

Globalisation Qualifications and Livelihoods

Report Number 18
Youth Aspirations in Zimbabwe
following Economic
Liberalisation

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Preface

This research report is one of a series completed within the DFID-funded research project 'Globalisation, Qualifications, Livelihoods and Youth'. The research examines the impact of globalisation on livelihoods, education and qualifications, and on the aspirations of youth for education, qualifications and livelihoods.

The research arises from the need to monitor the impact of globalisation – operationalised via policies of economic liberalisation – on the access of the poorest social groups to livelihoods, education and qualifications in different country contexts. Economic liberalisation is changing the nature of the livelihood structure and the economic demand for skills and qualifications. It is also changing the types of educational and qualifications provision within specific national settings. These in turn impact on the aspirations of youth for livelihoods, education and qualifications. The realisation of those aspirations is increasingly conditioned by the ability to pay, as policies of economic liberalisation encourage private sector, market driven provision, especially at the post-primary level. This research explores the impacts of economic liberalisation on the structure and volume of livelihoods, education and qualifications on the one hand, and on the aspirations of youth, on the other. In particular it seeks to explore differential impacts of economic liberalisation on members of different social groups.

The fieldwork has been undertaken mainly in Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. A smaller study was undertaken in Zhejiang Province, China, and a study of UK suppliers of qualifications to Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe was undertaken to explore the interdependent, cross border nature of qualifications supply.

Research report no 18, by Charles Nherera examines shifts in the aspirations of youth for livelihoods, education and qualifications following the policies of economic liberalisation introduced from 1990. It examines shifts over time through comparisons of youth aspirations with the recollected aspirations of the youth's parents. The study of aspirations is based exclusively on interviews with household members from different class groups in eight types of residential area in eight out of ten administrative districts in Zimbabwe. Residential areas were classified as urban low density, urban medium density, urban high density, peri-urban, rural district council, rural resettlement, rural communal farming, and mining.

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1 Shifts In The Education, Qualification And Livelihood Aspirations Of Youth In Zimbabwe Following Economic Liberalization

1.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980, bringing an end to 90 years of colonial rule. The pre-independence period was characterised by racial discrimination which marginalized the over 95 percent indigenous black population. Besides the colonial legacies that continue to haunt the country, economic structural adjustment programmes (ESAP) instituted by government in the 1990s and the socio-economic changes that followed have had a major impact on the:

- country's economic and employment structures;
- education and training systems;
- qualification market, and
- qualification and employment aspirations and expectations of the youth.

Generally, the economy took a downturn since the introduction of ESAP in the 1990s. Several indicators point to this observation. For instance, the collapse of the stock market with high inflation and interest rates, rapid depreciation of the local currency, public cuts in social expenditure, unprecedented brain drain and the decline in foreign investment, are all characteristics of the post liberalisation era.

1.2 Macro-economic Analysis

After the attainment of political independence in 1980, the economy experienced a boom, especially due to the lifting of economic sanctions. The economy performed well up to around 1987 when it started to decline, mainly due to what were perceived to be structural rigidities in the economy. In a bid to revive the ailing economy and create employment, the country adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1990 after persistent persuasion from the IMF and the World Bank. ESAP entailed the opening up of the economy, deregulation or removal of controls on trade (local and international), cutting down on government spending and removal of subsidies. However, as acknowledged by the World Bank country representative in Zimbabwe, ESAP totally failed to revive the economy as the recession persisted (Herald, 17 April, 2001).

1.3 Unemployment

One of the major manifestations of ESAP that had a direct impact on the youths was the worsening of unemployment generally. Figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) indicate that of all the unemployed, about 65 percent were youths within the 15-24 years age group. The majority of these youths have gone up to 'O' level in their education. An estimated 300,000 school leavers, with secondary education enter the job market each year, whereas the economy is only capable of creating around 30,000 jobs in the formal sector of the economy per year (Kanyenze,

1997). This leaves thousands of youths without employment. The following year another group also joins the ranks of the unemployed. This scenario was exacerbated by the massive retrenchment of workers from both the private and public sector, following ESAP recommendations to downsize the labour-force and maximise profitability. According to a Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries survey, approximately 400 companies closed down, leading to a net loss of around 10,000 jobs in 2001 alone (Herald, April 2001).

