discuss my broader reflections on the research and research process, before discussing the recommendations for future research, policy and practice.

### **9.2 Research Question One: What consequences do sport-for-development programmes have in the broader trajectory of a young woman's life in Zambia?**

In order to address the first research question, the perceived outcomes of SfD programmes needed to be captured to be able to explore if, and how, they translate to the broader trajectory of young women's lives.

To address this, in Chapter 2 the literature review began by introducing the development field and the role of NGOs, which presented the landscape upon which SfD NGOs emerged. The literature detailed the emergence and growth of the SfD field, and how sport is being leveraged as a strategic vehicle to achieve broader development goals (Schulenkorf and Adair, 2014), particularly in disadvantaged

community settings (Schulenkorf, 2017). Data from this research similarly highlights the role Sport in Action and EduSport play in the development of local communities in Zambia through the delivery of their SfD programmes. This is particularly pertinent to addressing gender issues, with Chapter 2 examining the growing interest in the concept of empowerment, where girls' empowerment and gender equality have become popular targets for many SfD organisations (Kwauk, 2022). Sport has been recognised to be able to play a role as a tool for empowerment taking place at an individual, the structural and more widely, at the cultural level (Petry and Kroner, 2019). The findings of this research evidenced how Sport in Action and EduSport have both designed programmes that are centred on gender equality, seeking to empower females. To foster girls' and young women's empowerment, Sport in Action and EduSport deliver female focused programmes – Girls in Action and Go Sisters respectively – that focus on seeking to create a safe space in which they can educate and support the empowerment of girls and women through sport and recreational activity. Safe space as an idea was under-theorised and under-researched in sport until Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) took forward the debate by considering the cultivation of a safe space as a key ingredient of SfD programmes. Safe space, as a concept, is rooted in educational and feminist thought and according to Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) it has five dimensions: physical, psychological or emotional, sociocultural, political and experimental. Applying these dimensions to my research helps identify the various types of safe space that were present in SfD programmes in Zambia. Furthermore, through the application of these dimensions, this contributes to our understanding as to how through creating a safe space, SfD programmes in Zambia can support the empowerment processes that young women experience. The provision of this safe space for women in Zambia is of particular importance as the literature has highlighted how women within Zambian compound communities have often been excluded from public space (Schlyter, 1999).

The 'physical' and 'political' safety of spaces created by SfD organisations were the dimensions of Spaaij and Schulenkorf's (2014) categorisation that were least highlighted by the research participants. The majority of delivery sites in this research were located in informal settlements and compounds (see Appendix D), that were situated on the outskirts of the city of Lusaka. Whilst these compounds are characterised by limited urban services and poor-quality conditions (Gough, 2008), the majority of delivery sites were conveniently located and well known to the programmes participants, providing a safe space from a physical perspective. From my observations, the notion of physical safety was also evident to see in the way the SfD programmes were organised and structured, with the various sports being modified to account for, and accommodate, the large number of participants attending each session. The physical safety measures observed in the Zambian context closely aligned with those identified by Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014), highlighting the critical importance of ensuring that SfD programmes remain both accessible and inclusive. This underscores the necessity for the intentional implementation of strategies designed to foster a safe and supportive environment for all participants,



particularly young women. Whilst these observations enabled some appraisal of Schulenkorf and Spaaij's (2014) dimension of physical safety, there was no comments from interviewees that related directly to political safety in terms of freedom of political views. Yet, a political perspective pervades the whole gendered environment within SfD in Zambia. As Schulenkorf and Spaaij (2014) note, the political dimension refers to "open dialogue, respect for political difference, and sharing a sense of community, where people feel less inhibited and more supported to share their experiences or views and to express their sporting and other identities" (p. 635), and these characteristics are reflective of the space the interviewees discussed finding within SfD programmes. Therefore, whilst the participants did not speak directly about gender relations within a political sense, it is important to note that the gender issues covered in this thesis are commonly political in nature. Only Juliet mentioned how having a female vice president was helping to change perceptions around women in leadership due to the visible presence of her role, but this did not link directly to the spaces created by the SfD organisations. This absence of discussion perhaps relate to a lack of priority regarding politics for SfD organisations in Zambia given the relatively politically stable and peaceful status of Zambia (Smith-Höhn, 2009).

On the other hand, dimensions of psychological and emotional safety for participants were a significant component of my data which reflected the orientation of the SfD programmes. One of the biggest influences that SfD programmes had in the broader trajectory of a young woman's life in Zambia was access to, and the gaining of, a social network within sport. This impact links to the 'power with' form of empowerment, where the sense of the whole is greater than the sum of the individuals (Rowlands, 1997). Within this lens, the access to, and acquiring of a 'sporting family' gave the young women a space in which they could build trust, develop a collective identity and a sense of belonging, and tackle problems together. This form of empowerment links to the collective dimension, where the female peer leaders were able to work together to bring about change. This collective action is not based on competition, but rather cooperation, with collective action occurring at a community level (Rowlands, 1995). The focus on shared experiences through Girls in Action and Go Sisters helped facilitate a context for emotional support for the young women, where they were able to develop a social network which became a central part of their lives. The visible group formation and the gaining of a sporting family that happened for young women through the SfD programmes is supported by observations in Brady (2005), Lindsey et al. (2017) and Jeanes et al. (2018), all of whom illustrate the importance of building social assets, including a collective identity and trusted relationships, if SfD programmes are to produce the social impacts they intend to.

Building on the 'sporting family' discussion, another dimension which was visible within the SfD programmes in Zambia was the sociocultural dimension. Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) proposed that this dimension related to a safe space where people felt at home and supported regardless of their social standing, a finding strongly reflected in my research. Through being involved in SfD programmes, the young women were able to drop the usual gender performance that they put on outside of sport (Butler,

1990), where they indicated that they tended to exhibit the expected feminine norms that were prevalent in Zambian society, and instead they had the freedom to express themselves in a way that was true to their identity. A safe space in this light facilitated a place where the young women felt wanted and were able to express themselves.

Closely related to this was the experimental dimension, which was consistently highlighted in the participant narrative. This final dimension, as conceptualised by Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014), involves creating opportunities for participants to engage in risk-taking and identity exploration within the supportive structure of SfD settings. This dimension was of particular significance in my research, given the prevailing gender norms and social expectations that often restricted the self-expression of female peer leaders in their everyday lives outside the sporting context (Saavedra, 2009). Within the SfD programmes in Zambia, the experimental dimension offered participants a supportive environment in which they could test new identities, behaviours, and roles without fear of judgement, punishment, or exclusion. This included challenging traditional gender norms, exploring leadership roles, and expressing themselves in ways that were otherwise socially constrained. SfD programmes provided young women with a platform to assume non-traditional positions of responsibility through the role of a peer leader. As my research demonstrates, these settings created spaces where young women could engage in meaningful risk-taking, illustrating the transformative potential of SfD when the experimental dimension is actively facilitated (Spaaij and Schulenkorf, 2014).

Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) propose a set of practical strategies that practitioners can implement to foster safe spaces within sport-based initiative, stressing the intentional creation of safe spaces that “requires detailed insight, planning, and management” (p. 642). They argue that these strategies are not only essential for enabling meaningful engagement of diverse participant groups but also function as a mechanisms for maximising the social outcomes of SfD programmes for both individuals and communities. When considered alongside my observations of SfD programmes in Zambia, however, a notable difference emerges. Whilst certain dimensions of safe spaces appear to be intentionally embedded into programme design, others arise more implicitly, as emerging outcomes of the broader sociocultural context. For instance, the political dimension of safe space as articulated by Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) was not overtly planned or structured within the Zambia SfD programmes I observed. Instead, it appeared as a by-product of the sociocultural familiarity that participants shared within the sporting environment, which fostered a sense of belonging and informal community. This contrasts with the emphasis on ‘strategic planning’ and deliberate ‘cultivation’ in Spaaij and Schulenkorf’s conceptualisation (2014).

Furthermore, Spaaij and Schulenkorf (2014) contend that the five dimensions of safe space are inherently interdependent, operating “in concert with each other; they are inseparable as they influence, depend on, challenge, contest, stimulate, and build on each other” (p. 642). My research in the Zambian

context supports this interconnectivity yet also highlights the variability in how these dimensions are expressed across different SfD delivery sites. Whilst some elements, such as the creation of female-only spaces by programmes like Go Sisters and Girls in Action, were clearly intentional, fostering a common purpose and identity (psychological dimension), other dimensions appeared more incidental, such as a respect for differences (political dimension). This underlines the importance of local social contexts in shaping how safe spaces are operationalised and experienced in practice, and suggests that while intentional design is valuable, naturally occurring dimensions can also play a critical role in SfD programming.

This research revealed that young women experience multiple forms of power through their engagement in SfD programmes, specifically highlighting how these programmes can function as sites of both constraint and empowerment. It is evident from this research that a large proportion of the interviewees, through their positionality as young women in Zambia, had previously experienced the more pervasive and zero-sum form of power, ‘power over’, most often within their day-to-day life. This form of power was prevalent as a result of them being a woman within a patriarchal and highly conservative Zambian society, where as a group they were marginalised, and often portrayed as powerless. However, the findings also evidence how the SfD programmes could support young women to resist patriarchal oppression, by exposing them to knowledge areas that are important for gender empowerment. Through this, the SfD programmes provided a space in which the process of changing the way young women see and experience their world can begin, supporting them to challenge and, in some cases, change power relations. This links to the ‘power within’ form of empowerment where female peer leaders gained new self-confidence (Rowlands, 1997) and a realisation of possibilities to be able to address their own situation through their exposure in SfD programmes. Rowlands’ (1995) proposes that for people to begin to challenge and change their own situations, they have to go through a process of raising their own consciousness – that is, gaining an understanding of their circumstances and social environment, and through careful reflections, perceiving themselves as having the ability to make the decisions that affect their life, which in turn may lead to action. Both Girls in Action and Go Sisters reflect broad feminist principles in their programming, seeking to target the development of knowledge specifically by supporting young women into leadership roles as peer leaders and giving them the opportunity to enter into a traditionally male dominated arena. Through this, the young women were provided with a space in which they could engage in critical dialogue and reflective practice, supporting them to develop an understanding of their existing behaviours. By documenting these nuanced processes, this research contributes to the literature by providing grounded, context-specific insights into how gendered power relations are both reproduced and resisted within the context of SfD programmes in Zambia. Alongside the development of knowledge, this research demonstrates that participation in SfD programmes as a peer leader can provide young women in Zambia access to opportunities they would not have previously been afforded. As a result of being peer leaders, several participants increased in economic

empowerment, through being provided with the opportunity to access education, and gain support as part of their professional development. Others were empowered, to varying extents, via access to various human and social resources, whereby the provision of training workshops from the NGOs gave the young women the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge, which in turn enhanced their ability to exercise choice (Kabeer, 1999). Whilst literature often views resource access as a key indicator of empowerment (Longwe, 1995; Williams et al. 2022), this research challenges that narrative. Through this research it was apparent that all of the interviewees noted how they had gained life skills in one way or another and were either talking about what they learnt (knowledge), the skills they now possessed, or their beliefs, values and attitudes. However, as evidenced through the life histories in Chapter 6, access to an education, and opportunities for professional development do not always translate into economic empowerment for all participants. Instead, the ability to translate a change in resources to empowered decision-making, are dependent upon the conditions in which they are making those choices (Kabeer, 1999), being heavily contingent on their individual social, economic and family context. In this way, this research contributes to existing literature by providing empirical nuance to Kabeer's empowerment framework. Whilst Kabeer's (1999) empowerment framework was originally grounded in life history interviews with women participating in microfinance programmes in Bangladesh. In particular, their article highlights how access to resources, which are often assumed to be empowering, is mediated by local gender norms, community structures, and the relational dynamics of everyday life. For the participants in this study, the ability to mobilise resources did not consistently translate into agency but were fundamentally contextually contingent for each participant based on her personal situation, household relations and community expectations. This context-specific analysis is a nuanced utilisation of Kabeer's (1999) framework by demonstrating that empowerment processes are not only shaped by access, but by how meaningfully that access can be exercised in lived contexts. In doing so, this research contributes to the ongoing body of literature that calls for more grounded, relational, and culturally sensitive interpretations of empowerment.

Whilst, on the whole, SfD programmes had positive consequences in the broader trajectory of the majority of female peer leaders' lives, these 'experiences' do not always translate into a more positive trajectory. This was highlighted in Esther's story (see Section 6.4), where other contextual factors influenced her broader life trajectory outside of those inside the SfD programmes. The capabilities of the young women to embrace and utilise the knowledge gained, and the skills developed through SfD programmes, and to put their experiences into use, are limited by their individual financial, social and family situations as well as familial expectations. SfD programmes have a tendency to focus on agency, placing the responsibility upon the young women to change their behaviour and their contexts (Darnell, 2010). But, in doing this, the programmes were unable to address issues of context, structural, and programmatic mechanisms that may actually restrict the ability of young women to progress (see Section 9.3). Whilst my research did not focus on the design of the SfD programmes explicitly, elements

regarding Girls in Action and Go Sisters did emerge throughout. It could be presumed that the staff from Sport in Action and EduSport would likely be aware of issues of context but may be working under their own constraints in the design and undertaking of SfD programmes. For example, funding considerations, where both NGOs receive external funding to deliver their programmes, have commonly been cited (Adams & Harris, 2014; Harris and Adams, 2016; Moustakas, 2024) as limiting SfD organisations in terms of what they can do in relation to their programme design, development, and scope.

