# Preparing for Independence:
## Narratives of Orphans Leaving Institutional Care in Mozambique



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO                          Aged/Aging Out

CL                          Care Leaver

CEO                         Chief Executive Officer

CCI                         ChildCare Institution

KI                          Key Informant

NGO                         Non-Government Organization

OVC                         Orphan and Vulnerable Children

OVY                  Orphan and Vulnerable Youth/Young People

PAR                         Participatory-Action Research

PO                          Participant Observation

UN                          United Nations

UNICEF                      United Nations Children's Fund

UNHDI                       United Nations Human Development Index

WDI                         World Development Indicators

YA                          Young Africa

*OVC's are 17 years and below.  OVY's are generally considered 18-25 years of age, though some literature recognize them based on the United Nations youth definition of 15-24 years.*

# Chapter I: Introduction

*If all we are doing is rescuing children to feed, water and educate them until they are eighteen so they can end up with survival choices as prostitutes or criminals as adults, then something is seriously flawed with our vision.*

*Tom Davis, former CEO of Children's HopeChest (orphan-focused NGO)*

Consider the following dialogue:

> **Santos:** *I wish I could go back to my childhood.*
>
> **Melinda:** *But Santos, why would you want to go back there?? You lived in an orphanage with 500 other children and no parents. There wasn't anyone to even tuck you in at night. Your childhood doesn't seem like something dreams are made of.*
>
> **Santos:** *Mana Melinda, when I was a child, I didn't have to worry. Everything was taken care of at the orphanage and I could play and be carefree. Even though I was an orphan, I was happy. My future doesn't look happy as an adult. I don't know how I will survive. I don't have a job, money for food, or any ability to finish my education.*

'Santos' is one of an estimated 1.6 million orphans in Mozambique's population of 25 million (UNICEF, 2014). The dire conditions he faces is partially reflective of what faces the citizens at large. The United Nations Human Development Index, places Mozambique as 185 out of 187 countries and among the four countries on the African continent with the highest incidence of poverty in the world, only ahead of Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNDP 2013). With an overall unemployment rate of 27%, whether you are an orphan or not, life in Mozambique is not easy for most.

It's hard to be a young person in Mozambique," says Rui Pedro Cossa, a 24-year-old geography student at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. "Normally in youth, you're supposed to gain experience for the future," he says. "But here you have more problems than opportunities. There's no way to overcome the obstacles" (UNFPA, 2011).

Certainly though, for those who are orphans, the already precarious position most Mozambicans find themselves in becomes infinitely more dangerous in the daily fight for survival. Aging Out (AO) orphans often experience the effects of political, economic, and social crises within their countries more severely than adults, and many lack the adequate institutional support to address their special needs. UNICEF

documents that amongst AO orphans between the age of 14 and 18, 20% will commit suicide within a year of leaving (Hope International, 2013).

It is for these reasons and more that I have approached this topic. I understand that Jesus seemed attracted to the discarded and the marginalized, and the AO population certainly fits that definition. (Note: According to the United Nations, the definition of an orphan is anyone that loses one parent, either through death or abandonment (UN, 2011).)

I have been involved in orphan care ministries for more than two decades, and during that time, I have become aware of a blindspot in its ranks. In fact, a simple internet search highlights the fact that Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC's) are often the focus of attention, whereas Orphan and Vulnerable Youth (OVY's ) get much rarer consideration. Great effort and media concentration is given to attending to the needs of young orphans, but once they approach adulthood, they are often abandoned once again. The results are tragic, as recorded by this AO orphan care advocate:

> *Most of the kids were forced to leave the orphanage at fifteen to sixteen years of age. 15% of those kids would end up committing suicide in two years, 70% of the girls would end up as prostitutes and 80% of the boys would end up on the streets or in jail* (Bond, 2012).



It is realities such as these that persuasively drew me into the direction of this research study.

## Research Topic and Question

Formulating a single research question into a clear and concise sentence can be compared to squeezing a hippopotamus into a pint-sized flask, all the while attempting to keep it alive and true to form.  Notwithstanding the difficulty, and proceeding with an understanding of the complexity of the task, here is the central question that emerged from my research:

> ***What measures are Christian Orphan Care providers in Mozambique using to equip aging out recipients for life outside their institution?***

The two variables in this relationship are the Christian Orphan Care provider and the aged out orphan.  I will be examining this relationship and its relevance to the question primarily through the lenses of the orphans, especially those who recently transitioned from these Christian institutions to independent living.

I have selected this target group as it is an under-researched population, particularly in Mozambique.  The research may be applicable to a wider context of aged out orphans in the developing world, but there may be some unique factors that set apart the constraints effecting Mozambican OVY's.

Also, selecting Christian orphan care providers as opposed to childcare institutions in general narrowed the focus considerably.  The variable is still easily researchable though, as historically, Christians have been on the forefront of orphan care efforts due to the biblical definition of 'pure religion' involving caring for orphans in their distress (James 1:27).

## Variables

In terms of dependent versus independent variables, the independent agents in my research are the Christian orphan care providers, while the dependent agents are the aging and aged out orphans.  This is because this research study is designed to understand what actions of the providers are effecting the viability of the aging out population.  This is seen by exploring the measures the Christian orphan care providers are using to equip the AO orphans for life outside their gates.