The chronic unemployment situation made attempts to alleviate poverty in the country more difficult. According to figures from the CSO, the evidence of poverty in the country had increased from 40 percent in 1990/91 to 63.3 percent by 1995/96. The Poverty Assessment Sectorial Study (PASS) conducted by the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare (1995) found that 61 percent of households lived in poverty and 45 percent of these were in extreme poverty. Compounding the effects of poverty was the fact that the social safety nets such as the Social Dimension Fund that had been put in place to cushion the anticipated negative effects of ESAP, did not reach the target population.

Against this background, the current study investigates whether there was a shift in the education, qualifications and livelihood aspirations of the youth following economic liberalisation in Zimbabwe. In order to assess whether there has been a shift, it is important to examine aspirations before and after liberalisation. The aspirations of the youths before liberalisation are assessed through the responses of parents and guardians of today's youths, while those of current youths come from those aged between 15 and 24 years of age at the time of the study. In essence, this is a comparison between the aspirations of youths today and those of their parents or guardians when they were youths themselves. Unlike the studies reported in GQL reports 16, 17, and 18, the 'pre-liberalisation' period referred to in this report of necessity extends back into the pre-independence era.

1.4 Research Questions

The first part of the study addresses the question: "What has been the shift in education, qualification and livelihood aspirations of youth before and after Economic Liberalisation in Zimbabwe?"

The second part of the study addresses the question: 'Has there been a widening of the gap between the aspirations of youth from higher and lower socio-economic backgrounds?'

1.5 Research Design

The 'normative survey' method was adopted for the execution of the study. This design was chosen because surveys are generally the most appropriate when gathering data to ascertain current conditions. By 'normative', it means that the survey is mainly made for the purpose of ascertaining the prevailing normal or typical condition or practice. Since the project is on Globalization, Qualifications and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe, the Normative Survey enables the collection of current information concerning the aspirations and expectations of the Zimbabwean youths and their parents or guardians. Analysis of the findings will enable the researchers to establish whether or not the educational, qualifications and livelihood aspirations and expectations are indeed a normal product of Globalization. This will also assist in deciding whether the observations are common or typical to Zimbabwe, with the view to come up with recommendations that can guide policy and programmes intended to alleviate the negative impact of Globalization, particularly among the low socio-economic groups.

1.6 Sampling

It is important to think critically about sampling to avoid problems in later analysis. Since it is impossible to study everyone, everywhere and do everything at the same time, careful consideration should be taken regarding whom to look at or talk with, where, when, about what, and why. All these aspects place limits on the conclusions one can draw the findings, and how confident one feels about them.

The dominant method employed in this study was stratified random sampling. This involves dividing the population into a number of strata (groups) where members of each stratum share particular characteristics (Robson, 1997). The categorisation of the sample according to socio-economic class was mainly based on the residential area of the subjects. For example the population was divided into urban and rural. The urban population was then further subdivided into four categories of residential areas, namely:

Low-density;

Medium density,

High-density;

Peri-urban areas (or squatter settlements in the case of Harare and Bulawayo)

In the rural areas, the population was stratified into: Rural District Council, Resettlement (small scale farming), Commercial Farming, and Mining communities. Gender and age were also used

to stratify the population sample. Other socio-economic background characteristics such as qualifications, livelihoods and salaries were also used to confirm the categorization of the sample population.

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was employed. This involved the selection of households at random from a visited location. If a youth who fitted the required age group was present, the interview would proceed. However, if such a youth was not available at the household, the researcher would move two to three blocks away from the original house chosen, then again randomly pick another household. The same process was repeated if a youth was interviewed and another one was required in the same locality. However, there was need to spread the selection of the households, rather than concentrate in one location. For example in the case of Harare, the researcher would choose the area to visit by randomly selecting from the different high-density suburbs such as Highfield, Mafakose, and Kuwadzana, in order to capture the aspirations and expectations of the youths and their parents in the different residential suburbs. The same exercise was repeated in the urban medium, urban low-density areas and peri-urban or squatter settlements. In the rural areas, the random sampling had to cover all the target areas such as rural district council, resettlement, commercial farming areas, and mining communities. Since the sample was deliberately biased towards the youths from low the socio-economic background, fewer households were picked in each urban medium-density and low-density area visited.