Overall, this research demonstrates that participation as a peer leader in SfD programmes can offer young women in Zambia to be able to engage in activities they would not otherwise have been able to do, gaining experiences they would not have been afforded elsewhere. However, it also revealed that both initial and sustained engaged in such programmes is heavily shaped, and often constrained, by a complex interplay of internal and external factors. Drawing on findings discussed in Section 9.3, the research contributes to existing literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how internal motivators, such as self-belief or aspirations, can be either enabled or undermined by external conditions, such as familial expectations, financial limitations, or gender norms. In doing so, it addresses research question two by illustrating just how overpowering and persistent external barriers can be, even in the presence of individual drive. This challenges highlights the need for a more context-sensitive and intersectional analysis of empowerment processes.

### **9.3 Research Question Two: What are the contextual factors that influence the participation of young women as peer leaders within SfD programmes?**

This research question was focused on gathering an understanding of the contextual factors that influence the participation of young women within SfD programmes, including the internal constraints within SfD organisations and programmes and the external constraints within the broader environment. It emerged in my research that these contextual factors had a range of influences on the young women, with some influencing their participation in a positive way, supporting their involvement as peer leaders, whereas others had a more negative influence, restricting their participation. These findings concur with Lindsey et al. (2017) who identified that the contexts within which young people find themselves constrain the extent to which they can obtain benefits from their engagement in SfD.

To begin to answer this question, Chapter 2, as explained above in Section 9.2, introduced the SfD field and the two NGOs featured in this research: Sport in Action and EduSport. Through reviewing this organisational context, the literature analysis detailed the way in which sport in modern-day Zambia bears the mark of colonial history, acting as a ‘new form of colonialism’ which reinforces neoliberal, colonial and patriarchal sport structures in disempowering ways (Darnell and Black, 2011). This

backdrop provides an insight into the context within which Sport in Action and EduSport operate, and how colonial history has shaped modern day thinking, which has, in turn, impacted the way young women engage in, and with the sporting field. Moreover, this allows the contextual factors within SfD organisations and programmes to be captured and understood.

Subsequently, the external contextual factors which shape the lives of young people and women were explored through Chapter 4, which outlined the physical and institutional environments that shape the lives of young people and women in Zambia. These factors were important to understand, as they influence the way young women are able to engage in, and with, SfD programmes. The literature analysis highlighted how challenging ‘youth’ is as a stage of life, with gender having important implications for the way men and women experience ‘youth’ and how they transition into adulthood (Ansell, 2017). Family formation and entry into the labour market are the most gendered, and critical, transitions for young people, and link into why men and women in Africa experience different effects longer-term (Chakravarty and Vaillant, 2017). For the young women who wanted to participate in SfD programmes as peer leaders, they had to operate against this backdrop, whilst navigating the challenges youth as a stage of life brought. Much of existing SfD literature has adopted a simplified and often instrumental view of youth, focusing primarily on their participation within programmes. This narrow lens has been critiqued by scholars for failing to engage with the nuanced and context-specific realities of young people in African settings (Schulenkorf et al. 2016; Coalter, 2013). This research makes a distinct contribution by foregrounding the lived experiences of young Zambian women in the SfD space. This thesis documents how they navigate intersecting challenges related to identity, agency, and social positioning, adding to the empirical and conceptual understanding of youth in SfD with greater contextual depth and complexity.

Against this backdrop, my findings have demonstrated how the SfD programmes in Zambia tend to ignore issues of structure, overlooking how contextual mechanisms implicate the ability of girls and young women to engage in, and with, SfD programmes. Rather, these programmes focused predominantly on what happened within the confines of programme delivery, paying little attention to how external factors influenced the involvement of the young women. This finding is consistent with Giulianotti (2004) who highlighted that SfD literature has commonly focused on single programme and mainly individualised outcomes, with little exploration of the significance of the local context. In this study, factors contributing to participant disengagement came not only from within the programmes themselves, but also from external social, economic, and personal dynamics that feature in the broader context of the lives of the young women. Recognising this interplay is crucial as it allows us to consider for when, and whom, the external pressures prevailed over the internal constraints, resulting in that individual dropping out of the SfD programmes and leaving their role as a peer leader. This was particularly evident in the cases of Martha (Section 6.3) and Esther (Section 6.4), whose first-hand accounts offer rich insight into the layered and context-specific nature of participant dropout in SfD.

Notably, the issue of dropout has received minimal explicit attention in SfD literature, and even less so from the perspectives of former participants. This research makes a novel contribution to the field by centring the voices of those who have exited SfD programmes, an underexplored group, thereby advancing empirical understanding of participation, disengagement, and the limits of peer leadership within real world settings. Equally important is it also allows us to consider when or for whom the opposite occurs, and the external contextual factors implicate the internal programmatic mechanisms, as it did for Juliet (see Section 6.2). The findings of this research uncovered programmatic mechanisms and social processes that enabled the young women to remain involved in SfD programmes, whilst successfully navigating their external personal circumstances. Through their involvement in SfD, some of the young women involved were able to increase their capabilities to have control over their broader life, linking to the notions of ‘power within’ and ‘power to’ (Rowlands, 1997). The SfD programmes created a space in which empowerment in action could occur, enabling the young women to develop and move from insight to action (Rowlands, 1995).

A key external contextual mechanism which emerged from the findings and was discussed in depth in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.5.5), was the role of the family. Whilst limited existing studies that specifically focus on the influence of family in SfD (see: Chawansky and Mitra, 2015; Mwaanga and Prince, 2016; Kay and Spaaij, 2021), few have explored this influenced in a detail, disaggregated way This study addresses that gap by demonstrating the family environment surrounding a young woman plays a critical role in shaping her life choices, particularly her ability to participate in sport and assume leaders roles within SfD programmes – a key theme emerging throughout Chapters 6 and 7. One of the key contribution of this study is its illumination of the individualised and context-specific role families play in enabling or constraining young women’s access to the opportunity to participate in sport and take up peer leadership roles in Zambia. This research shows that family influence is not monolithic, rather, it is highly variable and deeply shaped by personal, cultural, and economic contexts specific to each person. Whilst some families actively facilitated their daughters’ participation, encouraging involvement and supporting leadership aspirations, others acted as a barrier, often due to prevailing gender norms or cultural beliefs. For example, as show in the case of Martha (see Section 6.3), criticism from her sisters forced her to conceal her involvement in sport in order to continue participating.

This research makes an original contribution to the field by moving beyond the broad categorisation of family as ‘contributors’ and ‘obstacles’ within SfD programmes, as presented by Kay and Spaaij (2012) and Chawansky and Mitra (2015). Instead, it introduces a differentiated framework that recognises the diverse roles played by individual family members and the complex intra-family dynamics at play. Where families encompassed more supportive elements, the findings align with prior research, showing that young women with parental encouragement had greater access to, and deeper engagement with, SfD programmes. For these participants, the support of their parents as well as their wider family unit

were pivotal in enabling them to engage and sustain their involvement in SfD programmes and pursue their desire to be a peer leader.

By capturing these intricacies within the Zambian cultural context, this research offers a more granular and context-sensitive understanding of how family influence operates in shaping young women's engagement within SfD programmes. This represents a departure from the limited existing studies that explore the role of family in SfD programmes which mainly consider the overall constraints or supporting aspects of 'family' as a whole rather than differentiating this influence by individuals as my research has done. In contrast, this study reveals the often-contradictory roles families play, showing that young women encounter varying degrees of support and resistance from different relatives, including parents, grandparents, siblings, and partners. Notably, the strongest resistance frequently stemmed from male family members, who opposed female participation in sport and SfD programmes. In doing so, this research offers new empirical insight into how empowerment pathways in SfD are navigated not solely by individuals, but through ongoing negotiation within the family unit. This refined perspective not only captures the cultural realities of family life in Zambia but advances our understanding of how gatekeeping functions are enacted by families with SfD, shaping both access to, and trajectories within youth peer leadership roles. The findings suggest that future SfD programming should account for the specific family environments that shape both participation and leadership potential for young women.

An internal contextual factor which emerged from the findings across Chapters 7 and 8 was the influence and role of peer groups and friendships *within* the context of SfD programmes, which like families, played a role in either facilitating or hindering the involvement of young women in SfD programmes. For those interviewees who were surrounded by likeminded women, this social affiliation and network operated as advocates and enablers to their involvement, providing support and recognition of their place within SfD. Similar to wider literature (Meier, 2005; Saavedra, 2009), this research shows how friendships, social interaction, and group identity were all important elements that influenced the way young women interacted with SfD programmes. More so, my findings highlighted the importance of a 'sporting family', a term used by participants to describe a sense of solidarity and shared purposes that underpinned their involvement. Through being supported by likeminded individuals, the young women were able to adopt a public identity as a peer leader, moving beyond those typically prescribed to females in Zambia in the domestic realm. Crucially, this offers original empirical insight into how peer networks can facilitate not only participation but also the development of alternative, publicly visible forms of female identity within the SfD context. This opens up a new avenue in the SfD literature which has, as yet, under-considered the ways in which peer leadership enables young women to construct and embody empowered public identities through sport. This public identity illustrates Goffman (1956) and Butler's (1990) concepts of performativity. This behaviour links to performativity, empowerment, and agency, highlighting how the young women were able to embrace a new identity in



the SfD space, discarding their previous one because they were now sufficiently empowered to make those changes. By having this sporting family, the findings evidenced how this network of peers can serve as a protective factor, providing a safe place to challenge gender norms, operating as a social network, allowing the young women to build positive friendships and providing a space in which they can operate alongside their male peers. This 'sporting family' links to the relational dimension of empowerment (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014), where empowerment within the established relationships between peer leaders provided a safe for the young women to gain a sense of agency. SfD research has previously highlighted positive peer relationships, social bonding and a network of support as critical contributors towards personal development (Zipp, 2017). My findings echoed this, with the interviewees noting that being involved in sport enabled them to build healthy relationships with other women, and the feeling of social connectedness operated as a factor in supporting them in their role as a peer leader.

There are a number of other contextual factors within SfD programmes that shape the participation of young women as peer leaders, including the presence of role models and mentors, the provision of learning opportunities, the influence of male peers, the significance of the community setting and associated resources, and the focus on empowerment through sport and peer education. Some of these factors relate to elements of the programmatic structure and mechanisms adopted, such as the explicit focus of Girls in Action and Go Sisters on supporting women and girls to be empowered through their participation in sport and recreational activity and the provision of wider development opportunities which can be gained through participation as a peer leader. The approach of both NGOs to focus on supporting women to be empowered links to Rowlands (1997) 'power to' form of empowerment, highlighting how empowerment is not something that can be bestowed by others, but rather it comes from within the individuals, with programmes such as Girls in Action and Go Sisters providing help and support to the young women within the empowerment process. This is important to reflect on, because whilst empowerment is a key element of the Girls in Action and Go Sisters programmes, the SfD NGOs need to be careful not to overly focus on empowerment as an outcome. If they do, this potentially runs the risk of the NGOs becoming too directive in their approach and as a result, interfering with the empowerment process of the young women concerned. There needs to be a recognition from both NGOs that "the outside professional cannot expect to control the outcomes of authentic empowerment" (Rowlands, 1997, p. 16), which "may take unanticipated directions" (Rowlands, 1995, p.104).

This research also highlights the pivotal nature of role models and mentors to the female peer leaders. Building on the first research question, and the provision of a safe space within SfD programmes that is socioculturally appropriate, the presence of role models and mentors within the female-focused programmes aided with social engagement, participation, and inclusive development (Spaaij and Schultenkorf, 2014). As noted in the findings (see Section 7.6), having visible female coaches from the

communities where the SfD programmes are delivered exposes young women to the possibility of who they could become, providing an individual who they can relate with and to whom they could aspire to be. The particularity of this being provided via SfD programmes further exposes the female peer leaders to young women who are active in sport, holding leadership positions as coaches, site coordinators or project officers, and in doing so is resisting traditional gender roles by working in sport. Cornwall (2016) highlights that for women to be able to see themselves and their options in a different light, they need to be able to step away from the limiting expectations placed upon them, and role models are important in supporting this to happen. For the process of empowerment to be effective, it cannot operate from a 'top-down' methodology, but rather relies on a facilitative approach, built on mutual respect and confidence (Rowlands, 1995). My findings evidenced how this was visible in the relationships built within the SfD programmes, where the empowerment process was aided by the social relations that existed amongst peer leaders (Kabeer, 2011).

Through this research, the interviewees discussed how girls and young women should have access to SfD programmes and should be able to engage in all different types of sport via these programmes. However, despite this openness from the participants themselves, it did appear that the underlying cultural and historical beliefs that are prevalent in Zambia did still have an influence, as the female-only provision was centred more around 'feminine' sporting activities. This programmatic mechanism relates specifically to the way Girls in Action and Sport in Action were designed, but link into the external contextual factors which are shaped by traditional beliefs around what is appropriate for a young woman to engage in. I would argue that there was a contradiction considering that the Girls in Action and Go Sisters programme were focused on gender equality, seeking to support the empowerment of women, and provide them with greater equality of opportunities. Yet in the process of doing that, by focusing predominantly on the provision of sporting activities that reflect more 'feminine' behaviour, it could be suggested that rather than increase equality of opportunity, the SfD NGOs were reinforcing gender norms by suggesting that specific sports were better suited to girls and young women, and others, such as football and rugby, were reserved for boys and young men. The intentionality in this approach by Sport in Action and EduSport has been recognised in existing literature, with Lindsey et al. (2017) highlighting that the selection of football for men and netball for women may be representative of colonial influences as well as locally held gendered beliefs. This also indicated how certain sports might actually reproduce and reinforce gender norms, rather than facilitate empowerment by limiting the actual opportunities the young women were able to engage with.