There are a number of other variables that seem to consistently arise when one is looking at the crisis of care and viability off AO orphans.  These elements are indicative of larger-scale national problems that are not exclusive to the AO population. Nonetheless, they are crucial components that must be acknowledged, examined and dealt with if there is to be better outcomes in the future amongst these marginalized youth. These factors will be touched upon here, but examined in more depth in the literature review of chapter two.
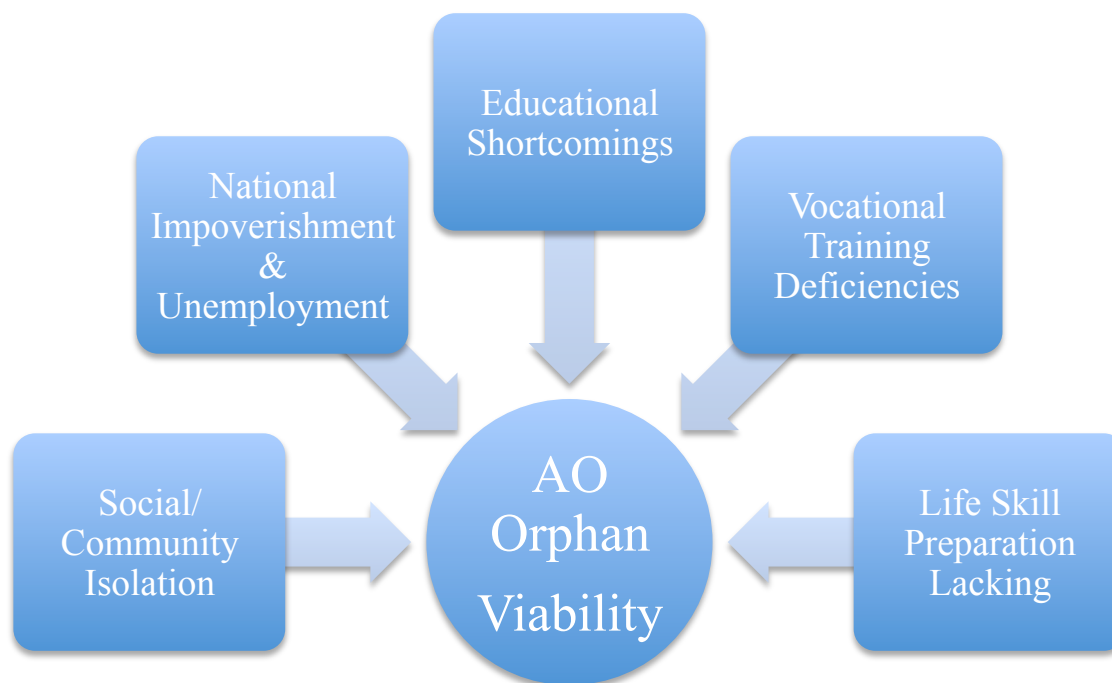
**National Impoverishment and Unemployment**

Presently, 90% of the people old enough to be employed in the nation are earning less than $2 a day (World Bank, 2015). Furthermore, three out of four of them are earning less than $1.25 a day.

There are 370,000 youth who enter the labor market yearly, but the private sector is only creating 18,000 jobs for them - a ratio of one job per 20 entrants ("Few Jobs," 2015).

### Education
*"If young people are not equipped today with the education, skill and guided exposure necessary for the accomplishment of tomorrow's challenges, a better tomorrow will die prematurely in our untrained hands"* (Morakinyo,2011).

Empirical evidence seems to indicate a high proportion of aged out orphans have to drop out of school.  However, the lack of accessible and verified data on out-of-school youth education remains a hindrance in attempts to provide adequate educational services to this disadvantaged group (Luis, 2012, p 28).

There is some evidence in sub-Sahara Africa of OVY's gaining access to education and job training opportunities through a Youth Scholars program (Breman, 2013), but such programs are few and far between.

**Vocational**

*"There should be more vocational training courses available for young people, who like me completed grade 12 but can't afford to continue with tertiary education"* (Plan International Mozambique, 2015).
.
The basic educational standards in the nation are notoriously deficient, so young people have been crying out for more vocational training courses and funding to start self-employment.  Specific training in agriculture, fishing and blacksmith skills have been requested by youth looking for employment.  There is a desire for more internships in order to acquire practical skills for life **(**Plan International Mozambique, 2015).

The Young Africa vocational training model for aging out orphans has proven to be wildly successful in some of the most economically harsh climates of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, but it needs to be expanded if it is to make any significant dent on improving the viability of this population (Beurskens, et al.., 2013).

**Social/Community**

One consistent theme from comprehensive assessments on the needs of Africa's youth is that they do not have access to the life skills training they need to make it in the world (Breman, 2015).  International research evidence suggests young people aging out of care are among the most excluded groups of young people in society (Stein, 2006, p 423).   A strong attachment to at least one adult was associated with good outcomes, but many orphans who age out feel adrift as prior to leaving, they did not know anyone outside their orphanage walls

**Personal/Psychosocial**
*"We needed love like we needed bread"* (Bell, 2014)

For the AO orphan, internal, rather than external constraints may be the binding factor.  Many are faced with ongoing challenges that force them to mature more quickly than their other peers (Mmusi,2014).  Those that experience abrupt exits from their former care environment have the most difficult adjustments.

## Purpose of Research/Community Relevance

As indicated in the previous section, many countries in southern Africa are facing a critical and growing challenge – how to provide an education that meets the socio-economic needs of their bulging youth populations (Luis, 2012, p 34).  "No one wants to be a beggar in life" declares an impoverished youth in the documentary film, Poverty, Inc., and that seems to confirm the cries of the youth here for employment.

In Mozambique, the growing unemployed youth population is steadily rising.  This is a matter of concern for the government and society in general.  About 46 percent of the population is 14 years old or younger. The median age is 16.8 years (Luis, 2012, p 5).  AO orphans who are ill-equipped to make it in the world increase the economic and social burden on society, so addressing their needs will result in benefits for the community.  Notwithstanding the fact that how one treats the weakest members of its society often reflects the strength of the spiritual health and socioeconomic capital in a community as well.

At present, the voices of the experts are pointing out that we must address the education and employment deficiencies that are facing our youth: "The inadequacy of the current dispensation does not bode well for youth and adults who are neither employed nor enrolled in any education or training programme. …The complexity of their needs is also on a scale that dwarfs the relatively scant resources and investment allocated to meet them (Luis, 2012, p 28).   Perhaps nowhere is this more true than for AO orphans entering the work force unskilled and without reliable prospects for work.

This research is timely, for at a time when youth unemployment on the African continent is rapidly rising and giving way to fear and concern of violence, the findings from this project could prove to be instructive in diminishing the ranks of the unemployed.  Beyond that, it will serve to increase the number of healthy productive members in the community.

The research also serves as a springboard for the emerging conversations in church and mission circles regarding their growing awareness of a "black hole in missions" when it comes to serving the AO orphan population. Some of the NGO's and agencies I will be partnering with have expressed to me their interest in these findings.

# Theological Framework

*There is no greater danger than ignorance in action.* (Goethe)

## Transformational Conversations

The Christian faith is a contextualized faith. There is no such thing as a universal or ahistorical expression. Jesus didn't come to earth as a generalized human being; he came as a particular human with a particular agenda. God in human form is evidence that being proximate is part of His plan.  It allows for His redemptive work to be seen and known.