1.7 Data Collection Methods

The interview method was used to gather relevant data for the project. According to Bless and Smith (1995) an interview has the advantage of collecting data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. A team of field research assistants was deployed throughout the country, one to each province. At each household, the field research assistants, who had been trained at a workshop prior to their deployment, introduced themselves and explained the purpose of their investigation, that is, the aims and objectives of the project. To solicit more specific data, they used semi-structured interview schedules for their interviews. The interview schedules had precise questions and sub-questions to be answered, covering the various issues to be investigated and could be completed as structured questionnaires. The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that interviewers went on to ask probing questions meant to make respondents expand on their responses for clarity. The method had already been tried and the research instruments fine-tuned through a pilot study that was conducted prior to this investigation. The pilot study helped in the formulation of accurate and precise questions and helped the field research assistants to anticipate possible areas of miscommunication in their subsequent interviews.

The survey covered eight out of Zimbabwe's ten administrative provinces. Research assistants sent to the other two provinces abandoned the project before submitting their fieldwork data. However, the eight provinces will suffice since they include all the socio-economic categories in terms of residential areas and background characteristics of both youths and their parents / guardians. An average of 45 youths was interviewed in each province. Slightly fewer parents than youths were interviewed since they were less available at the time of the visits. In each province, the households were selected in the following residential areas, which relate to the socio-economic background of the respondents:

- Urban Low density;
- Urban Medium density;
- Urban High density;
- Urban Peri-urban;
- Rural District Council;
- Rural Resettlement;
- Rural Commercial Farming; and
- Mining.

These residential area categories are listed in their general hierarchical order in terms of the socio-economic background of the majority of people who live there, from the highest to the lowest.

1.8 Interviews

Data was collected from both youths and their parents / guardians, using mainly interview schedules, which could also be completed as questionnaires. The interviews were only administered with youths who met the laid down selection criteria in terms of; age, gender, and residential area. Both male and female youths in the age ranges of 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years old were selected for the interviews. Only parents or guardians of the youths selected for the study were interviewed as well. While the ideal situation was to interview the youths individually in a private setting, so that they would express themselves freely and fully, this was not possible in some cases. Even though prior permission was sought from the parents or guardians to interview the youths on their own, some still insisted on being in the background during the sessions. It is possible that the presence of the parents might have distracted or interfered with the responses of some youths and prevented them from expressing their views freely.

Also, some interviews with parents or guardians of the youths were done in the presence of the youths in cases where the youths had to translate or help explain some of the concepts. It made some parents / guardians more willing to talk. In such interviews, however, the youths were asked

not to remark and would only talk when requested to do so. Where responses could be recorded by simply ticking in the interview schedule or brief notes, the researchers did so during the interviews and added detailed notes after the interview. Although some of the youths felt that the interviews were rather too long, they were still cooperative and answered the questions fully.

1.9 The Sample

The location of each respondent was indicated on the interview schedules, in relation to the socio-economic categorization of residential areas. The identification of the respondents by their residence as a proxy of socio-economic background is complemented by data on other socio-economic background indicators such as educational, qualification and income levels of parents / guardians in the analysis of the data.

A total of 363 youths and 323 parents / guardians were included in the study. 49 percent of the youths were female while the other 51 percent were male. 64 percent of the youths were in the 15 – 19 years age group with the other 36 percent aged between 20 and 24 years. For the parents / guardians, 63 percent of them were female while 37 percent were male. The high proportion of females is because more women than men tended to be at home rather than at work. This is a common phenomenon in Zimbabwe where males are usually the bread-winners. Their ages ranged from 25 to over 55 years. 26 percent of them were in the age ranges 25 – 29 years (10%) and over 55 years (16%) and most of those in these age groups were guardians rather than parents. The households were mainly drawn from the low socio-economic areas. Less than 4 percent of the parents were employed in high-level professional jobs, with another 20 percent employed in medium-level jobs. Over 33 percent of them were engaged in low-level jobs such as Cleaner, Farm Worker, Domestic Worker, and Driver. The other 18 percent were self-employed, while the remaining 25 percent were unemployed. Just under 55 percent of the females included in the study were either unemployed (33%) or self-employed (22%). For the males, only 24 percent of them were either unemployed (12%) or self-employed (12%).