Existing literature suggests that for SfD to be effective it needs to be delivered in a way that gives consideration to local context (Lindsey et al. 2017; Jeanes et al. 2018). Yet, pedagogical approaches utilised in SfD programmes have not gone far enough in initiating the social change they seek to bring about (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013). Unless SfD NGOs acknowledge and account for the contextual factors which surround their programmes, they will be unable to support change at an individual, structural or

community level. As Spaaij and Jeanes (2013) highlight, “education is not neutral: it either reproduces structures of domination or is used to promote freedom and social changes” (p. 451). As such, if SfD programmes are to bring about the change they seek, programme development would benefit from being further underpinned by critical pedagogy (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016), placing local needs and knowledge at the heart of programming (Jeanes et al. 2018). This, in turn, would help create a space in which participants can foster critical awareness and challenge broader social structures and power dynamics, by designing a programme that is in concert with the conditions of the lives of the participants (Morgan and Parker, 2022). This change links into Rowlands’ (1997) ‘power within’ and ‘power to’ forms of empowerment whereby the young women gain an awareness of their social exclusion and, as a result, are able to develop a strategy to facilitate action (Mwaanga and Prince, 2016).

The acknowledgement that there were multiple contextual factors, both associated with and beyond the SfD programmes themselves, is important to recognise because it allows us to consider for when, and whom, the external contextual factors prevailed over the internal constraints, resulting in that individual dropping out of the SfD programmes and leaving their role as a peer leader, as was the case of Martha (see Section 6.3) and Esther (see Section 6.4). It also allows us to consider when or for whom the opposite occurs, and the external contextual factors implicate the internal programmatic mechanisms, as it did for Juliet. The findings of this research uncovered programmatic mechanisms and social processes that enabled the young women to remain involved in SfD programmes, whilst successfully navigating their external personal circumstances. Through their involvement in SfD, these young women were able to increase their capabilities to have control over their broader life, gaining the power to make their own decisions. For example, the young women were able to choose to remain involved in the SfD programmes, in spite of the influence of external contextual factors, asserting their independence in making choices that are available to them. This was particularly notable for a number of participants who resisted external pressures from their families, gaining the power to be able to pursue their own interests within sport. This increases links to the notions of ‘power within’ and ‘power to’ (Rowlands, 1997). The SfD programmes created a space in which empowerment in action could occur, enabling the young women to develop and move from insight to action (Rowlands, 1995). However, it is worth noting that the extent to which these young women gained ‘power to’ varied on a spectrum, with a large proportion gaining ‘power to’ only do things within the confines of sport, and others gaining ‘power to’ exert influence outside of the SfD space.

#### **9.4 Research Question Three: What are the influence of gender norms on young women as peer leaders?**

This research question was concerned with exploring the role and influence of gender norms on young women as peer leaders in SfD programmes. To address this, Chapter 2 examined gender and peer

leaders (see Section 2.3.4), Chapter 3 explored the intersection of sport, gender, and development (see Section 3.5), and Chapter 4 examined the socio-cultural, economic, and institutional constraints on young Zambian women (see Section 4.3). This literature review subsequently supported the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data, allowing key findings to emerge in relation to the influence of gender norms on young women as peer leaders.

In Chapter 2, the significance of the history of Zambia was analysed (see Section 2.2.3), to highlight how colonial gender norms have shaped modern day society. The SfD field in Zambia has emerged against a backdrop of post-colonialism, where gender biases and norms that reflect the expectations established during this era are still present (Jeanes et al. 2013). The literature evidenced how sport in Zambia is gendered, and the findings of this research concur with this. My findings (see Section 7.4) demonstrated how there were prevalent gender differences in the involvement of young women in SfD programmes in Zambia. Throughout the research, the young female peer leaders recognised how their involvement in sport conflicted with underlying gender norms (Section 8.3). Their experiences are not too dissimilar to those discussed by Spaaij et al. (2014) who focused on contemporary gendered issues of exclusion in Zambia specifically. It was evident to see the broader beliefs that underpinned Zambian society ran into the local community, and as such, were reflected in the sporting field.

Despite Sport in Action and EduSport attempting to address gender specific issues through their programming, by supporting the empowerment of women, and providing a space in which young women could become leaders, the underlying challenges around gender are certainly not straightforward to resolve. It can be considered as problematic when SfD NGOs simply integrate girls and women into their existing sporting structures, and may end up reinforcing, rather than challenging, existing gender norms. This integrative model, which was noted in Section 3.5.4, is utilised by SfD NGOs when they deliver mixed gender programmes that incorporate both boys and girls within the same space. When girls and young women are integrated into an existing hegemonic model, this only attends to issues of access and inclusion by permitting females to play (Chawansky, 2011), rather than actually addressing and challenging traditional gender roles. However, there is limited recognition of the prevalence of integrative models in SfD with Chawansky (2011) noting that “the academic literature on mixed-gender SDP contexts is dismally silent” (p. 127), an argument which Hayhurst et al. (2014) supported. Alongside this, as my findings highlighted, there is a risk that SfD programmes end up creating a vacuum where young women can be leaders within sport, but it is apparent that this skillset does not always transfer outside of the sporting space. This is a point that is returned to in regard to the overall contributions of this research in Section 9.5.

On one hand, my research findings showed that the participation of young women as peer leaders in SfD can challenge gender norms, where there was a realisation that girls can also play sport, and do it well, they can explore non-conventional career paths outside of the home and can compete against their

male peers (see Section 8.3). The provision of football for girls at some of the SfD NGO delivery sites, provided a space in which the young women could participate in a traditionally masculine sport. Through this involvement, these young women were able to demonstrate their own agency and were supported to be empowered to operate outside of traditional gender roles. Furthermore, the opportunity for young women to become leaders, highlighted a desire by the SfD NGOs, and the young women themselves, to create a space which females could occupy roles for which there was limited opportunity outside of the sporting field. In this way, by enabling young women to become peer leaders, the SfD programmes were providing them with an outlet to dispute restrictive cultural expectations.

However, as the various narratives showed, the participation of young women did not come without resistance. Whilst being in sport provided the young women with the opportunity to challenge gender norms, the findings highlighted how many of them had to navigate the influence of these norms outside of the sporting space. Traditional attitudes about gender roles, and expectations in vocation and life were prevalent in the wider community, where many held the belief that the place of a woman was in the kitchen and at home fulfilling domestic duties (see Section 3.5). Despite their desire to compete in sport, and holding the role of a peer leader, domestically all of the participants were more restricted, and had to navigate the conflicting demands of fulfilling their expected duties at home, alongside those that came with their role as a peer leader. This conflict links into Butler's (1990) notion of performativity (see Section 3.3), whereby the interviewees felt compelled to 'act' in a particular way whilst at home to display the feminine gender performance that is expected from a young woman in a Zambian context. As my research showed (see Section 8.3), many of the participants operated under a belief that it was their role as a female to fulfil the household chores, with their male siblings, where relevant, responsible for a different set of duties that were determined by their gender. However, despite this, many of them felt compelled to challenge gender norms through their participation in sport, seeking to engage in the opportunities provided by the SfD programmes in spite of the widely held belief that sport was for boys, they felt empowered to pursue their own interests in the sporting context, even when these interests fell outside of the expected gender norms.

The involvement of women in SfD programmes and sporting spaces enabled some of the interviewees to hold a leadership role in their community and operate alongside their male peers. Prevalent gender stereotypes in Zambia suggest that women are incapable of leading, or of leadership (Tamela and Banja, 2021). The findings from this research highlighted that for young women who desired to become a peer leader, they faced challenges including gender stereotypes, a lack of development and education opportunities and resistance from those outside of the sporting field. Yet, once they entered the sporting field, they were able to tackle negative and limiting beliefs, challenging the idea that women should not participate in sport, and begin to re-define what Zambian society believed was femininity.

As a result, some of the traditional stereotypes around women in sport in Zambia that were prevalent in the local communities and of which the peer leaders were privy to, began to change and evolve, and this was noted in my findings (see Section 7.4 and 8.3). The male participants of this research openly shared how prior to their involvement in SfD, they had held underlying beliefs about the role of a women, which reflected views held more broadly in Zambian society, believing that women were not equal with them. Nevertheless, through their joint involvement in SfD, they shared a space with young women as peer leaders in their communities, which helped to change their perspective. The findings from the male interviewees highlighted how their previous beliefs were as a result of the culture they had grown up in, but the opportunities afforded by SfD programmes had provided a safe space in which those beliefs could be questioned, challenged and re-shaped.

Whilst the involvement in SfD programmes provided young women with the opportunity to hold a leadership role, something that were not afforded in their normal life, and gave them a space where they operated as equals with their male peers, the findings did highlight that these ‘changes’ did not necessarily translate to life outside of the sporting environment. The questions around the transferability links to Rowlands’ (1997) typology of power and the different processes of empowerment taking place. Individual change was able to happen within the confines of the SfD field (power within), where young women and men were able to operate collaboratively (power with) in a safe space. Through this collective support, the female peer leaders were able to develop agency (power to) and championed the idea that girls and women have the right to, and can, choose to pursue the type of life they want, regardless of traditional gender norms. Through their interactions, the female peer leaders had some ability to reject the dominant gender norms regarding women and girls that were prevalent in their communities, disregarding the traditional heteronormative and masculine assumptions that came with sport, and often operated to advance male hegemony. Embedded within those beliefs, however, were culturally informed preferences. The restrictions do not lie in the ability of a young woman to make a choice as such (power to), as the findings of this research indicated this was something they developed, to differing extents, through their involvement in the SfD programme (individual empowerment), but rather in the execution of such choice. Their limited ability to enact agency in the same way outside of sport asks questions about the extent to which they were actually empowered. It could be suggested that whilst the consciousness of the young women was altered via participation in the SfD programmes, the lack of power (over) the young women possessed outside of the SfD field meant they were still constrained in action. Literature has highlighted that a sole focus on individual empowerment is not enough to effect significant changes in women’s power within broader society (Young, 1993), and this may have resulted in the situation described above.

## 9.5 Research Contribution

The contribution of this thesis lies primarily with regard to SfD literature, through highlighting the extent and varied scope of contextual influences in determining engagement with, participation in, and the impact of SfD programmes in Zambia. There is an existing argument in SfD literature that critiques SfD programmes for being heavily focused on the individual, being compatible with neoliberalism whilst ignoring the broader structural and social reality within which the programmes exist (Darnell, 2010a; Hartmann and Kwauk, 2011; Mwaanga and Prince, 2016). This prevalent approach highlights how SfD programmes have focused on ‘empowering’ young women to grasp an awareness of their circumstances and gain the power to do something about it – empowerment - but in doing this, SfD programmes have not addressed or challenged the structures of inequality themselves. By failing to acknowledge neoliberalism, and through focusing on promoting individual behaviour change in response to inequality, some SfD literature argues that programmes are complicit with it (Darnell, 2010; Eisenkraft Klein and Darnell, 2024).

My research presents a more nuanced understanding of the wider contextual factors, suggesting that for SfD programmes to actually achieve their desired development outcomes, there is a requirement to capture and understand the broader relationalities at play, as ultimately *so much* is contingent on these. By exploring and breaking down the internal and external contextual factors prevalent in the lives of young women and SfD programmes, this research identified and examined the potential role these factors play in influencing the individual. This is particularly noteworthy in relation to developing individual empowerment (see Section 3.4.2) which is understood in the literature as both a process and outcome. In this research, empowerment was detailed as a desired outcome of the female-focused SfD programmes delivered by Sport in Action and EduSport, whereby the programmes sought to create safe spaces in which young women can be supported to be empowered. This was particularly relevant in the Zambian context, as here gender norms limit girls’ mobility whilst also defining the opportunities they have to engage in SfD programmes. By focusing solely on what happens within the confines of the SfD field, such as a workshop or a sports session, the SfD NGOs in this research do not sufficiently address structural conditions and lack mechanisms to directly challenge the conditions that had disempowered the young women in the first place. My research provides a response to Lindsey et al. (2017) who highlighted that “*scholarly enquiry does not need to be solely focused on programme specifics to be useful to programme deliverers; knowledge and understanding are also required*” (p. 196), and through focusing on localised, first-hand, contextually grounded experiences, my findings offer a new contribution in this regard.

Previous literature has, in parts, highlighted some of these contextual factors such as the context of the family (see: Chawansky and Mitra, 2015; Mwaanga and Prince, 2016; Kay and Spaaij, 2021), but often independently and in isolation. This research makes an original contribution by bringing these

fragmented elements together and analysing them more broadly as interconnected, mutually reinforcing influences within the broader social, cultural and economic structures of young women's lives in Zambia. By adopting a broader, more holistic approach, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how multiple contextual mechanisms including family dynamics, gender norms, socio-economic status, and community expectation interact to shape, enable, or constrain young women's access to and engagement with SfD programmes. If SfD programmes are to achieve their gender transformative potential, this research argues there is a need to frame the involvement of young women in sport not as an isolated activity but as one deeply embedded within the broader structures of their lives. This suggestion builds on and extends the argument made by Lindsey et al. (2017) who contend that knowledge about SfD is only able to exist within the broader understanding of its particular context. In particular, this study highlights the importance of attending to the unique and intersecting circumstances that shape each young woman's engagement with SfD, demonstrating that context is not a peripheral concern but a central factor that influences participation and leadership. By empirically illustrating how these intersecting contextual factors operate in practice, this research contributes a more integrated and context-sensitive perspective to the SfD literature, one that is essential for informing the design of programmes capable of achieving sustainable, gender-transformative outcomes.