This transformational conversation approach uncovers an understanding of theology that is of utmost relevance to aging out orphans.  After all, such a population is more likely to be delivered biblical platitudes of the type James cautions against:  "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" (James 2:15,16).

Aging out orphans need to interact with a Jesus with skin on, rather than have words spoken at them.  Mother Teresa's words still hold true, "Today it is fashionable to talk about the poor. Unfortunately, it is not fashionable to talk with them." The AO marginalized population needs include engaging in conversations that will remind them of their immeasurable value as human beings created in the image of God.  The Incarnation is the infinite prototype of missional activity. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn. 1:14).   The Message Version translates the passage: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood."

This segues us into a closer examination of transformational conversations.  This method of enquiry is like Joseph's technicolor garment (Genesis 37:3):  it has many sides and parts to it.  It is one coat, but it is composed of numerous threads.  Transformational conversations thread themselves into multiple disciplines, though they are identified by other names in various venues.  So in Education or Development theory, it would be called *Participatory-Action Research (PAR),* in Business research, *Case Study Methodology*, and in Theology, it is often identified as *Grounded Research* (Grigg*, 2009)*.

Grounded Theological Research accounts for theological reflection derived from real life issues.  A few of the theological themes to consider when studying the viability of life beyond institutions for AO orphans, are those that focus on orphan care and 'completing the task,' rather than merely starting or dabbling in it.  These biblical themes help illuminate the understanding that caring for orphans does not suddenly stop when they turn 17 or18.  James 1:27 is clear, we are called to care for orphans in

their distress, and that is not confined to a particular age.  2 Corinthians 8:11 emphasizes the value of finishing what God instructs us in:  "But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability." John 17:4 continues on with this theme, noting that the reason Jesus identified that he had brought glory to God was absolutely tied into the recognition that He could truthfully say "I have finished the work you gave me to do."

Ultimately, we must come to understand God's image as redeemer, defender, provider, and father, and promote the cause of those who have little or no voice, such as AO orphans.
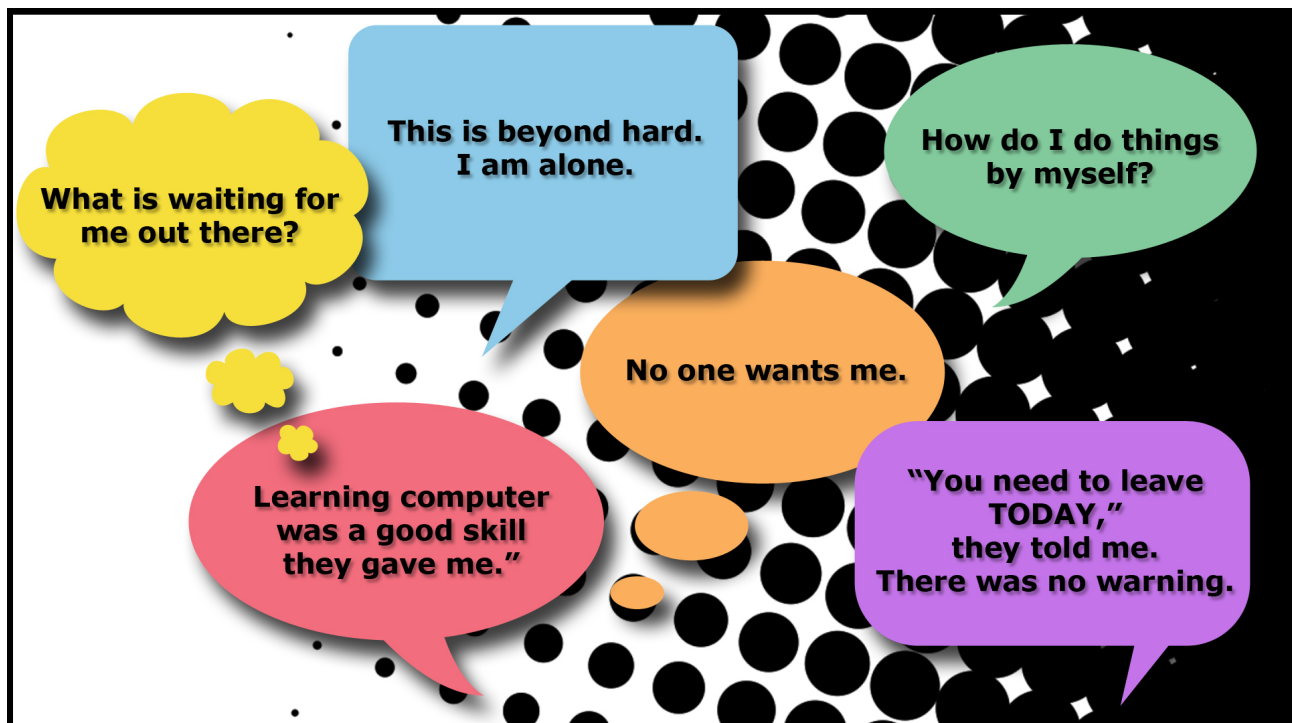


## Assumptions or Presuppositions

Since I am the primary tool for data collection, it is important to be aware of some of my beliefs and values, as with anyone, they could bias my results.  Some of my presuppositions are clearly visible in the section prior to this one that provided indications of my theological perspective.

One of my potential research biases to be aware of is that in the last twenty years I have been involved in orphan care ministries.  As a result, I don't enter into this study bereft of emotion or intention. The statements in the 'multiple-bubble' figure above are all words I've heard AO orphans speak.  I do not enter into this research with a 'blank slate.

I have seen orphans struggle as they make the transition to adulthood, so one of the reasons for this study is to discover if these are isolated cases, or they are indicative of a much more widespread problem.  I am hoping this first cycle of enquiry will generate additional questions and insights that lead to better long-term outcomes for this population.  Some would say I have "skin in the game," and considering the theological reflections in the previous section, that would be an indication that my theology is lived, not merely spoken. That bias and its intersection with this research is one I am willing to acknowledge and note for others to determine if its skews the study's results.