As indicated earlier, the sample was deliberately biased towards the low socio-economic groups in terms of numbers. Those in the urban low-density areas comprise the highest socio-economic group, while those who reside in mining communities and commercial farming communities represent the lowest socio-economic groups. Although the Mining and the Commercial Farming Communities represent the poorest areas, most of the sample was drawn from the Rural District and Urban High Density areas where the majority of the people in the country reside. Only a very small proportion of the total population in the country resides in the Resettlement, Commercial Farming and Mining areas.

Peri-urban areas are a result of the increasing urban migration. Most of the people who reside in these areas would have left rural and farming communities to seek better livelihoods in urban areas, but end up living in make-shift shelters on the outskirts of the major cities and towns, in squatter settlements, that are now commonly referred to as peri-urban areas. In most instances, authorities and NGOs end up providing amenities and basic infrastructure such as temporary schools and clinics, after failing to move the people away from such 'illegal settlements'. However, although some of these settlements have continued to exist for many years, they remain temporary settlements officially, with residents waiting to be allocated plots or houses elsewhere by local authorities.

Table 1 presents the residence of parents / guardians.

Table 1: Residence of Parents / Guardians

Residence of parents/guardians	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Urban Low Density	7	2.2	2.2
2. Urban Medium Density	11	3.4	5.6
3. Urban High Density	111	34.4	39.9
4. Peri-Urban	2	.6	40.5
5. Rural District Council	124	38.4	78.9
6. Rural Resettlement	27	8.4	87.3
7. Rural Commercial Farming	28	8.7	96.0
8. Mining Community	13	4.0	100.0
Total	323	100.0	

Table 2 depicts the residence of youths.

Table 2: Residence of Youths

Residence of youths	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. Urban Low Density	27	7.4	7.4
2. Medium Density	29	8.0	15.4
3. Urban High Density	148	40.8	56.2
4. Peri-Urban	26	7.2	63.4
5. Rural District Council	69	19.0	82.4
6. Rural Resettlement	27	7.4	89.8
7. Rural Commercial Farming	22	6.1	95.9

	Residence of youths	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
8.	Mining Community	15	4.1	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

2 Findings

2.1.1 Shift in aspirations of youths before and after economic liberalization

Several questions were posed to solicit the perceived aspirations of the parents when they were youths. This data is intended to capture the aspirations of youths before the introduction of economic liberalisation. A comparison of these aspirations with those of the youths today will give a proxy of the shift in the aspirations of youths before and after economic liberalisation.

2.1.2 Shift in educational aspirations

Some of the parents did not distinguish between educational, qualification and livelihood aspirations. They argued that their main concern was what jobs they would get in the end. They gave the jobs they aspired to instead of the educational aspirations. In such instances, we had to work out the educational qualifications that would be required for such jobs at the time and use them for the analysis. Table 3 presents the educational aspirations of parents / guardians.

Table 3: Educational level aspired to by parents / guardians

	Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Primary	17	5.3	5.3
2.	Junior Certificate	7	2.2	7.4
3.	'O' Level	189	58.5	65.9
4.	'A' Level	16	5.0	70.9
5.	Degree	86	26.6	97.5
6.	No response	8	2.5	100.0
	Total	323	100.0	

Table 3 indicates that over 58 percent of the parents aspired to go as far as 'O' level while almost 27 percent of them aspired to attain university degrees. This is probably because 'O' levels were regarded as the qualification required for most college level training in areas such as nursing and teaching. As will be seen later, most of the parents aspired to these two professions. Although the percentage aspiring to get university degrees was relatively high in relation to the opportunities that actually existed, particularly before the attainment of political independence in 1980,

university education was seen as a necessity for economic prospects and social mobility. Table 4 presents the educational aspirations of youths.