Furthermore, the contribution of research brings into question the transferable nature of the knowledge, skills and experience young women develop in SfD programmes. Previous literature has highlighted the challenges young women face in their capacity to transform their situation outside of the SfD setting, often struggling to exert influence within their communities (Spaaij and Jeans, 2013). As noted above, SfD programmes operate to act on the individual, but questions can be asked as to how transferable these changes are to life outside of the SfD field. This research provides an insight into this, with the findings providing evidence that SfD programmes in Zambia do succeed in bringing about *some* level of change in young women, but it also highlights that more needs to be done if these changes are to be transferred to other societal contexts. The findings of this research showed how the young women developed as part of their role as a peer leader in SfD programmes in Zambia, through the development of knowledge, skills and experiences that they were only able to access as a result of the SfD programmes. Yet, it was evident to see that, for a proportion of the participants, these skills were only effective within the sporting domain, and they were constrained in applying them to situations outside of the SfD field. This lack of transferability may suggest that the external contextual factors at play in the lives of some young women have a greater influence than the internal contextual factors within the SfD programmes. The ability for some of the young women to negotiate the broader structures surrounding their lives appeared unachievable, where they were unable to act on those structures which implicated their lives.



## 9.6 Broader Reflections on the Research and Research Process

Reflecting on the thesis as a whole, and the research process I engaged in, enables a number of key issues to emerge. My efforts to analyse the lived experiences of female peer leaders in SfD programmes in Zambia is limited by the research choices that were justified earlier in the thesis, but that necessarily meant that the scale of the research was bounded. My research was conducted in Lusaka, an urban setting, working with Sport in Action and EduSport, who are just two of the many SfD NGOs operating within the Zambian context. Through the research, I chose to engage in as much depth as practically possible with a smaller sample of participants, focusing specifically on those who were involved in SfD as peer leaders, rather than widening to a broader group associated with the NGOs. My research process was constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Appendix C) which prevented me from undertaking my third field visit. This additional field visit had been planned with the intention to meet with staff members from both NGOs who were involved in the design, development, and delivery of the SfD programmes. As a result of the pandemic, I had limited engagement with those responsible for the design of SfD programmes, and therefore, was unable to gather their firsthand accounts. As such, this thesis has not empirically examined intended programme designs and structures, and pedagogical approaches and learning models that the SfD organisations had enacted. For example, Lindsey et al. (2017) highlighted how Sport in Action and EduSport operate from a communitarian ethos. Whilst there was a sense of a communitarian ethos emerging from the interviewees in my research, my lack of interaction with the SfD NGO staff members means I cannot indicate this ethos as an intention of those ‘in charge’. The peer leaders within my study did acknowledge, to some extent, their desire to contribute to their own communities but largely spoke about this in relation to the *SfD community* rather than their wider communities. Interactions with SfD staff members may have permitted me access to this type of information, which would have given me a better insight into, and understanding, of the ways of working for both Sport in Action and EduSport.

Given the nature of this research, I was constrained by some parameters regarding the duration over which I could collect my data. My intention to collect research over a period of three years maximised the time available to me, avoided a short-termism approach (see Section 5.5), and acknowledged the time-constrained nature of undertaking my PhD studies. During my data collection process, a full immersion within the field was not possible and, therefore, I made the decision to go in and out of the field at regular intervals. To further strengthen my approach and to aid collaboration in knowledge production, I built relationships with local actors and engaged with participants over an extended period of time; for example, as of my last field visit, I was interacting with some individuals I had met eight years earlier during my first visit to Zambia. This familiarity enhanced my access to the field and the subsequent quality of data collected. However, this short duration has limited the ability to track patterns in the lives of young women over an extended timescale, and therefore, I would recommend that this is an area for future research.

My use of the life histories as part of my data collection aided in cultural exploration and allowed me to access the personal experiences and perspectives of some of the female peer leaders in more depth. The adoption of this approach supports McSweeney's (2019) call for further anthropological investigation of SfD, with life histories providing a means through which this can be achieved. The use of life histories allowed me to "create powerful insights, through narrative life histories, into the lived experiences of others" (Collison and Marchesseault, 2018, p. 236), which enabled me to study changes in my participants over the period of my research. Lindsey et al. (2017) highlighted that there is a lack of depth in ethnographic approaches to SfD research. Whilst there has been more ethnographic research since Lindsey et al. (2017) made this point, my study does also address this issue, as I have engaged with individuals who are best placed to indicate what life is like for people who are the key intended beneficiaries of SfD programmes, particularly females, giving their own in-depth account of the local context.

Throughout the course of this study, my positionality shifted in ways that had a tangible impact on the research process, and it is important to critically reflect on how this influenced both the production and interpretation of knowledge. The findings presented above are not neutral observations, but a joint construction of the experiences and events I encountered during my fieldwork, and the lens through which I engaged with them. As outlined in the Introduction (Section 1.2) and discussed further in the Methodology Chapter (Section 5.3), I entered this research following a period of volunteering in Zambia with Sport in Action and EduSport, supporting the delivery of SfD programmes. At that time, I viewed myself as both an outsider - an eager volunteer seeking to learn more about the field - and an insider, given my familiarity with the field and my prior connections to the participants. This initial positioning led me to frame my research questions in ways that reflected my curiosity about how these programmes operated and how young women experienced them.

As I was not connected to a particular SfD organisation or programme, I argue that this thesis is stronger because of my positionality, where I had autonomy over the entire process. Reflecting on my motivations at the outset and my methodological considerations where I had intended to adopt the position of both an 'insider' and an 'outsider', the actual reality of the research process was different. As discussed earlier, my research was built on the relationships I had formed with local actors, and as a result, on reflection a large proportion of time I felt more like an 'insider'. My prior familiarity with the SfD NGOs, the programmes being delivered, and the broader context and culture I was studying, facilitated my access to the field and I feel that fostered a greater level of openness with a number of my participants who interacted with me more as a friend, than a researcher. Rather than providing success stories or answers which were always positive, this familiarity enabled the peer leaders to talk more candidly about their experiences - good and bad - the challenges they have experienced and the frustration they have felt. Whilst I feel this has afforded me access to more critical insights, enhancing

the quality of my data, I do also acknowledge the complexities inherent in this stance, where at times the roles I was adopting became blurred.

My positionality also had an influence across multiple stages of my research process, from data collection through to data analysis. These effects were revealed not only through specific moments in the field, but also through supervisory discussions, ongoing critical reflection, and engagement with the data itself. One early example emerged through my first fieldwork visit in 2017, during which I undertook nine semi-structured interviews. All of these interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format, where I was sat opposite the participants engaging in a two-way discussion, in a manner which reflected a conventional interview situation. Whilst the interviews did produce some valuable data, at the time, I initially attributed the somewhat disjointed nature of the conversations to the early stage of my research and the natural unfamiliarity that comes with initial field engagement. However, through later reflection, I noticed that the set-up of the interview created a 'formal' and potential hierarchical dynamic where my positionality as a white, researcher from the Global North with prior ties to the NGOs likely influenced how at ease the participants felt to speak. This prompted me to reflect more critically on the role of power dynamics in my data collection process and how my approach to the interviews was key in the quality of data I was able to gather. In subsequent fieldwork visits, I made a deliberate effort to address the interview set up, working to create a more relaxed environment. Where possible, I chose to conduct the interviews in informal settings, such as at the side of a sports pitch, out in the local community or walking together, rather than in a formal office or meeting space. I also supplemented my semi-structured interviews with informal follow-up conversations which provided richer, more natural insights, potentially due to the more relaxed context, than the disjointed responses received by some participants in the first fieldwork visit. This shift reflected a more reflexively informed approach to my data collection process, acknowledging the role of relational power and improving the quality and depth of the data I was able to gather.

A further example emerged during the data analysis process, where I began to code and interpret the data. Initially, I found myself gravitating towards the narratives that aligned with my own prior experiences within Zambia; particularly the young women with whom I had developed strong relationships with and who talked about empowerment, the power of sport and the desire to 'give back' through being a peer leader. Both supervisors and a critical friend who I often spoke to throughout my research process, challenged my thinking on the early findings that were emerging, commenting how they aligned very much with my own stance and the optimistic framing of the SfD field. Through these critical discussions, my friend particularly questioned me about the more marginalised perspectives, and this prompted me to interrogate the data deeper. These discussions were particularly pertinent to help me examine how my early motivations, which had been shaped by my volunteering experiences in Zambia, may have led to an unintentional filtering of the data. In response, I decided to re-engage with the transcripts, purposefully foregrounding the participants whose accounts highlighted

frustrations with the SfD programmes and their role as a peer leader. This ongoing process of reflexive analysis enhanced the methodological rigor of my study by ensuring improved representation of the diverse perspectives of my participants.

A further substantial shift in my positionality occurred as I transitioned into a professional role within the broader international development sector supporting the delivery of education, employment, and enterprise programmes across sub-Saharan Africa during the latter stages of the thesis. Whilst I am not currently based or working within the Zambian context, my position as a practitioner inevitably informs the lens through which I interpreted and engaged with this research in the final stages. On reflection, I began to view the data not only as a researcher, but also as a practitioner with a growing sense of responsibility to apply the insights I was gaining within my every day working environment. This dual identity came into how I interpreted my participants' narratives, particularly in recognising structural and contextual barriers that may not have been fully visible to me at the outset. For example, one instance where this occurred was when analysing the transcript of one of the longer standing female peer leaders who spoke about a mismatch between the expectations of a funder and the realities they faced on the ground. Earlier in my research journey, I might have interpreted this mismatch as a case of poor communication or a breakdown in the project implementation. However, having gained experience working on programme delivery within a similar context myself, I now understand this as a structural tension embedded within development work; one that I am now navigating myself.

My motivation to 'give back' - a sentiment rooted in my initial volunteering experiences in Zambia - continues to drive my professional practice. The knowledge, insights, and skills developed through this research are actively informing my current work, particularly in project design and implementation. For example, in my current role delivering education-focused programmes in rural Kenya, I am conscious of how gender and broader contextual factors influence how young people participate, particularly young women. This deepened understanding has led me to adopt programmatic approaches that account for these dynamics, including this thesis' recommendation to involve and educate the wider community alongside young participants.

Collectively, these examples highlight how my positionality impacted my research, shaping how I approached the research, what I noticed, and how I made sense of my participants' experiences. At times, on reflection, my positionality narrowed my focus, whereas at others, it offered insight. These examples also highlight how my positionality was not merely acknowledged but consciously and critically interrogated through ongoing self-reflection, feedback from peers and critical supervision. It was through these reflexive processes that I was able to identify and challenge my assumptions, reframe my interpretations, and modify my approach where necessary. This enabled me to strengthen the rigour of my work and ensure a more ethically grounded and nuanced analysis, and one that recognises the co-constructed nature of knowledge.

## **9.7 Recommendations for Future Research, Policy and Practice**

Whilst this thesis is a timely contribution to knowledge within SfD, particularly concerning the involvement of young women as peer leaders, there is still more to be done at the intersection of sport, gender and development. This research has focused primarily on young women as peer leaders within SfD programmes in Zambia, providing a means through which their experiences can be understood and contextualised within SfD and more broadly within the wider trajectory of their lives. Building on my research, this thesis is recommending the use of extended life histories as a data collection tool when exploring the intersection of sport, gender and development, to deeply capture, understand and critically analyse the experiences young people go through as a result of SfD programmes over a longer period of time.

Given the limitations around the scope of what this thesis could and could not do, with my research being one of a very limited number of studies which specifically focus on the experiences of young women in SfD programmes first-hand, further research should be conducted to delve further into the contextual experiences of young people within SfD, both in Zambia and more broadly across the Global South. This could include further exploration into the influence of the family given its limited academic attention to date. Building on my thesis, which focused on the female peer leaders' perception of the differing contextual influences, this should include interviews directly with family members to discuss their daughter's involvement in SfD programmes. Similar to McSweeney's (2021) recommendation, this would help capture family members' firsthand experiences of SfD, and how SfD affects family life outside of the programme setting. It would also enable an exploration of how family structure, resources, gender, age and location affects family members' perspectives of women in SfD and the underlying beliefs upon which these perspectives are founded. The gathering of empirical data specifically from individuals implicated with wider contextual factors such as families would enable future research to investigate their perspectives in relation to those of the peer leaders, exploring the contrasting perceptions between different individuals.

Furthermore, this thesis is recommending that future research looks at the dynamics of male / female engagement in different programmes within the SfD field. Whilst this research did begin to explore some of these dynamics, more attention needs to be given to the perspectives of the male peer leader. Undertaking further research with male participants would allow further exploration regarding how the perceptions among men change in the context of close engagements within SfD field. Such research could benefit from linking with broader literature around masculinities, which was not covered in this thesis, but more research into this area would help understand how the hegemonic masculinities within sport influence and impact male peer leaders within SfD programmes, particularly when operating alongside, and with, young women. This further research would build on gender and development initiatives which promote the engagement of all participants – male and female – to engender change

through sport and enable boys and men to deconstruct masculinities (Chawansky, 2011; Zipp et al. 2023).

This research has important implications for policy and practice within SfD, particularly concerning the involvement of young women as participants and peer leaders. Even though this research was conducted in Zambia, there are some approaches which can be explored more broadly and applied to similar communities and SfD programmes across the Global South. This thesis is recommending that additional thought be given to the following elements to determine whether they can be incorporated into practice in SfD programmes moving forwards. Firstly, as the findings of my research have demonstrated, the full scope of contextual influences are imperative in determining young people's engagement in SfD programmes. Therefore, there is a need to consider an educational approach and activities for engaging with the wider community surrounding the participants. This could be addressed through the designing and developing of SfD programmes that are built on pedagogical approaches that initiate social change at an individual, structural and community level. Doing so would address a gap whereby the focus solely on what happens in the SfD programmes and with the participants who attend, is balanced by seeking to improve the wider support experienced by young people at both an individual and collective level.