## Population and Locations

The primary population I will be gathering information from are orphans who have left a number of different Christian-based orphan care institutions in Mozambique.  I also plan on conducting some KI interviews with distinctive providers of orphan care.  Besides interviewing a cross-section of individuals in the capital city region of Maputo, I will also be conducting interviews with orphans in Beira, near the Central Coast.  If grant money becomes available, I plan on flying to Pemba in the northernmost region of the country, where I will interview additional aged out OVY's and those who have been involved with caring for them both pre and post transition time.  In this manner I hope to acquire information regarding the experiences of this population across a wide geographic swath, and one that allows for the variable nature of different institutional missions.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

*"We have some independent research centres, unconnected with the University; we have civil society organizations of various sorts, but in terms of academia and universities, there is very little."*     Mozambican Economist João Mosca

## Introduction

Contextually, it must be understood that documentation (adequate data and research) of variable issues in Mozambique are grievously lacking. This no doubt relates to a history of civil war, impoverishment, disease and other life-threatening conditions that have served to keep a focus on survival needs, rather then education, development and research.  Mozambique is entering a new era of development due to 1) a relatively stable political situation since the war, 2) recent discoveries of oil, gas and mineral deposits, and 3) the increasing interests of foreign governments and NGO's (Smith, 2012).   As a result of this changing reality, there is a growing body of national research being deposited in libraries and government offices, but the overall condition is still deficient and dearth (Heerde, Hemphill, Broderick & Florent, 2012; Meyers, 2008).

This dismal state of affairs was documented by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) in 2011 when they conducted their own research study in Mozambique. OSISA reported, "There is a serious lack of accurate and coherent data on youth and adult education in Mozambique. …the Education for All report (World Education Forum, 2000) noted that: 'the lack of an adequate statistic data collection  system of the sector contributes to the lack of qualitative information regarding on Adult Education and Literacy'"(Luis, 2012, p 24).

Though the above example focuses on education, it reflects a reality that all researchers in Mozambique face.  One cannot dismiss the relevance of a 16 year long civil war  (1976-1992) in which 50% of the nations educational institutions were destroyed. The significance of this is visible on the national flag, where an AK-47 weapon is prominently displayed (Jacob and Benzkofer, 2015).)

Thus, it is not surprising that my literature review needs to travel outside the boundaries of Mozambique.  Though I have been able to find some scholarly articles confined to this region, there are not enough of them dealing with my focus in research, so I have included academic articles from other regions of the continent.

And because I am exploring the issue of transitional care of AO orphans, I have also examined research on this subject from other areas of the world as well.  For the most part I have stuck to research related to developing world nations as many of the challenges Mozambicans aging out of their institutions face relate to that construct. That being noted, it doesn't mean I overlooked *all* developed world research.  In order

to explore what categories there might be potential overlap in, I did examine some scholarly studies from Scotland, America, Ireland and a few other developed nations.

The focus of my literature review is being bracketed to capture five predominant categories that appear to have significant relevance to my research focus.  The relationships between these concepts and my primary research question is strong, and examining them helps fill in some gaps regarding why the AO orphan population faces the challenges it does.  It is a holistic approach, and moves from an initial broad canvas looking at God and spirituality, to a narrower focus of the individual.

The data collection method that proves to be most predominant in researching this population are qualitative one-to-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups.   I previously considered using focus groups, as they certainly would have reduced the time of one-to-one interviews, but the more I studied the purpose of focus groups, the more convinced I became that they didn't naturally lend themselves to my particular research.  I don't doubt they would yield some useful data, but I think the individual interviews allow a person to feel more at ease and less endangered by expressing an opinion that might run contrary to other's in the group.

Some researchers have relied on secondary data sources for the bulk of their data, but I do not believe that is an appropriate path for me to follow as I feel the primary research gap in this nation needs to be reduced.  I hope my small contribution is a step in the right direction.  I don't have illusions that it will be significant enough in scope to stimulate great advances, but I do pray it creates a hunger for further enquiry, and that ultimately my primary focus of aged out orphans will see positive changes coming into their midst.

**The Wide Lens**

Starting with a broad perspective then, I examined some of the overlap that exists between the aging out population and impoverishment.  As mentioned in my chapter one Introduction, poverty is widespread in Mozambique, so there is no surprise in finding a great majority of aging out orphans in the ranks of the extremely poor. When thinking about the poor, Corbett and Fikkert (2009) wisely advise we remember:

> *"Like all human beings, poor people have a range of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.  Hence, appropriate interventions, for poor people include such diverse sectors as economic development, health, education, agriculture, spiritual formation, etc."*

Thus, one of the first places to start in examining AO orphan viability outside orphanage walls, is to look at the influence one's spiritual health has on the opportunity to flourish and thrive.

## 1. Spiritual Health

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is considered one of the most challenging periods of human development. For orphans experiencing the transition from a supportive institutional environment to an isolating independent environment, the shock can be even greater.

One way the transitional period is navigated with greater ease by some is when the AO orphan has a relationship with God and feels spiritually supported. Otherwise, they experience abandonment all over again. For those who have been brought up in Christian orphan care facilities, they may find their faith wavering when they no longer have the 'props' that have allowed them to engage in 'worship' and 'fellowship' without any effort on their own part.

Some AO orphans flounder in their faith when leaving their institution, just like some American teenagers do when they leave home for college. There is not much literature documenting the positive and negative effects Christian care facilities might be responsible for in the lives of orphans leaving their institutions in Mozambique. ( I hope my findings can 'fill the gap' and contribute to building that baseline up. )

## 2. Employment Opportunities

Africa has the youngest population in the world, with some 200 million people between the ages of 15- and 24-years-old. This number is estimated to double by 2045. The trend offers a reservoir of young human capital that can be channeled toward the productive sectors of the continent's economy. However, African countries have yet to create sufficient employment opportunities for this group.

Young people make up 60 percent of Africa's unemployed, and youth unemployment rates are double those of adult unemployment in most African countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that there were 73 million jobs created in Africa between 2000 and 2008 but that only 16 million were for people between 15 and 24-years-old. As a result, many young Africans find themselves unemployed or underemployed in informal, low productivity jobs, with few opportunities for further development.

Young Africa, a phenomenal program that includes reaching out to aging out orphans, to date, has seen 26,000 youth graduate from their facilities in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. About 83 percent of the graduates in Mozambique have managed to secure employment either in the formal sector or through self-employment.