Table 4: Educational level aspired to by the youths

	Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	'O' Level	83	22.9	22.9
2.	'A' Level	40	11.0	33.9
3.	University	237	65.3	99.2
4.	Not sure	2	.6	99.7
5.	No response	1	.3	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

Table 4 indicates that over 65 percent of the youths aspired to go to university, compared to less than 27 percent of the parents / guardians. Fewer than 23 percent of the youths aspired to go as far as 'O' level while 11 percent aspired to attain 'A' levels. There has therefore been a clear shift in the educational aspirations of the youths before and after economic liberalisation. This could be due to the escalating demand for higher qualifications in the employment sector, a phenomenon described by Dore (1976) as 'qualification escalation'. The increasingly stiff competition on the labour market as more and more people chase fewer and fewer jobs has resulted in employers asking for qualifications that are higher than what the actual tasks for specific jobs require. However, one manifestation of Globalisation, which could explain the rise in aspirations of the youths, is the increased movement of people around the world in search of livelihoods. This has intensified the competition for employment opportunities in a work environment that is also asking for higher qualified personnel who can keep the companies competitive on the global markets. Table 5 presents the perceptions that youth have of the educational aspirations that parents have of them.

Table 5: What youths perceived to be their parents' aspirations for their education

	Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	'O' Level	28	7.7	7.7
2.	'A' Level	34	9.4	17.1
3.	College	56	15.4	32.5
4.	University	235	64.7	97.2
5.	Don't know	10	2.8	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that almost 65 percent of the youths believed their parents wanted them to go to university while over 15 percent of them thought their parents wanted them to acquire college qualifications. This was consistent with responses of the parents (Table 6), almost 71 percent of

whom indicated that they wanted their children to go to university. Another 21 percent of the parents wanted their children to attain either 'A' levels or college qualifications.

Table 6: Parents' aspirations for their children's education

	Level of education aspired	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	'O' Level	79	24.5	24.5
2.	'A' Level	78	24.1	48.6
3.	College	44	13.6	62.2
4.	University	96	29.7	92.0
5.	Not Sure	26	8.0	100.0
	Total	323	100.0	

Table 6 shows that youths perceived their parents to have high aspirations of them. The high educational aspirations that parents have of their children might also have had an influence on the high aspirations of the youths as reflected in their responses. It also reflects what both parents and youths perceived to be the level of education required for today's livelihood opportunities. Table 7 presents the expectations, rather than aspirations of parents for their children.

Table 7: The educational level parents expected their children to reach

	Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	'O' Level	79	24.5	24.5
2.	'A' Level	78	24.1	48.6
3.	College	44	13.6	62.2
4.	University	96	29.7	91.9
5.	Not Sure	26	8.1	100
	Total	323	100.0	

Although parents had high aspirations for their children's education, they were more realistic when asked what they actually expected them to do. Less than 30 percent thought their children would go up to university, with the majority of them settling for lower levels at 'O', 'A' or college level. These findings might also reflect what has actually happened to their children, rather than speculating about how far they would go with their education. Table 8 presents the actual levels of education attained by the youths at the time of the inter

Table 8: Educational level of the youths

	Educational level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Below 'O' level	140	38.6	38.6
2.	'O' level	158	43.5	82.1
3.	'A' level	34	9.4	91.5
4.	College level	4	1.1	92.6
5.	University level	1	.3	92.8
6.	No response	26	7.2	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

Since the study targeted youths from the lower socio-economic background, the majority of them (over 82%) had only gone up to 'O' level. Most of those who did not respond to the question were below 'O' level and appeared to be embarrassed to state their qualifications. This brings the actual percentage of youths who had not reached 'O' level to almost 46 percent.

2.1.3 Shift in qualification aspirations

Over 63 percent of the parents / guardians had aspired to get college diplomas when they were youths, while almost 26 percent had wanted to attain university qualifications. Almost 11 percent indicated that they did not have aspirations for any particular professional qualification. Responding to the same question, over 66 percent of the youths indicated that they aspired to get university degrees while just over 33 percent wanted to attain college qualifications. Only three youths (less than 1%) did not indicate any particular professional qualification that they aspired to. Again, the professional qualification aspirations of the youths in this sample are much higher than those of the parents / guardians when they were youths.

Despite their aspiration for college diploma and university qualifications, 37 percent of the parents had not gone beyond primary school level, while another 23 percent had gone up secondary school level (Table 9).

Table 9: Qualification of parent / guardian by gender of respondent

Qualification of parent /guardian	Gender of respondent				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	34	10	87	27	121	37
Secondary	27	8	48	15	75	23
College	40	12	53	16	93	28
University	12	4	7	2	19	6
None	3	1	4	1	7	2
No response	3	1	5	2	8	3

Qualification of parent /guardian	Gender of respondent				Total	
	Male		Female			
Total	119	37	204	63	323	100

As depicted in the table, 34 percent of the parents had attained either college or university qualifications. Although males tend to have higher qualifications than females nationally, this was not the case in this sample in which 18 percent of the female parents had either college or university qualifications compared to 16 percent among men. Table 10 shows the qualifications that the youths in this sample had attained, according to their gender.