Secondly, taking into consideration this full breadth of contextual factors, SfD programmes need to recognise that all participants do not need the same support, given that their circumstances may be different and have different influences on their trajectories. Rather than taking a standardised approach, SfD NGOs need to consider purposive differential support for each of the peer leaders within their programmes. By critically assessing and understanding the needs of their potential peer leaders, this positions the SfD organisations to be able to address the actual individual situations of each participant, accounting for these in the implementation of their programmes. Taking into account this broader context and structures of inequality enables the SfD organisations to operate to drive individual and collective change. If, for example, this is unattainable due to funding constraints - often there is an emphasis on measuring 'impact' and demonstrating value for money with external funding - consideration should be given as to whether SfD NGOs should focus on quality over quantity, in terms of programmatic levels of engagement.

Thirdly, SfD NGOs need to place a greater recognition of the role of gender and actively speak to this via their ways of operation. This could be through their programmes, community education and working with families, as noted above. These suggestions have implications on a practical level for the SfD NGOs as they would require resources, capacity and particular skills, not to mention a willingness to change some aspects of ongoing practice.

## 9.8 Concluding Remarks

The research reported in this thesis has critically addressed gender relations through sport for development programmes in Zambia by analysing the lived experiences of female peer leaders. The contributions of the type of understandings that this thesis has produced are “essential to any efforts to improve SfD practices and policies” according to Lindsey et al. (2017, p. 201). This final chapter has discussed findings in relation to each of the research questions, while also taking into account the broader literature review chapters that supported the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. As demonstrated through the chapter, Rowlands’ (1995; 1997; 1998), Cornwall’s (2016) and Cornwall and Edwards’ (2014) work on empowerment has emerged as particularly relevant and important frameworks to support consideration of the data in relation to the research questions. This thesis has highlighted how SfD programmes are a potentially important platform for supporting young women in the Global South. Through their participation in SfD programmes, young Zambia women were afforded the opportunity to become a leader in a traditionally masculine domain, to find a safe space where they can build a social network and feel like they belong, to be able to develop their critical consciousness through dialogues, discussion and analysis, and to collectively resist and challenge traditional gender norms. More so, this thesis has discussed the environment created in SfD that operate to support the various forms of power – namely ‘power within’, ‘power to, and ‘power with’ - which support the empowerment processes that young women go through, despite the cultural and historical baggage it carries.

However, some aspects of the SfD programmes could be designed more intentionally in order to fully enable the changes that they aspire to. Broadly, SfD programmes have individualistic and neo-liberal orientations, but to move beyond this, SfD practice needs to be locally orientated and defined, favouring local participation in knowledge production. By acknowledging and recognising the broader contextual and environmental conditions within which SfD programmes are delivered, and the young women reside, enables SfD NGOs to design and develop interventions that are contextually relevant. Whilst the programmes may provide important conditions to bring about change, there are constraints on the transfer of such changes beyond the SfD field and, as such, changes may only and also be temporarily limited. Therefore, SfD programmes need to disrupt broader social structures of inequality and oppression to more substantially bring about the change they seek, supporting young women to be empowered to reach their full potential within and outside of sport.

## Appendix A: NGO Information Sheet

### **NGO Information Sheet**

This research aims to analyse the experiences of female peer leaders in sport for development programmes in Zambia. Through exploring the relationship between sport and gender; this research aims to capture the experiences of female peer leaders by considering how their gender influences their involvement in peer education, particularly sport for development programmes.

#### **Why am I doing this study?**

I am interested in exploring the relationship between sport and gender, trying to capture the influence and role sport plays in the lives of female youth in Zambia. This research will form part of my doctoral research project which I am studying at Durham University, and it is hoped that this will help increase our understanding of the influence sport and sport-for-development have in the broader trajectory of a female youth's life.

#### **Why would I like your organisation to take part in this study?**

EduSport is selected because of its involvement in sport-for-development and peer education programmes in Zambia. I would like to utilise your organisation to create links and identify relevant individuals to interview.

#### **What is required of EduSport?**

EduSport are not required to do anything specific for my research, but help would be welcomed when looking to identify relevant individuals to interview.

#### **What will I be doing with the data?**

The data will be used to form my doctoral thesis and all participants involved will be kept anonymous. They will be provided with a different name to protect their identity. The individuals however may discuss aspects relating to EduSport and therefore please understand this information will be included where relevant in my final paper.

#### **If you have any further questions?**

If you would like to discuss anything in more depth or have any questions regarding the study and your involvement in it please contact me:

*Researcher: Grace McCatty*

*Email: [grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk](mailto:grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk) / Tel: +447411 209604*

*Supervisor: Dr Iain Lindsey*

*Email: [Iain.Lindsey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:Iain.Lindsey@durham.ac.uk)*

Having read the above I confirm that I understand what is required of EduSport for this research and I am happy for us to be involved.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (NGO representative) Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: Interview Record

Number	Pseudonyms	Date(s)	Location	Time	Role	Gender
1	Esther	30.05.18	Mtendere	12:00	Former peer leader	Female
2	Juliet	05.07.17	Sport in Action Office	12:30	Peer leader and site coordinator	Female
		30.05.18	Levy Mall	17:00		
3		30.05.18	Munali	13:30	Peer leader	Male
4		31.05.18	Mtendere	10:00	Peer leader	Female
5		31.05.18	Mtendere	11:00	Peer leader	Female
6		26.06.17	Mtendere	14:00	Peer leader	Female
		31.05.18	Mtendere	12:00		
7		31.05.18	Mtendere	13:00	Peer leader	Female
8	Samuel	01.06.18	Kabwata	10:30	Site coordinator	Male
9		01.06.18	Arcades	13:00	Former peer leader	Female
10		01.06.18	Munali	15:00	Peer leader	Female
11		04.06.18	Chipata	14:00	Peer leader	Female
12		05.06.18	Kalingalinga	10:00	Peer leader	Female
13		05.06.18	Kalingalinga	11:00	Peer leader	Female
14		05.06.18	Kabwata	12:30	Peer leader	Female
15		06.06.18	EduSport Office	10:30	Peer leader	Female
16		07.06.18	Sport in Action Office	10:30	Project officer	Female
17		07.06.18	Munali	14:30	Former peer leader	Female
18		08.06.18	Kalingalinga	11:00	Peer leader	Female
19		08.06.18	Lusaka Central	13:30	Peer leader	Female
20		08.06.18	Lusaka Central	14:30	Peer leader	Female
21		08.06.18	Lusaka Central	15:30	Peer leader	Male
22		09.06.18	Chawama	10:30	Peer leader	Female
23		09.06.18	Chawama	11:15	Peer leader	Male
24		09.06.18	Chawama	11:45	Peer leader	Female
25		09.06.18	OYDC	14:00	Former peer leader	Female
26		11.06.18	Chilenje	09:30	Peer leader	Female
27	Martha	05.07.17	Sport in Action Office	14:00	Project manager	Female
		11.06.18	Levy Mall	11:00	Former peer leader	
28		03.07.17	Chawama	10:00	Peer leader	Female
		12.06.18	EduSport Office	11:00		
29		12.06.18	EduSport Office	12:00	Peer leader	Female
30		12.06.18	EduSport Office	13:00	Peer leader	Male
31		13.06.18	Kalingalinga	10:00	Peer leader	Female
32		13.06.18	Mtendere	13:00	Peer leader	Male
33		13.06.18	Mtendere	14:00	Former peer leader	Female
34	George	06.07.17	Mtendere	14:00	Site coordinator	Male
		13.06.18	Mtendere	15:30		
35		14.06.18	Kaunda Square	14:00	Peer leader	Female
36		14.06.18	Munali	12:00	Peer leader	Male
37		28.06.17	Fountain of Hope	10:30	Peer leader	Female
		15.06.18	Sport in Action Office	13:00		
38*		27.06.17	Kabwata	11:30	Peer leader	Female
39*		05.07.17	Kamwala South	11:20	Peer leader	Female
40*		06.07.17	Mtendere	11:30	Peer leader	Female

*\*These individuals were only interviewed during the first fieldwork and were not interviewed again.*

## Appendix C: Durham University Covid-19 Academic Impact Statement

<b>Durham University</b> <b>Covid-19 Academic Impact Statement</b> <b>Postgraduate Research Thesis (Masters by Research/Doctoral Programmes)</b>		
<b>Student Name</b>	<b>Student ID number</b>	<b>Department</b>
Grace McCatty	000682804	Applied Social Sciences
<b>Did Covid-19 prevent or impede you from completing part of your research project as originally intended?</b>		<b>Yes   <del>No</del></b>
<p>If 'Yes', please state what Covid-19 prevented you from doing (maximum 200 words). For example, limitations to the data set or other primary sources due to travel restrictions, inability to run/replicate certain experiments due to restricted access, cutting short aspects of research due to additional caring responsibilities etc.</p>		
<p>Due to COVID-19 and the government restrictions on travel, I was unable to travel to Zambia to undertake the final phase of my data collection. The travel restrictions imposed by the UK government started 2020, and were lifted in 2022, which impacted upon my ability to travel for a two-year period as Zambia featured on the government's 'red list'.</p> <p>This impacted my data collection as I was unable to conduct focus groups, and undertake further interviews as planned. The purpose of the additional interviews was to speak to staff members involved in the delivery of SfD programmes at the NGOs to understand more about their programmatic approach as well as the design and development of their programmes. The reason for including focus groups was to deepen my data and understanding by providing the opportunity for the participants to share further experiences, contributing towards the knowledge I had already gathered.</p> <p>Also, I had been planning to provide feedback to participants in the project and to check the validity of the key themes I had highlighted in the interviews conducted during the previous fieldwork trips. However, as a result of the pandemic I was unable to do this.</p>		
<b>Please state the dates over which the impact occurred</b>	From:    March 2020                      To: March 2022	
<p>Please use the space below to provide a brief statement (up to 500 words) on any choices you have made and actions you have taken in response to anything you were prevented from doing as identified above. For example, reduction in the scope of the research, changes to the research design or revised research questions.</p>		
<p>As the impact of the pandemic was unknown, at the start of it, I made the decision to pause the data collection process until the situation improved, and travel was permitted, but given the level of uncertainty over the course of the pandemic, it was difficult to anticipate its end. As such, there was a reduction in the scope of the data collection and adaptation to the research design process.</p> <p>To accommodate the restrictions, I attempted to adapt my methodology to adjust to the restrictions which prevented me from travelling and engaging with my participants in a face-to-face environment. I made a decision to transition to a digital work environment during the pandemic, adopting digital research methods to allow a continuation of my research. The use of digital platforms grew in popularity during the pandemic, when individuals were unable to meet in person, and I adopted this method in an</p>		

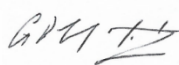
attempt to engage with some of my participants via virtual methods. Through the use of WhatsApp and Facebook, I tried to keep in touch with some of my participants online, engaging in conversation, and asking questions, albeit it in an informal manner, to build on my previously collected data.

Whilst these limited interactions helped with provide additional detail to some of the previously collected data, pivoting to a virtual approach was not as successful as I had hoped it would be. The feasibility of interacting or attempting to interact via virtual platforms was impacted by a lack of access to airtime data among participants, weak or inconsistent connection, and the challenge of generating a flowing verbal conversation through this means. As a result, I made the decision not to include any of this data in the thesis.

Whilst pivoting to remote data collection gave me the opportunity to collect some data and to sense check other parts, I do acknowledge the limitations of being unable to travel to Zambia to undertake this in person. The proposed subsequent field trip(s) would have given me the opportunity to again check the validity of the data collected, but also to talk further to any participant who had previously been interviewed. This would have included the delivery of focus groups, something which was prevented due to the pandemic.

**I declare that the work submitted with this form was completed to the best of my ability in the light of the impact of Covid-19 as described above.**

**Candidate signature**



**Principal Supervisor signature**

**Date**

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024

## COVID-19 Impact Statement

### Guidance Notes

The University recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic has, to a greater or lesser extent, affected the work of many postgraduate research students. Access to laboratories, secure databases, libraries and workplaces conducive to effective study might have been impacted by the closure of University premises. Access to data subjects, field studies and archival sources might also have been significantly disrupted by travel restrictions, social distancing measures and closure of resources. For others, caring responsibilities, illness or employment circumstances might have impacted on research productivity.

The University's approach has been to encourage researchers to:

- (i) reschedule research activities where possible so that researchers carry on elements that are feasible given restrictions to access to resources;
- (ii) alter the scope, objectives or research methods of research projects;

Where it has not been possible to fully mitigate the impact through (i) and (ii) extensions may have been granted.

If you wish to make your examiners aware of the academic impact that COVID-19 had on your thesis and the choices you have made in response please download the Impact Statement here and complete this in consultation with your supervisors. Then return the statement with the Higher Degree Entry form when you submit your thesis.

Please note while examiners may take into account impacts in examining the thesis (or other research output) all candidates must still satisfy the minimum award criteria as set out in the University's [Core Regulations for Research Degrees by Thesis or Composition](#) (para 24). It is the responsibility of the examiners, using their academic judgement to determine whether the award criteria have been met.

## Appendix D: Research Sites

The research was conducted in a number of communities across Lusaka where SfD and peer education programmes were delivered. These sites were:

**Chawama:** Chawama is found southwest of Lusaka city and is a high-density area.

**Chipata:** Chipata is a neighbourhood found of Lusaka. It is not Chipata District which is a district of Zambia located in the Eastern Province.