### 3. Educational Opportunities

Success in higher education has been correlated with greater earning potential, improved self-worth, and confidence  (Casey, 2008).  Too often when an orphan has to leave their CCI, their education has to cease as well.

Institutional living itself seems to contribute to decreased outputs.  Studies in the USA have suggested young people in institutional care lag at least half a school year behind demographically to similar students (Smithgall et al, 2004: 14).

Due to the extensive oil, gas and mineral deposits discovered in this nation in the last ten years, there has been a whirlwind of development activity, and an influx of trained foreigners taking jobs that could have gone to Mozambicans if they were better educated.

### 4.  Family/Social/Community Health

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, "The family is the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth, well-being and protection of children, but for those who are orphans, challenges emerge in becoming healthy productive members of a community who flourish and thrive, rather than wither and die" (1989).

Every young person deserves to live in a supportive protective nurturing and caring environment that promotes their full potential, but for AO orphans, many are being denied this as they are kicked out or sent out from their orphanages.  Data from Eastern Europe, reveals less than 50% of the orphan population will live to see their 20th birthday (Bond, 2012).   But the data is scarce for Africa in general, and Mozambique in particular.

Literature reviews reveal that the best practice approach should primarily be directed towards enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of close family members when parental care is unavailable due to death, disease, or abandonment  (Williamson & Greenberg, 2010).  Community-based care options are preferable to institutions.  Sometimes though, when family and community options have been tapped, institutional care steps in to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.  Christian care institutions are especially common. Unfortunately, with many CCI's, there is a lack of vision or intention in regards to equipping these vulnerable young people for life outside their walls.

When thinking of what the solutions to this crisis might be, it becomes clear that to simply think of orphans in isolation will not solve the challenges.  Celestin Musekura, CEO and founder of African Leadership and Reconciliation Ministry claims "Christians

should not be talking about helping anyone," he said. "We should be talking about mutually giving to each other so we can grow."  This is a community-based care perspective, and is worth pursuing in the field of AO orphan care.

In reviewing the literature, it becomes apparent that what is needed are efforts that incorporate churches, NGO's, businesses, government agencies, educators and community members.  Only then can we develop the whole community, which is truly the best solution for AO orphans, *and* the community.

Young Africa is one such example that actually does successfully network with churches, NGO's, businesses, government agencies, educators and community members (Beurskens et al.., 2013)!  Their holistic integrated approach to development proves itself more effective than singularly-focused efforts, and YA's work with aging out orphans, in particular, is very successful in an arena that is too often marked with failure.

YA founder Beurskens explains, "It is the whole package that allows the young person to stand stronger in his/her own shoes.

### Personal/Psychosocial
*"We needed love like we needed bread"* (Bell, 2014).

For aging out orphans, internal, rather than external constraints may be the binding factor.  When AO orphans define their impoverished condition, they do so primarily in psychological and social terms.  They talk about "shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation and voicelessness (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009).  What matters is not just facts, but people's *perceptions* of these facts (2009).

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, compared with children from the same socioeconomic background, children in care have much higher rates of serious emotional and behavioral problems, chronic physical disabilities, birth defects, and developmental delays (2007).  Thus, by the time an orphan 'graduates' from their institution, they may be doing so with a flunking grade in 'Community Viability.'

And once the orphan enters that transitional space between institutional and independent living, studies from my literature review reveal that they face ongoing challenges that force them to mature more quickly than their other peers (Mmusi, 2014).  And because of how abrupt that transition time is, AO orphans are often denied the psychological opportunity to deal with those changes over time — which is how most young people are able to deal with problems and challenges (Stein, 2005). As a result, many young people leaving care have very poor life chances compared to their peers.

The best outcomes appear to come from continuum of care efforts that allow AO orphans to transition from dependence to independence in a gradual and flexible rate, rather than an accelerated one (Geenan & Powers, 2007, p 1086).  Care leavers (another term for aging out) cannot reasonably be expected to attain instant adulthood without family or community assistance . Virtually no one can handle suddenly having to successfully attain independent housing, leave school, move into further education, training or employment, and in some cases become a parent, all at the same time.  These are the sorts of tasks that most youth can undertake sequentially, but AO orphans aren't given that luxury.  Regardless, each individual has unique and different requirements for transitioning from dependence to independence.

Once again, Young Africa addresses the need of the individual at this level as well. "We run a life skills training program, which is mainstreamed into the curriculum and includes lessons in personal empowerment, [e.g.] how to stand up for civic and human rights, build self-confidence, and develop leadership skills" says Beurskens (2013).  She believes their skills of heart and mind' training helps nurture the social and emotional skills of these individuals, and ultimately produces young and successful changemakers (2013).

## Conclusion

The literature review favors holistic approaches to AO orphan transitions that involve adult support and gradual movement.  The challenges are many, including financial instability, poor educational/vocational opportunities and outcomes, lack of safe and affordable housing and missing life skills (Medicine) & Council), 2013).  Results of one aging out study suggested that successes among this population were hardwon and tenuous (Gonzalez, 2014) .

Though some like to favor 'resilience' as a central organizing concept, a review of the literature on self-esteem, single-issue movements, although popular, usually oversimplify complex associations (Elmer, 2001). Resilience theory as it relates to this subject of study is somewhat controversial.  Some say it places the blame on those who already have been marginalized, and that it is not only too simplistic to explain a complex phenomenon, but it is harmful to those it seeks to help (Chadburn, 2015)..

The problems AO orphans face are multi-faceted, and Christian orphan care institutions would do well to approach the topic with the respect, attention and understanding it deserves.  Too often, considering the plight of an orphan's transitional journey from institutional living to independence is approached as an afterthought.  But the literature review reveals that to take such an approach would be a grave oversight, and is undertaken at the peril of the OVY's actual survival. Suicide rates of AO orphans are a disgrace to humanity, and especially those institutions designed to help them in the first place.

As orphan care advocate Tom Davis said to his board and staff members, and I opened up this paper with, our vision is marred if we drop the ball on orphan care when they reach the age of 17 or 18 years old and abandon them to choices of prostitution and crime. One published paper likened the experience to having a football team go to a championship game and play the first half brilliantly, but then fail to come out during the 2nd half which actually determines the outcome of the game (Bedford, p 9, 2012)!