Table 10: Qualification of Youth by Gender of Respondent

Qualification of parent /guardian	Gender of respondent				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary	70	50	70	50	140	50
Secondary	100	52	92	48	192	48
College	2	50	2	50	4	50
University	0	0	1	100	1	100
No response	14	54	12	46	26	46
Total	186	51	177	49	363	49

Among the youths (Table 10), over 38 percent of them had only gone up to primary school level, while almost 53 percent of them had gone up to secondary school level. Only four out of the 363 youths had college qualifications while one had attained a university degree. The lower proportion of the youths who held professional / vocational qualifications could be due to the fact that the youths were still in the process of acquiring their qualifications, while the parents had already completed their education and training cycle. Over 50 percent of the youths confirmed that they were still pursuing their education. It is most likely that a lot of the 53 percent youths who had gone up to secondary school level (both 'O' and 'A' levels) will end up with college and university qualifications. There has been a significant increase in the number of colleges and universities offering a wide range of vocational and professional qualifications since the attainment of political independence in 1980. The proportion of the youths who had only gone up to primary school level was almost the same for both parents and youths.

Just under 50 percent of the parents who indicated that they aspired to attaining college or university qualifications had fathers who had gone up to 'O' level. Among the parents whose own fathers had gone up to 'O' level, 93 percent of them aspired to attaining college or university qualifications. 84 percent of the parents, whose fathers had only stopped at primary school level or had not gone to school at all, still aspired to college or university qualifications. It appears

therefore that the level of qualifications attained by their own parents' did not influence the qualification aspirations of the parents in this sample, when they were still young. This is confirmed by the fact that aspirations of both the fathers and mothers of the parents when they were youths were consistently higher than the qualification level attained by their own parent. The majority of the parents who aspired to college or university qualifications had parents who had either not gone to school at all or had stopped at primary level, as depicted in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11: Parent's Highest Qualification Aspiration by Their Father's Qualification

	Father's qualification	Highest qualification level aspired			Total
		None	College	University	
1.	Primary	8	32	10	50
2.	Secondary	12	113	48	173
3.	College	1	10	8	19
4.	University	0	3	2	5
5.	Don't know	1	1	1	3
6.	Not applicable	13	46	14	73
	Total	35	205	83	323

Table 12: Parent's Highest Qualification Aspiration by Their Mother's Qualification

	Mother's qualifications	Highest qualification level aspired			Total
		None	College	University	
1.	None	7	38	11	56
2.	Primary	8	73	41	122
3.	Secondary	0	7	4	11
4.	College	0	0	4	4
5.	University	1	1	0	2
6.	Don't know	18	82	21	121
7.	Not applicable	1	4	2	7
	Total	35	205	83	323

Tables 11 and 12 also reveal that the aspirations of the fathers when still youths were higher than those of mothers. Also, a higher proportion of the mothers, in comparison to the fathers, indicated that they did not know what qualification they aspired to. This could be explained by the fact that educational opportunities were much more restricted for females than for males, particularly because parents tended to send boys to higher levels of education than girls.

2.1.4 *Shift in livelihood aspirations*

Over 52 percent of the parents / guardians had aspired to become either Teachers (27%) or Nurses (25%) when they were still youths. The next sizeable group had aspired to become Medical Doctors (7.4%). Over 15 percent of them aspired to the following jobs: Driver (3%), Mechanic (2.5%), Agriculturist (2.5%), Accountant (2.5%), Air Hostess (2.5%), and Taylor/Dressmaker (2.2%). The aspirations of the remaining parents / guardians (approximately 25%) were spread thinly over a wide range of jobs, with less than two percent choosing a similar type of job.