**Chilenje:** Chilenje is a residential area built by the state in the 1960s to house government workers. The single-family houses are usually formed of up to four bedrooms, each often surrounded by a garden.<sup>1</sup>

**Kalingalinga:** Kalingalinga is a compound which lies on the periphery of the city. Originating as a squatter settlement in the 1940s, it predominantly houses the poorer section of society. It is a very densely populated area, formed of multi-family homes housing both the owners and the tenants.<sup>9</sup>

**Kabwata:** Kabwata is a bigger constituency but covers a number of Lusaka suburbs including Kabwata, Libala and Chilenje. Kabwata is home to the Sport in Action and EduSport offices in Lusaka.

**Kamwala:** Kamwala is located next to Kabwata and similarly to Chilenje, it was where the government constructed several new housing estates during the 1960s.

**Munali:** Largely a residential area, Munali is known for the University of Zambia, whose campus is based nearby. As an area, Munali is also home to several shopping centres including East Park Mall and Arcades Shopping Mall, alongside a number of mid-range hotels

**Mtendere:** Mtendere, which was formerly known as Chainama Hills, is a low-income settlement in Lusaka and is a densely populated area.

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<sup>9</sup> Gough, 2008. Moving around”: the social and spatial mobility of youth in Lusaka



This research aims to explore the experiences you have as part of sport for development programmes in your community. I would like to learn about your experiences as a peer leader and how you feel about sport.

### **Why am I doing this study?**

I want to look at the relationship between sport and gender, to understand the role sport plays in your life as a young person in Zambia. This research will form part of my research studies at Durham University and it is hoped that your experiences can help me.

### **Why would I like you to take part in this study?**

I would like you take part in this study because of your involvement in sport-for-development and peer education programmes in Lusaka

### **What is required of you?**

The research will involve you taking part in a one-to-one interview discussion with me which will last up to last about an hour. The purpose of this is to hear your views on your involvement in sport-for-development programmes, how sport relates to the rest of your life in your community, at school and in your family, your views about females in sport and what sport means for you as a female youth peer leader.

Therefore, please don't be afraid to speak your mind and be as honest as possible about your views and experiences.

### **What will I be doing with the data?**

Your interview will be recorded on a Dictaphone, and these will be saved on a password protected computer. Ultimately, my findings from all interviews will contribute to writing my thesis, on which my studies will be examined. I may also write articles or present findings from my research.

### **Will I be named or identifiable in the research?**

You will not be named in the research, and you will be given a different name to protect your identity. However, I would want to provide readers of the research with some detail about you, for example details about your life at home, your involvement in sport and how long you have been a peer leader. It may be that other people try to guess your identity based on these details.

### **Are there any other potential risks and/or benefits involved in your participation?**

We may discuss potentially sensitive topics and therefore please be aware you do not have to answer specific questions if you do not want too. You can always stop taking part at any time you wish.

### **What happens if I change my mind about participating in the research?**

You are asked to participate in the research voluntarily. Therefore, you have the right to withdraw from the research freely before or during the interview and up to 14 days afterwards. If so, records of your involvement in the research will be destroyed.

### **If you have any further questions?**

If you would like to discuss anything in more depth or have any questions regarding the study and your involvement in it please contact me:

Researcher: *Grace McCatty*

Email: [grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk](mailto:grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk)

Tel: +447411 209604

## Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

**Title:** *Sport for development: addressing gender relations through sport for development programmes in Zambia: An analysis of the contextual realities of female peer leaders.*

**Name of Researcher:** Grace McCatty

Please read and complete the below:

	Yes	No
I have read the attached information sheet, and I can confirm I understand what I am required to do.		
I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I have.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part, without giving any reason before and during the interview, and up to 14 days afterwards.		
I understand that the audio recordings and interview transcripts will be safely stored using password protected computer files.		
I understand that my name will not be used within the research project, and I will be given a different name to protect my anonymity. However, I am also aware that others may try to guess my identity based on details provided about me in the research.		
I am aware that I can access a support system following the interview should I wish to talk to someone about my experiences.		
I agree to take part in the above project.		

Having read the attached information sheet and consent form, I confirm that I understand what is required of me for this research and I am happy to take part.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Researcher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix G: Interview Guide**

Name:

Age:

Location of interview:

Date:

Time:

Schooling level:

Why have they left school if they haven't completed?

### **Themes for discussion**

#### **Family Life**

Q: What does your life at home look like? Who do you live with?

Q: Do you have any other family living outside of Lusaka? How often do you visit?

Q: Are the roles / responsibilities different for a girl if you live in a rural village or city? E.g. assumed roles to fulfil, responsibilities and disposable income.

Q: What are your family's views of you playing sport? Do they play sport?

Q: Do you go to church? (What are churches thoughts around what your role as a female should be)

#### **Involvement in Sport**

Q: Are you involved in sport other than being a Peer Leader?

Q: What first led you to becoming involved in sport?

Q: Does your family play sport?

#### **Life as a Peer Leader**

Look at significant people in their life and their career development.

Q: Who is your closest friend?

Q: What do they think of you being involved in sport?

Q: Is your friends' lifestyle very different to yours (if not involved in sport / how so?)

Q: What do you think you would be doing if you were not involved in sport?

*Distinguish between male and female friends and support network.*

Q: What would be for you, as a woman, a good life? What is expected of women?

Q: What things would raise concerns among your family / friends / NGOs?

Q: What does being a Peer Leader do for you? What have they learnt / benefits etc...

Q: Do they know what empowerment means?



Q: What is the reason they wanted to become a Peer Leader?

Q: Who empowered them to become a Peer Leader?

Q: What do you most / least enjoy about being a Peer Leader?

Get the peer leaders to tell me stories, explain their experience.

Tell me a good story... Tell me a time when it didn't go so well...

Q: Do you think sport is a good way to teach people life skills and important life lessons?

Q: Do you think sport helps people to avoid situations such as drinking and early pregnancy?

Q: Why do you think some people stay in sport longer than others?

### **Time commitment**

Q: What does your usual week look like (Mon-Sun)?

Q: What fills your time alongside playing and being involved in sport?

Q: Is this the same all year round or does the weather (wet/dry) affect this?

### **Jobs / Work Life**

Q: Do you do a job alongside your studies / sporting commitments?

Q: How do work and sporting commitments fit in your schedule? Are there any conflicts?

### **Aspirations**

Q: Where do you see your life going? Where would you like to be in 10 years' time?

Q: What are the biggest challenges in the way of your aspirations?

Q: Does being a female matter or affect these aspirations from becoming a reality?

### **Economic status**

Q: Do you think you live in a rich or poor area? Have you been to other areas nearby?

Q: Do you think where you live / grow up affects your aspirations from becoming real?

Q: Does where you live limit anything you do?

Q: What other barriers apart from location and money available to you would you say prevent you from having a good life?

Q: Finally, do you believe sport has given you a better life overall?

### **Male Peer leaders / interviewees**

Q: What is your view / vision of a perfect girl? Understand their perspective of gender norms

Do you have any other comments that you would like to add that I have not covered?

Thank you for your time, I will now stop recording

## Appendix H: Preliminary Analysis of Interview Data

Theme	Instances/Notes	Verbatim
<b>Family Life</b>  <i>Life at home, family set-up, siblings, religion, context of their home life</i>	<p>Influence of home context on life decisions</p>	<p><b>Participant 6:</b> But actually, for us young ladies, it's more like where we come from. Who we live with. How they are treating us. That makes us to make us either make a step forwards or a step backwards. Maybe my mother can be forcing me to do what I don't want whereby I want to do this whereas my mother wants me to do that. If I want to do sport then my mother says you can't go for sports you just have to say home. So, I will become that way by not my own choice.</p> <p><b>Participant 38:</b> I believe yes, because I know a lot of people have talents and gifts but then your family is the background. They will encourage you to say yes take part in this because I had stopped playing football, because I had started playing football when I was 6, I stopped playing football when I was like 12, I just stopped. Mum is the one who was the one who was telling me no she had seen me play, and that I was really good, and you have to continue. I was like no it's been long, and I will need to learn again.</p> <p><b>Participant 27:</b> I had issues with my sisters at home. I will leave home as early as 8am, then when I was Peer Leader I wouldn't be home until 18:00 hours. And every time I got home then would start shouting at me. Where are you going, what have you been doing, you are not going to benefit anything, you are supposed to be at home cleaning and all those things, you are going to come pregnant and all those things. So, I would sneak out of the house just to go to Munali every day, and I would come back, and put up a lie about where I had been. But through the time I was a player I learnt a lot and I wanted to do what Sammy was doing and what other Peer Leaders were doing. I wanted to do what these guys were doing. So, my interest came from the stations I was going too, and learning different things, so here the interest grew and develop.</p> <p><b>Participant 27:</b> But I have never grown up like that, I have my mother tells me I need to find this in life to be able to get somewhere, this and that, that what I am doing. I hope it is working for me. My younger sister, I want to stand on my own before I have to ask for support. Because if I am standing and I have nothing and if any person wanted to help me, they wouldn't, and I need to have something. I would like to change the mindset of girls, to say despite you being a girl, you have breasts, a vagina and you still more for your life okay than just waiting for a man to come and to look after you.</p> <p><b>Participant 40:</b> Back in the day my family used to stop me playing netball, but my coach tried to convince them for now that is it beneficial, so they do support me.</p>

	<p><b>Participant 27:</b> Before they were so negative, saying this and that and questioning what I was doing and telling me I should have been cooking and at home doing chores, but when they saw what I had become, they wanted to support me and even became interested in what I was doing. They would ask me, and I would tell them who helped me at Sport in Action and what their job was, I was a Peer Leader. They became supportive after things started changing in my life.</p> <p><b>Participant 40:</b> They thought that it disturbed me in cases like my studies, I don't find much time for my studies, I always spend much time in sport and so on. They were worried sport would stop me focusing at school.</p> <p><b>Participant 35:</b> I think my, Dad, I say my dad, but he's actually my uncle. He's actually very proud of me now.. Yeah. He forced me and then there was a stress, then he was like, no, you need to quit now and concentrate in school. But then I was in my 12th grade, he said no, quit no and concentrate on school. So, it was more like the advice and then he was like, no, no, no. Stop.</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> If I started getting involved in that then my family would just say no, they would just kick me out of the house as they would say you can't be doing that on our house.... Those are some of the rules. Because every house there is rules, so you have to obey them. If you don't obey them you have to go and look through a life on your own.</p> <p><b>Participant 5:</b> Background, my background. My cousin used to stop me, when you went to sports. There's nothing you find there. You just find, you just go there and play, and you go to school. You'll be judged, you won't concentrate for schooling. So many they do they don't understand. So, me I was like when you say that you shouldn't go to sport today. I will say that. Okay, I won't, All right. But when my friends come over to sports me. As for now, they're just letting me be.</p>
Support from parents to be involved in sport	<p><b>Participant 38:</b> Yes very much happy because whenever I am having a programme here, and I have to tell my mum tomorrow that I have to be at Fountain around this time. She will be like you don't even have to work here; you go there then I will do the work for you... They encourage me a lot when it comes to sport</p> <p><b>Participant 35:</b> And then fortunately I'm the only person who is in sport, you know, in my families, like I think three generations. But yeah, I am the only one, not my brothers, my siblings and none of them plays sport.</p> <p><b>Participant 11:</b> Yes, they support very much, they see the benefits that it gives me, it's really good.</p> <p><b>Participant 33:</b> Oh, he's [Dad] supportive. He does support me. Everyone would go for league games and at times, he would come and support when he is free.</p>