What has also become clear in looking though these other published reports is that there is clearly a need for additional research to produce more verifiable data and understanding. There is a particular gap in connecting the effects of the variable relationships between Christian orphan caregivers and AO orphans, especially in Mozambique.
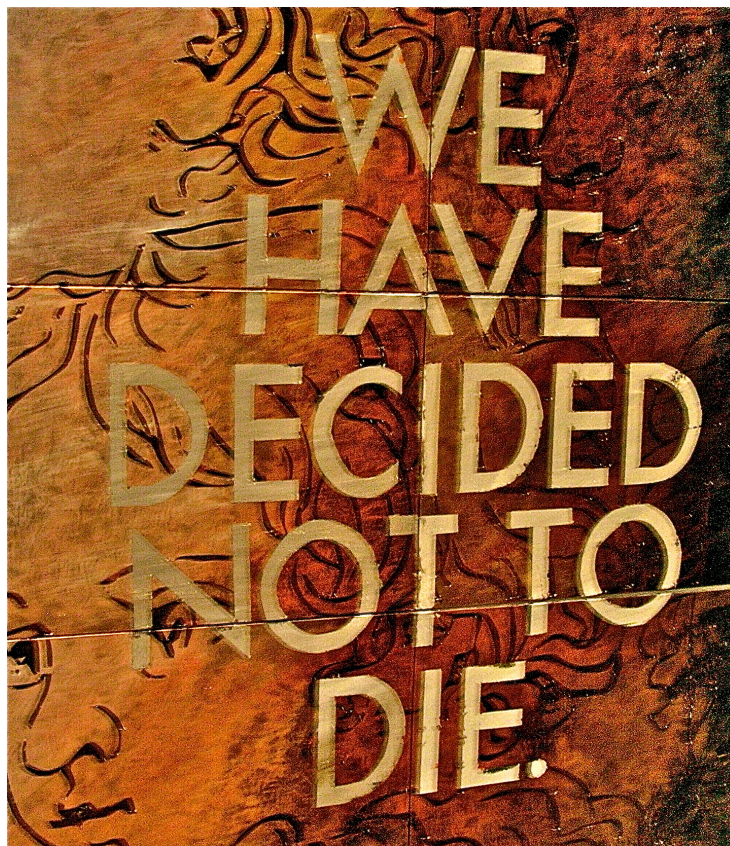
# Chapter 3: Methodology

*The knowledge of the world is only to be acquired in the world, and not in a closet.*
Lord Philip Dormer Stanhope Chesterfield

## Methods

Slimbach (2013) notes: "Fieldwork involves the study of human beings in social interaction, something that is notoriously lacking in fixed rules."  As a consequence, ethnographic research is both fraught with great potential and equal dangers.

Since my subject of study lends itself most readily to that of a qualitative nature, I'll proceed with appropriate caution, but also with optimistic expectation.  I do so because this type of research is often cited as a means to "give voice to the voiceless" and considered vital in examining the lives of individuals who have been traditionally underrepresented and marginalized (Gross, 2013, p 3).  Since AO orphans clearly fall into this category, I believe the potentially positive outcomes of pursuing qualitative research outweigh whatever dangers also lurk in its midst.  That being said, it should be duly noted that some of my research methods will involve quantitative data gathering as well, but only a small minority.

Since qualitative research is most often interested in conducting in-depth studies of smaller populations and groups, it is suitable for my study question. Though the subsequent data may not be able to be applied across the board, I expect the smaller sample/phenomenon being studied will produce a thicker truth with multiple layers of meaning and application.  I anticipate these layers being part of the transformational conversations that will emerge.

The particular data collection methods I propose to utilize include secondary research gathering through the use of web-based scholarly searches and library visits, Participant Observation (PO), one-to-one semi-structured interviews with approximately 20-25 aged out OVY's, and 4-5 key informant (KI) interviews with different transition care providers.

The purpose of the one-to-one interviews is to listen well to the experiences and concerns of those orphans who have aged out of their institutions.  This is an effort to understand their history, good and the bad, regarding this transition time.

The interview style is semi-structured and includes open-ended questions.  This method and style was chosen due to the foundational research question being exploratory, and thus data that emerges from the participants may fall outside the boundaries of the proposed questions.  By using a semi-structured approach in this

story-telling and relationship-based culture, participants are both put at ease and given a wide berth of space where they can feel free to explore deeper dimensions of the topics or concerns that are raised. This format also lends itself to validating the OVY's voice, and allows them a sense of ownership while telling their own story.

When analyzing the data I gather, I will use a mixed methods and triangulation approach.  I will also utilize what we have learned regarding coding and themes.

## Validity

*We have to think through the possible consequences sequences of our research, pointing them out, and try to work out ways of dealing with them, from the viewpoints and power perspectives of the widest possible range of community members* (Desai & Potter, 2012).

Variables that need to be considered effecting validity include those related to personal preconceptions and my ability to minimize their impact on the findings. As Slimbach (2012) has noted, "Writing itself is an interpretative act" (p 35).  And even if my data set is relatively free from bias, Ryan and Bernard (2003) point out that researchers must also consider that what is not said in an interview, along with what is actually stated, both contribute to the viability of one's research (p 92).   My deductive outputs, then, become a matter for inspection, as whatever themes I may discover through deduction will need to be "carefully scrutinized to ensure that investigators are not finding only what they are looking for" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p 92).

Further variables to be aware of pertain to the effect of location on dynamics, and accordingly, the interview results. Although I'm limited to the space I'm given to carry out the interviews, I've received permission to use rooms that are deemed to be comfortable and free from privacy concerns.  I will need to stay alert in discerning if this proves to be correct.

My choice to interview at least 25 aged out OVY's from at least four different NGO's and institutions aims to make sure I have "targeted a diverse range of people who might have different opinions or perceptions based on their own experiences and contexts" (Willis, 2006:147).  Still, the relatively small size of my data set can be subject to question.  And in some manner, I hope it is questioned in such a fashion that additional grant money is offered to expand the research reach.  In this way, my research can contribute to stimulating more research so that better documentation results.

## Research  Guide  and  Assistants

Many of the people I will be interviewing speak English well.  This is due to their proximity to large cities and growing globalization which not only brings more English-

speakers to its shores, but exposes them to media that is often English-based. Many Mozambicans are also recognizing that English language skills yield higher paying jobs in the nation, and for beggars, higher monetary yields as well.

Along with these changing cultural realities, those who have found themselves in orphanages for any length of time are usually exposed to a high percentage of English speaking caretakers, volunteers or visitors. Of course, this is not a 'blanket' statement meant to be applied to the whole of the nation, for the majority of the Mozambican population is rural, and even there, the national language, Portuguese, is seldom spoken or much less understood.

Due to the fact though that my research is focusing on urban phenomenologies, the likelihood of encounters with aging out rural orphans is slim. Still, in order to make sure my interviewees are comfortable, I plan on having a translator with me for all interviews. Since English is a second or third language to many, for those who would be more at ease speaking in their native tongues, that option will be provided. As my Portuguese is not developed enough to give me confidence in accurate translation, for those who choose to speak in a tribal language or Portuguese, I plan on having those interviews transcribed.

My research guide, Laura Anderson is bilingual, so she is available for translation assistance when necessary as well.

## Ethical considerations

Responsibility entails thinking about the consequences of one's actions upon others and the establishment of clear lines of accountability (SRA, 2002). As far as possible, I will guard against causing harmful effects on the participants in my research. Being a candidate for a higher education degree in the Theology department, ethical concerns are definitely within my purview. That being said, when dealing with field-based research, some of the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects may actually skew results and render the research meaningless.

The 'doctrine' of informed consent is one such example that anthropologists conducting ethnographic research have discovered can be a thorny issue at times. Noteworthy though, is the understanding that "being *against* informed consent doesn't mean being *for* deception or covert research" (Bell, 2014,p13). In this case, one is simply acknowledging that in some cultures, the particulars of informed consent do not lend themselves well to effective anthropological ethnographic research. This can be due to cultural realities recognizing the significance of story-telling and relationship-based societies, and the distrust of authority-based documents. The introduction of signed consent forms can cause suspicion to participants and result in unnatural responses. Such changed behavior can distort data and render observations worthless.

Another consideration worth noting when one is pursuing ethical guidelines in a Western wrapping, is that pre-literate societies are understandably not likely to be comfortable with signed documents.  In many cultures, such documents were used for ill-conceived gain that harmed indigenous pre-liiterate populations.  Thus, it may be necessary as a researcher for a Western-based graduate school program that I do indeed get 'informed consent,' but it may also be necessary for such consent to be granted through an audible, rather than a literary channel.

And worthy of consideration in a nation whose history involves cruel colonialism, ethically, it is paramount that I consider the power relation with which I am perceived.  I can't change my white skin and whatever negative ramifications might be associated with it, but I can stay aware of how past inequalities and injustices can possibly mediate the relationship between myself and the participants.  Truly, who I am, that fusion of various elements that includes nationality, race, and social class, cannot be divorced from how I relate to others in the field, and consequently, the information I acquire (Slimbach, 2014).

One last ethical consideration to mention: justice, beneficence, and respect for persons were the three major themes set forth in the Belmont Report, and one way to honor those values is for me to give all participants aliases in my oral and written presentations.  In this manner they will be protected from any negative ramifications that identification with this study could possibly bring to them.  The recruitment script in Appendix 1 goes into further detail regarding protections this study affords the participants.

## Permissions

I have purposely structured my research to involve those who are 18 years or older so as to avoid the risks involved with interacting with vulnerable children in a research capacity.   I have yet to get IRB approval, but this is because I have delayed submitting my documentation due to a slight sabbatical from coursework necessitated by a medical emergency.

In anticipation of that formality being taken care of in the next month, I have sought and received permissions from the NGO's where I desire to do my unstructured interviews with AO orphans and KI caregivers.

# Potential Outcomes

### Research Product

The tangible product resulting from my research will be a printed professional report.  Both the aging out OVY's and the organizations I partnered with to conduct my research will be presented with an oral presentation of the findings (most likely utilizing

Powerpoint presentations), and for those who desire them, a written version will be provided as well.

The long-term vision I've brought into this project is to help birth reproducible models that can be modified for their local contexts, yet applicable beyond the boundaries of this nation alone.  In addition, it is quite likely this Masters project will be modified in the future for use in grant submissions.

### Action Outcomes

> People have suffered a great deal at the hands of the powerful—doctors, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and others. They have suffered so much from broken promises, from people wanting to learn from experiments, or to write a thesis, and then having gained what they wanted—recognition, training, an impressive book or report—going away and never coming back. They are waiting for someone who really cares, who sees them in the light of love, who recognizes their gifts (not just their deficits), who accepts their need for change, but who will accept them just as they are, with no preconceived ideas of change (Vanier, 1998, p 78, 79).

This research aims to inspire constructive action resulting in better-informed institutional and program designs for aging out OVY's. It is hoped that this contribution to the research literature will encourage further studies into the unique challenges this population faces, both nationally and internationally.

Ultimately, the goal is not about releasing grant money and/or producing additional research studies, but rather changing for the better the prospective viability of a population that has too often been forgotten, marginalized and left with little recourse for a positive future.  The desire is to see action initiated that will facilitate aging out orphans to flourish and thrive, and communities to be enhanced by their presence and contributions.

## Community Benefits
*There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.*  Margaret Wheatley

Since there is little appropriate education such as vocational training or lifelong skills that cater for aging out OVY's immediate and future requirements (Luis, 2012, p 7), it is hoped that this research will result in stimulating awareness, action and programs that cater to the real needs of this population.  This then, has the potential to increase the viability of AO orphans and improve the health of the community.

Both OVC-related government agencies and international NGO's seeking to enhance the viability of those aging out could potentially see improved program outcomes if they use the information revealed in this research to more wisely construct exit programs for those permanently leaving their premises.  Again, improving the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of aging out OVY's will improve the overall health of communities.  And perhaps better-designed programs might actually save lives and reduce the high suicide risk in this population amongst those who were previously at risk for suicide.