		<p><b>Participant 37:</b> Again, it depends on what time of family you come from. A lot of ladies get involved in different things, others will nurture their talent in hair platting, others will just do school and then it's done.</p> <p><b>Participant 28:</b> One it is good because you personally not fulfilling what the family ask of you for example, I need to be home to help mum, but then if I don't help her, and then today you want me today at the sports grounds, she will tell me you have to stay home so I won't have that support. Or maybe it could be, I just don't live a proper life, so they think maybe sport, because other people have a negative view on sport, they think sport is bad, it is a bad way of living, so depending on how your family view sport depends on how much they support you to get involved.</p> <p><b>Participant 39:</b> It depends on the person and the challenges they face, including their families and circumstances on whether they stay in sport or not... It will depend, life is a challenge, some families say that when you do sports, sports can make you fail at school, and it is a bad distraction. For some families stop their children do sports and don't allow them. I am not sure why but maybe it is due to their culture or their religion</p> <p><b>Participant 40:</b> I think they do, they see sport as a good thing for me. I am the only one in my family apart from brother who boxes and does boxing. I think I know more about life skills because of sport compared to my sisters who do not play as I have learnt more.</p> <p><b>Participant 1:</b> Yeah, they were very happy because they thought they saw how talented I was. How, how because I had strength to say, no I can do what, what I can do it... They helped me. They were giving me courage to say no, no don't stop, go ahead and do it.</p> <p><b>Participant 4:</b> I think for those people whose family support it yes. because doing sports, makes me so busy, and keeps me focused. whereas if I was not doing sport, I could have been found myself in a bar, taking alcohol, but sports made me forget about all of those things, and gives me something to focus on. Sport has helped with that, and my family understand that. I find sometimes though they don't understand, the only person who understands me when I am doing sport is Dad. Yeah because mummy she is like, ever since I started doing sport there is nothing I bring at home, you don't even like, you don't have a passport, like no Mum I am going to South Africa. No there is nothing like that, so she says to me she thinks I should stop doing sport and then start, maybe like find a job, but I tell her, no sport is fine for me.</p> <p><b>Participant 5:</b> Yeah, like for me. I always say I was always staying with mum, not my family. Because when my dad died, the family of my dad, he took all the properties of Dad's. So, me I just stay with mum, now my mum when she lives, I was staying with her first, but then Gideon said you should be at school. So, she should let her stay here and my Mum go on her own. That is when I started school and playing netball.</p>
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		<p><b>Participant 12:</b> yes they are, they support it. They allow me to go and learn things from sport and they also sometimes, my brothers come to watch and also teach you more where they see you do not have knowledge, they educate you.</p> <p><b>Participant 15:</b> I was very lucky, as I know others don't have that support. For those who don't have supportive family they might end up missing a lot of opportunities to participate in sport, since if you find that the parents are not there to support you in sport, it is very difficult for the peer leaders to participate. You just need to convince the parents, to talk to them one on one, to help them understand EduSport and the programmes you are doing, and the benefits of sport, and who you are as peer leaders.</p> <p><b>Participant 19:</b> My mum, because it's always been a challenge for parents. I'll give you like just here in the community like despite their children coming to our pitch and playing football, the thing that motivates them most is that through our programs we also give opportunities for children to go to school. So, we can take them to school, sponsoring them to go to school. But without that some other parents, like my mom She had find it so difficult because I had once failed, because of only concentrating on sport. It was my fault that I failed once and then she was like, maybe you might fail again so probably she was protecting me to say that you stop. It was also then she didn't understand that was also the process that I didn't have anyone to inspire me.</p> <p><b>Participant 26:</b> Like the parents find that maybe you are low at school and maybe feel too much, so they think that the same support you are doing is contributing to your failure. so, when they saw that I was doing better like in grade 9, I passed. I was the second class, so they realise that this thing they will stop me from doing it was affecting me in any way. So, if parents see that your grades are going up, and you also what playing sport, they can't stop you if they can see that that your grades are going way down, they will think that the sport you are doing it is making you stop studying. Because they think that maybe you are coming from the sports ground and that you are tired, so you fail to assist and study so you have to, to read books all of the time, other than keeping yourself busy with sport</p>
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## Appendix I: Research Ethics and Risk Assessment Form

**REVISED RESEARCH ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT FORM, MAY 2015**



School of Applied Social Sciences

### **SECTION A: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION**

<b>A.1. Name of researcher(s):</b>	Grace McCatty
<b>A.2. Email Address(es) of researcher(s):</b>	<a href="mailto:Grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk">Grace.e.mccatty@durham.ac.uk</a>
<b>A.3. Project Title:</b>	Sport for development: addressing gender relations through sport for development programmes in Zambia.
<b>A.4. Project Funder (where appropriate):</b>	N/A
<b>A.5. When do you intend to start data collection?</b>	Scoping visit to begin in June 2017 for 3.5 weeks
<b>A.6. When will the project finish?</b>	Data collection for entire PhD anticipated to finish August 2019
<b>A.7. For students only:</b> Student ID: Degree, year and module: Supervisor:	000682804 First Year PhD Applied Social Sciences, L3A101 Dr. Iain Lindsay
<b>A.8. Brief summary of the research questions:</b>  <p>My previous first-hand lived experiences in Zambia suggest that there are important connections to explore between the socialisation of gender relations and the contextual realities of female peer leaders. Sport for development programmes in Zambia have begun to deliver education through a peer leadership approach (Jeanes, 2013), a concept that is integral to any peer-based intervention and uses young people as leaders who facilitate grassroots activities (Nicholls, 2009). Through this approach, sport for development and education programmes utilise the energy and altruism of young volunteers to educate their peers regarding sensitive topics (Campbell and MacPhail, 2002).</p> <p>The following questions stem from an understanding of the current field, and the factors I intend to explore to understand the experiences these female youth face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the impacts of gender norms on female youth as peer educators and leaders?</li> <li>- What is the lived experience of female youth who are involved in sport in Zambia? How do they view sport and their experiences?</li> <li>- What influence do sport-for-development programmes have in the broader trajectory of a female youths' life?</li> <li>- How does sport affect the socialisation of gender norms on an individual and collective level? Does sport contribute to reinforce or challenging dominant ideologies?</li> </ul>	
<b>A.9. What data collection method/s are you intending you use, and why?</b>  <p>This ethics application is primarily for my scoping visit to Lusaka, Zambia. This trip is designed with the intention of visiting and identifying field sites, connecting with in-country partners and mapping the field for future data collection. Following on from my progression review, the intention is to</p>	

resubmit my ethics form ahead of subsequently beginning, fuller data collection process and therefore the identified data collection methods that will be utilised in the future have been referred to for outlining purposes.

I am intending to adopt an inductive approach utilising qualitative semi-structured interviews which are shaped by a life history approach. Through utilising this approach, this research will strive to capture the subjective experiences of the individuals involved allowing an analysis of the contextual realities of female peer leaders to be conducted.

This research will adopt a life histories approach which will direct and shape the data collection process. The semi-structured interviews will be undertaken within the local community setting and will address topics such as family life, educational experience, social, political and religious involvements and will attempt to explore the relationship between the individual and the broader context, events and social themes which characterise daily life in Lusaka. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews will allow for the exploration of everyday lived experiences, particularly those evidenced during the participant observation, allowing different aspects to be explored more deeply.

These data method collections will provide an opportunity to explore and attend to the complexity of lived experiences, capturing the contextual reality through which these are formed.

## **SECTION B: ETHICS CHECKLIST**

While all subsequent sections of this form should be completed for all studies, this checklist is designed to identify those areas where more detailed information should be given. Please note: It is better to identify an area where ethical or safety issues may arise and then explain how these will be dealt with, than to ignore potential risks to participants and/or the researchers.

	Yes	No
a). Does the study involve participants who are <i>potentially vulnerable</i> ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b). Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c). Could the study cause harm, discomfort, stress, anxiety or any other negative consequence beyond the risks encountered in normal life?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Does the research address a <i>potentially sensitive topic</i> ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e). Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f). Are steps being taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g). Are there potential risks to the researchers' health, safety and wellbeing in conducting this research beyond those experienced in the researchers' everyday life?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **SECTION C: METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION**

### **C.1. Who will be your research participants?**

The participants utilised within this research will predominantly be female youth who are active peer leaders within the sport for development and peer education programmes delivered by two prominent non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Lusaka. The NGOs are not going to be named but have been made aware that they may be identifiable through description of their characteristics in subsequent PhD publications. The participants will be asked to take part based on the following criteria:

1. The participants have indicated that they are willing to partake in my research and will be happy to conduct follow up interviews and discussions.
2. The participants are currently actively involved in the delivery of sport for development and peer education programmes as a peer leader.
3. The participants are all female and fall within the African conception of 'youth' and [for this phase of the research] are over 18 years old.

During the scoping visit, I will be trialling a couple of interviews with young men involved in these sport-for-development programmes. The same interview template will be used for these.

### **C.2. How will you recruit your participants and how will they be selected or sampled?**

The sample will be drawn from two Zambian NGOs who are actively involved in the delivery of sport for development and peer education programmes in Lusaka, Zambia. A purposive sampling approach will be utilised enabling the female peer leaders detailed above be identified out and accessed.

The core participants (female youth peer leaders) identified have to meet the criteria outlined in C.1 and will be selected based them fulfilling the last two criteria detailed: Currently actively involved in the delivery of sport for development and peer education programmes as a peer leader and they are female and are aged 18 years or older.

The sample will initially be selected based on my knowledge of the population and the nature of my research aims. However, I will also aim to utilise the guidance and knowledge of this selection to locate and identify wider participants who will also be able to contribute towards forming a breadth of sample.

### **C.3. How will you explain the research to the participants and gain their consent? (If consent will not be obtained, please explain why.)**

The potential participants will be made aware of the nature of the research, the participants' role and what is required of them prior to taking part in the study. More so, the participants will be made aware of the subjects covered and the potentially sensitive topics that may be discussed. This will be done verbally but supported with a written document to ensure clarity is gained (see Participant Information Sheet). Furthermore, the two selected NGOs are already aware of this research and are willing to support this process to ensure the research is correctly translated where language barrier may be an issue. The documents themselves will be in English and consideration will be given during the scoping visit as to whether this limits the scope of the subsequent study when conducted.



Informed consent will be obtained through this approach and will be recorded on a document prior to the data collection process (see Participant Informed Consent). These consent forms will include all of the information regarding the nature of the study and two copies will be provided to each participant; one for the researcher to keep and one for the participants to keep.

C.4. What procedures are in place to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of your participants and their responses?

The names and identity of the participants will be hidden at all times in an attempt to preserve their anonymity and confidentiality. Each participant will be allocated a pseudonym that will be used during the transcribing process, and the interview recordings will be safely stored on the university network to minimise the risk of others coming into contact with the data.

C.5. Are there any circumstances in which there would be a limit or exclusion to the anonymity/confidentiality offered to participants? If so, please explain further.

Given that a PhD thesis is ultimately a publicly available document, I will have to consider the potential implications for both of the Zambian NGOs I am utilising as part of my research as well as the impact this may have upon the participants involved.

At times complete anonymity may not be possible to guarantee, especially when the data collected will include the age, gender and other contextual factors regarding the participant. These details which may refer to their identity, such as socio-economic status, class, geographic location and social relations, are crucial to capture as they contribute towards understanding the participants' lived experiences. Therefore, this risk will be pre-empted and included in the informed consent procedure. Furthermore, the way in which the potential identifiable information is portrayed through the research will be done in such a way that the specific details will be limited (e.g. 'a peer educator from the community of Mtendere' will be used in place of a more specific title such as 'a peer educator from 'Study Location A').

With this in mind, this research will adopt an 'alternative approach' (Kaiser, 2010) to presenting data. Given that this research will contain rich descriptions of the participants and their lives, the alternative approach proposed by Kaiser (2010) will enable accurate accounts of the social world including personal revealing data to be conveyed in an ethical manner. This approach will ensure that the study's participants are better informed of how their data is to be used as well as a greater consideration of the potential audience and subsequent dissemination plans for the research once completed.

C.6. You must attach a **participant information sheet or summary explanation** that will be given to potential participants in your research.

Within this, have you explained (in a way that is accessible to the participants):	Yes	No
a). What the research is about?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b). Why the participants have been chosen to take part and what they will be asked to do?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c). Any potential benefits and/or risks involved in their participation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) What levels of anonymity and confidentiality will apply to the information that they share, and if there are any exceptions to these?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e). What the data will be used for?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f). How the data will be stored securely?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g). How they can withdraw from the project?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h). Who the researchers are, and how they can be contacted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **SECTION D: POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS**

You should think carefully about the risks that participating in your research poses to participants. Be aware that some subjects can be sensitive for participants even if they are not dealing explicitly with a 'sensitive' topic. Please complete this section as fully as possible and continue on additional pages if necessary.

What risks to participants may arise from participating in your research?	How likely is it that these risks will actually happen?	How much harm would be caused if this risk did occur?	What measures are you putting in place to ensure this does not happen (or that if it does, the impact on participants is reduced)?
1. Interviews can be quite sensitive and therefore potential distress may occur as a result of discussing their experiences which have impacted upon them.	Somewhat likely depending on the individual involved.	Possibility of short term mild emotional distress if a participant became upset discussing a subject which was sensitive to them.	<p>Participants will be informed that if at any point during the research process they become uncomfortable with the topic under discussion they can either refuse to answer the question or express their distress which would result in omitting that topic area.</p> <p>Additionally, a number of support systems will be provided. Firstly, a group of staff will be provided through the partner NGOs who will be able to offer support to reduce the emotional distress and impact upon the participant. Additionally, the researcher has the contact details of a couple of NGOs in Zambia that focus on young people and supporting their development and is able to refer any participant across who requires additional support.</p> <p>For those participants who demonstrated a greater susceptibility to emotional distress their contact details will be noted and a follow up will be conducted to ensure they received support if needed.</p>

2. Potential risk of aspects of the participants' anonymity being compromised due to the individual specific details being shared and the close nature of the communities.	Somewhat possible, as despite being anonymised there is a limit to that.	Possibility of short-term mild emotional distress were participants to disclose sensitive information regarding themselves as they may be worried that this information may be tracked back to them or shared beyond the research.	Participants will all be given a pseudonym which will maintain anonymity and ensure interview transcripts aren't easily linked to specific participants. Furthermore, although the names and personal details of each participant will be known and visible to the researcher prior to the interview, the use of a pseudonym will be utilised as soon as the interview is transcribed.
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## SECTION E: POTENTIAL RISKS TO RESEARCHERS

You should think carefully about any hazards or risks to you as a researcher that will be present because of you conducting this research. Please complete this section as fully as possible and continue on additional pages if necessary. Please include an assessment of any health conditions, injuries, allergies or intolerances that may present a risk to you taking part in the proposed research activities (including any related medication used to control these), or any reasonable adjustments that may be required where a disability might otherwise prevent you from participating fully within the research.

### 1. Where will the research be conducted/what will be the research site?

The research will take place in a number of locations in and around Lusaka, Zambia. The interviews will be conducted in a number of communities where sport-for-development and peer education programmes are delivered and will include Mtendere, Kalingalinga, Kamwala, Chipata and Munali.