In addition to these benefits, NGO's currently catering to OVY's will also benefit in having more cost-productive and successful goal-efficient outcomes by implementing planning and procedures that can result in better prepared AO orphans.  The opening quote in this report by a former orphan care CEO reinforces this reality, for indeed there is serious dissonance if the following speaks truth:

> *If all we are doing is rescuing children to feed, water and educate them until they are eighteen so they can end up with survival choices as prostitutes or criminals as adults, then something is seriously flawed with our vision.*

## Timetable*

| Research Activity | Begin | Complete | Estimated Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collect Secondary Data | February 2015 | June 2015 | 50 hours |
| Submit and Receive IRB Approval | Sept 2015 | Oct 2016 | 30 hours |
| Plan Interviews with OVY's & KI's | June 2015 | July 2015 | 5 hours |
| Conduct Interviews with OVY's & KI's | October 2015 | Nov 2015 | 25 hours |
| Analyze and synthesize Data into Thesis Project | October 2015 | Dec 2015 | 80 hours |
| Write Thesis (First Draft and Second Draft) | July 2015 | Dec 2015 | 60 hours |
| Community Report-back to OVY's, CCI's and Transition Center | December 2015 | Dec 2015 | 20 hours |
| Submission of Final Research | December 2015 | Dec 2015 | 2 hours |

*My personal calendar gives more specific dates for these activities. The above summary is a generalized version more conducive for inclusion in this project plan.*

## Budget

This is an estimate of expected costs resulting from this research. These figures are only intended to provide a general idea of costs. The higher cost estimate is only relevant if I receive grant money to extend the geographic reach of my research.

| ITEM | COST |
|---|---|
| Professional services: e.g. language coach, transcriber | $ 150 |
| Research: e.g. text purchases, duplicating | $ 70 |
| Research assistants (translator-interpreter) | $ 100 |
| Supplies (Snacks for helpers) | $ 20 |
| Equipment: e.g. Jump drives, digital recorder, software, paper, | $ 75 |
| Transportation (2nd figure is for expanded interviewing if grant money available) | $100-$2000 |
| Housing | $100 |
| Thesis Presentation to Community Organization | $ 50 |
| Thesis Publication (formal)      (5 copies x$10) | $ 50 |
| Other: e.g. Meals en route… | $ 75 |
| **TOTAL** | **$790-$2760** |

**Textual Resources**

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# Appendix 1:  Research Tools

**Recruitment Script**:  Prior to the interviews, using a project assistant who speaks their native language, participants are informed that I am a student researcher who wants to learn more about their transitional experience of moving from an institution to independent living.  They are also notified that their names and identifying information will be kept confidential.  They are invited to pass on any question that they choose to, and to exit the interview at any time in the interview process if so desired.  As consent forms are off-putting in this relational and mostly pre-literate culture, participants are requested to give verbal consent into an interviewer's voice recorder regarding their voluntary consent to be interviewed.  If digital recording is not deemed invasive, verbal consent will be requested to utilize this tool.

By the time I begin my interview, participants will have been briefed on the above information, as well as the following:

- The duration of the research
*(15-20 minutes)*

- How data will be collected and stored
*(hand written/audio recorded and inputted into a computer which is password protected)*

- Who will have access to the data
*(myself and two academic advisors)*

- How the results may be used
*(to inform  and encourage CCI's and transition centers to adopt OVC suggestions and formulate workable plans)*

Potential risks and benefits resulting from participation
*(Risks: emotional distress regarding potentially painful memories.  Note: the risk of distress in these interviews is not higher than expected from any other conversations about personal experiences.  If, indeed, participants do experience distress, free resources are available to them through the use of  previously identified counselors and pastors.*
*Benefits: a sense of accomplishment from participating in research improving the lives of others)*

# Interview Guide (Aged Out OVY's)

**Quantitative Data**

**Demographics** *(Personal identifying information will be kept anonymous and is only for researcher documentation):*

1) Name?
2) Age?
3) What family do you have?  (Mom? Brothers? Sisters? Aunts?...)
4) What years were you in institutional care?


**Qualitative Data**

**Knowledge and Opinions**
Thinking back to your time in the Child Care Insitution (CCI), and specifically regarding how you were prepared for life outside the CCI, what were:

5)  the positive actions that were done?
6)  the things that could have been done better?
7)  the specific practical things that prepared you or could have better prepared you for life outside the CCI?

**Behaviors**

8)  Do you have a job or go to school? (*Quantitative*)


How do you presently pay for

9)  rent ?
10) food ?
11) transportation and other incidentals?

**Feelings and Opinions/Values**

12)  If you could design a 'perfect' transitional program for moving from institutional care to independent living, what would it include?

13)  What are your dreams for the future?  How do you plan/think you can move towards seeing them realized?

14)  Is there anything else you wish I had asked about that you want to add now?

15)  Are there any questions you have for me?

**For Caregivers involved in pre and post transition time care**

1) What is your position or role in the lives of OVY's who have left institutional care?

2) What, if anything, do you ascertain prepared them for life outside the institution?

3) What, if anything, was missing in their preparation for life outside the institution?

4) What do you perceive are some of the major challenges for OVY's outside their institution?

5) What life skills do OVY's need to survive and thrive beyond institutional life?

  --Based on your observations, are these normally provided OVY's before leaving CCI's?

  --- If not, what do you perceive are the obstacles CCI's face in providing them?

6)  Do you know of successful reintegration stories of OVY's back into communities?
   -- If so, what were the defining elements that led to those successes?

7)  Have you seen troubled reintegration efforts of OVY's, and if so, what were the defining elements that led to the problems?

8)  What do you envision would be a 'perfect' transitional program for OVY's leaving their CCI's?

9)  Is there anything else you wanted to talk about or add to this subject?

10) Are there any questions you have for me?

# Appendix 4 Project Supervisor Signature Form

*I understand that this proposal will likely undergo one or more revisions while on the field. The final version will have the signatures of my project guide, and be reviewed by my program supervisor prior to undertaking the research.*

Laura L. Anderson *(scanner unavailable but email signature confirmation  was provided)* 24/07/2015
_____     _____
Signature of Project  Guide                              Date

**Laura Anderson**
_____
Name of Project Guide

*Melinda Nelson*                                              *20/07/15*
_____     _____
Investigator Signature                                    Date

**Melinda Nelson**
_____
Investigator Name


_____     _____
Signature of Program Supervisor                     Date

**Dr. Viv Grigg**
_____
Name of Program  Supervisor