What hazards or risks to you as a researcher may arise from conducting this research?	How likely is it that these risks will actually happen?	How much harm would be caused if this risk did happen?	What measures are being put in place to ensure this does not happen (or that if it does, the impact on researchers is reduced)?
1. Medical risks such as malaria are increased when conducting research in Zambia.	Low with necessary precaution (See: <a href="http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/zambia.aspx#malaria">http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/zambia.aspx#malaria</a> )	High risk of harm should the research contract malaria whilst in Zambia.	The researcher will be taking malarone, an anti-malaria tablet pre-departure and every day during the trip as prescribed and is highly effective for preventing malaria. If however, the researcher falls sick they will attend CFB Medical Centre in Lusaka for treatment. Additionally, medical insurance will be provided through the university insurance scheme.
2. Conducting research as a lone interviewer carries risks for the researcher.	Medium	Possibility of low harm but also possibility of serious harm if the researcher does not remain vigilant. Researcher will be taking on the advice of the Foreign Office when travelling to Zambia to ensure her safety and security as much as	Undertaking research within local communities in Zambia carry risks as a white western female operating in a predominantly black community. These risks can include hostility from community members, verbal abuse and apprehension. To ensure these risks are reduced, staff from both of the Zambian NGOs will be consulted and notified of

		possible (See: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/zambia/safety-and-security">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/zambia/safety-and-security</a> ).	<p>my intended visits and my initial visits to communities will be undertaken in the company of others.</p> <p>The researcher will also use her prior knowledge and experience of the local communities to become familiar with her surroundings initially before any research is conducted. This will ensure the researcher becomes a recognisable figure in the public areas to reduce any potential hostility and verbal abuse she may face.</p> <p>Furthermore, the researcher will be staying in a safe and secure house with some Zambian friends and colleagues and therefore will very rarely be travelling or staying alone.</p>
3. Potential for hostility or aggression from the participants.	Low	Low levels of harm.	The research is being guided by an interview guide and the use of semi-structured interviews allows the power to alter and change the topics under discussion should the participant become aggressive, distressed or show hostility towards a particular topic.
4. Stressors such as cultural differences and language barriers.	Low	Low levels of harm as these cultural differences and language barriers are already known to the researcher and she is prepared for them. She has previous experience of facing them.	<p>The researcher has previously spent 6 months living in Lusaka and is familiar with the cultural differences and language barriers she will face. She has strong links to the communities being researched, enjoying a positive rapport with the local people. The researcher will utilise the support of the local NGOs during the first few days of her visit to overcome any initial barriers or differences she may encounter.</p> <p>Additionally, when out conducting research in the field the researcher will use her knowledge and previous friendships she has built with community leaders to support any barriers she may face. These individuals will be able to provide translation for any language barriers faced.</p>

5. Challenges when conducting research in the Zambian climate which differs greatly from the UK.	Medium	Medium possibility of short-term health risks such a sun stroke, dehydration and sun burn due to sun exposure.	The researcher will be using sun protection cream recommended for the Zambian forecasted weather and will avoid being out in the sun during the middle of the day. The researcher will also ensure that she consumes water regularly to stay hydrated. If at any point the researcher feels unwell when out conducting research, she will seek the nearest shelter and remove herself from the sunlight for a period of time until she feels better. Should this persist, she will stop the data collection for that day and head home to protect herself.
6. Public Transport and traffic	Low	Possibility of high levels of harm caused should the researcher be involved in a public transport or traffic accident.	The researcher is familiar with the public transport routes of Lusaka and will ensure she only uses it between the hours of daylight – 6am and 6pm. Should there be occasions when she is in the field until beyond this time, she will utilise the use of a government recognised taxi (blue) to travel to and from her place of residence to ensure safety.
7. Possibility of theft or assault due to presence of being white in a predominantly black community.	Low	There is a possibility of high levels of harm should this happen. Traditionally Europeans are seen to be people of wealth and status within a developing community and therefore there may be the impression that the researcher is an affluent person.	The researcher will ensure she travels around during daylight and remains in public areas where possible. When travelling the researcher will not carry large amounts of money or have expensive gadgets such as iPhones or cameras on show. She will purchase a local phone with a Zambia sim card on arrival and will ensure everyone she is working with is aware of this number to contact her. The Foreign Office indicates that security risks increase after dark especially in tourist areas and city centres (see: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/zambia/safety-and-security">https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/zambia/safety-and-security</a> ) and therefore the researcher will be acting on this advice.

			Furthermore, the researcher will ensure that the two NGOs she is working with know her daily movements and schedule and can be made aware of a problem should she not be in a particular place at a particular time as planned.
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## SECTION F: OTHER APPROVALS

	Yes, document attached	Yes, documents to follow	No
a). Does the research require ethical approval from the NHS or a Social Services Authority? If so, please attach a copy of the draft form that you intend to submit, together with any accompanying documentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b). Might the proposed research meet the definition of a <i>clinical trial</i> ? (If yes, a copy of this form must be sent to the University's Insurance Officer, Tel. 0191 334 9266, for approval, and evidence of approval must be attached before the project can start).	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c). Does the research involve working data, staff or offenders connected with the National Offender Management Service? If so, please see the guidance at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/research">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about/research</a> and submit a copy of your proposed application to the NOMS Integrated Application System with your form.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d). Does the project involve activities that may take place within Colleges of Durham University, including recruitment of participants via associated networks (e.g. social media)? (If so, approval from the Head of the College/s concerned will be required after SASS approval has been granted – see guidance notes for further details)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e). Will you be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (criminal records) check to undertake the research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) I confirm that travel approval has or will be sought via the online approval system at <a href="http://apps.dur.ac.uk/travel.forms">http://apps.dur.ac.uk/travel.forms</a> for all trips during this research which meet the following criteria:  For Students travelling away from the University, this applies where travel is not to their home and involves an overnight stay.  For Staff travelling away from the University, this applies only when travelling to an overseas destination.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No <input type="checkbox"/>

## SECTION G: SUBMISSION CHECKLIST AND SIGNATURES

When submitting your ethics application, you should also submit supporting documentation as follows:

Supporting Documents	Included (tick)
Fully Completed Research Ethics and Risk Assessment Form	✓
Interview Guide (if using interviews)	✓
Focus Group Topic Guide (if using focus groups)	
Questionnaire (if using questionnaires)	
Participant Information Sheet or Equivalent	✓
Consent Form (if appropriate)	✓
<i>For students only:</i> Written/email confirmation from all agencies involved that they agree to participate, also stating whether they require a DBS check. If confirmation is not yet available, please attach a copy of the letter that you propose to send to request this; proof of organisational consent must be forwarded to your Programme Secretary before any data is collected.	

Please indicate the reason if any documents cannot be included at this stage:

(Please note that any ethics applications submitted without sufficient supporting documentation will not be able to be assessed.)

### **Signatures**

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Signature (PGR students only):

Date:

**Please keep a copy of your approved ethics application for your records.**

**If you decide to change your research significantly after receiving ethics approval, you must submit a revised ethics form along with updated supporting documentation before you can implement these changes.**

## **PART F: OUTCOME OF THE APPLICATION**

<u>Reject</u> The application is incomplete and/or cannot be assessed in its current format. Please complete the application fully.	
<u>Revise and Resubmit</u> The application cannot be approved in its current format. Please revise the application as per the comments below. Please complete the application fully.	
<u>Approved, with Set Date for Review</u> The application is approved, and you may begin data collection.  A date for further review of the project as it develops has been set to take place on: _____  The anticipated nominated reviewer will be: _____	
<u>Approved</u> The application is approved, and you may begin data collection.	X

### Comments:

I approve this Ethics and Risk Assessment application and I have no conflict of interest to declare.

First Reviewer's Signature:



First Reviewer's Name: Dr Martin Roderick

First Reviewer's Role: PGR Director

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017

If applicable:

I approve this Ethics and Risk Assessment application and I have no conflict of interest to declare.

Second Reviewer's Signature:

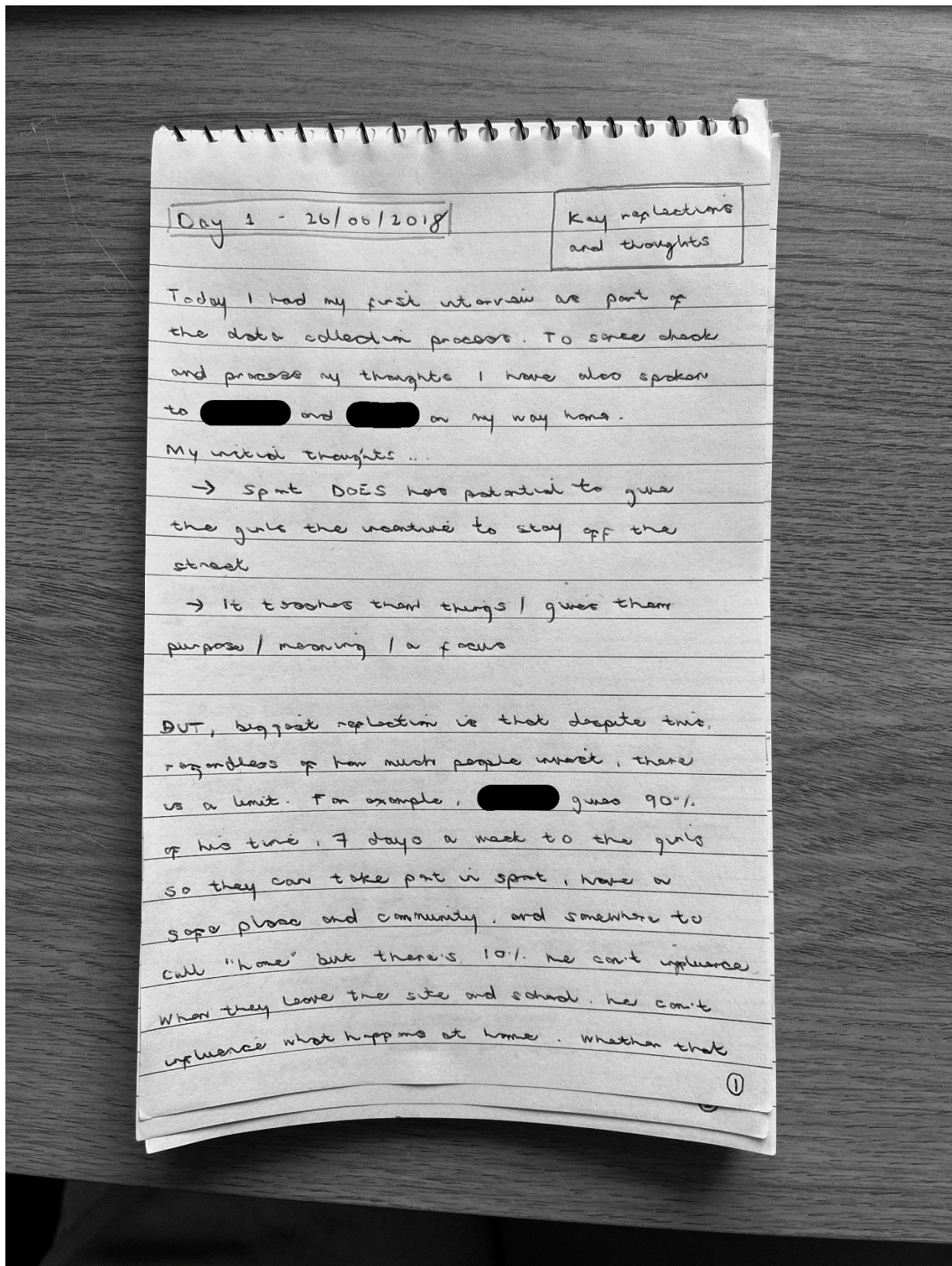


Second Reviewer's Name: Will Craige

Second Reviewer's Role: Ethics Committee Member

Date: 19/06/2017

## Appendix J: Ethnographic Diary Extract



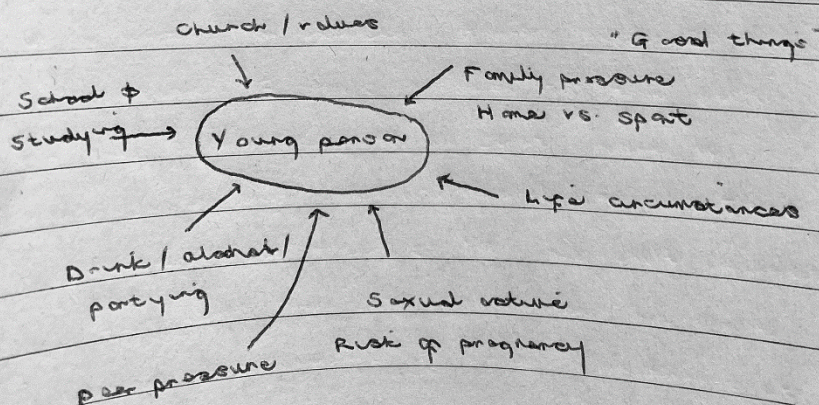


be family, friends, wider community, that influence is huge and may possibly be stronger than the influence of their time spent at the sports ground.

So, sport / SPD = good BUT the support network at home, family life and set up needs to reinforce & support the messages coming out of the programmes.

### Influences:

- Family, friends, church / religion
- wider network & exposure
- Money / economic needs (works?)
- Key messages from SPD - Does it align w/ broader life / exposure?



(2)



### Example:

- Spent ↑ % of time at
- Active peer leader
- "Role model" / inspiration
- High aspirations and desire to do well

### Change in circumstances

- Parents left her to fend for herself
- Stand on her own two feet
- Drawn into other things
- Demand on time, need to make ££



### Outcomes

- Prognosis
- Young mother
- Drop out of school
- No longer peer leader

### How do we get them here

- Low on community
- Use lessons from SFD
- Engage in "good things" & make better choices

? Influences: Internal vs External

? Broader education piece, less in isolation

? How much influence does SFD have longer term

(3)

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