Unlike parents most of whom aspired to become nurses or teachers, the youths aspired to a wider range of jobs, which on the whole were at higher levels. This appears to be consistent with their higher aspirations in the educational and professional qualification aspirations. The largest cluster was of those who aspired to be in various Engineering / Technical fields (15,3%) followed by those aspiring to various areas in the medical profession, such as Doctors, Dermatologists and Chemists who comprised 14.3 percent of the sample. The other youths aspired to jobs such as; Nurses (9.6%), Accountants (9.6%), Teachers (8.8%), Managers / Administrators (7.2%), Lecturers (4.4%), Legal professionals (3.0%), Pilots (2.8%), and Commercial Farmers (2.2%). Over four percent (4,4%) of the youths indicated that they did not mind any job that came their way. They cited the scarcity of employment opportunities as the reason why they could not choose any particular job. The livelihood aspirations of the remaining youths (almost 20%), were spread over twenty different types of jobs.

Based on the findings from the parents and youths, it can be concluded that there has been a shift in the livelihood aspirations of the youths before and after economic liberalisation. In trying to understand some of the possible reasons for such a shift, both parents and the youths were asked to give reasons why they aspired to specific livelihoods.

2.1.5 *Why parents and youths aspired to particular jobs*

Table 13 shows the reasons given by parents as to why they aspired to particular jobs when they were young.

Table 13: Why parents aspired to particular jobs

	Reason	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Monetary	48	14.9	14.9
2.	Interest	187	57.9	72.8
3.	No choice	12	3.7	76.5
4.	To help country	16	5.0	81.4
5.	Easy to do	6	1.9	83.3
6.	No response	7	2.2	85.4
7.	Prestige	47	14.6	100.0
	Total	323	100.0	

The largest group of parents (almost 58%) cited 'Interest in the job' as the main reason why they aspired to particular jobs. Monetary (just under 15%) and Prestige (just under 15%) were the next most popular reasons. It should however be noted that the reasons given by parents may not have been the same when they were actually youths themselves, but what they thought at the time of the study. Nevertheless, it still provides us with a basis for comparison with responses from current youths. When asked if their aspirations came true, almost 88 percent of the parents responded that they had not. Table 14 presents the reasons why youths aspired to particular occupations.

Table 14: Why youths aspired to particular occupations

	Reason	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Monetary	141	38.8	38.8
2.	Interest	162	44.6	83.5
3.	No choice	15	4.1	87.6
4.	To help country	24	6.6	94.2
5.	Easy to do	3	.8	95.0
6.	Prestige	18	5.0	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

With over 44 percent, 'Interest in the job' was also the most popular reason why youths aspired to particular jobs. A much larger proportion of the youths (almost 39%) cited 'Monetary' reasons, compared to less than 15 percent among the parents. In comparison to their parents, a smaller proportion of the youths were influenced by the prestige of particular occupations in their aspirations for livelihoods. Table 15 reflects the hierarchy of occupations according to perceived salary by the parents.

Table 15: Hierarchy of occupations according to perceived salary by the parents

	Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Medical Doctor	133	41.2	41.2
2.	Pilot	84	26.0	67.2
3.	No Response	34	10.5	77.7
4.	Architect	29	9.0	86.7
5.	Accountant	21	6.5	93.2
6.	Estate Manager	12	3.7	96.9
7.	Teacher	8	2.5	99.4
8.	Police Inspector	1	.3	99.7
9.	Clerk	1	.3	100
	Total	323	100.0	

The largest proportion of parents (41.2%) chose 'Medical Doctor' as the most lucrative occupation from a list that was given to them. 'Pilot' came second, with 26 percent of the parents indicating that it was the highest paying profession. Over 10 percent of the parents did not respond to the question.

Table 16: Hierarchy of selected jobs according to perceived salary by the youths

	Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	Pilot	145	39.9	39.9
2.	Medical Doctor	128	35.3	75.2
3.	Accountant	40	11.0	86.2
4.	Architect	33	9.1	95.3
5.	Estate Manager	8	2.2	97.5
6.	Teacher	4	1.1	98.6
7.	Police Inspector	3	.8	99.4
8.	Clerk	2	.6	100.0
	Total	363	100.0	

Among the youths, 39.9 percent of them thought 'Pilot' was the most lucrative profession from the list given to them, while 35.3 percent of them thought 'Medical Doctor' was the highest paying job. Although they differed in their perceptions between Medical Doctor and Pilot, and the proportions of the responses in each category, both youths and parents ranked the remaining jobs in a more or less similar order.

2.1.6 Aspirations to work abroad

In response to the question whether they aspired to work abroad or local, 86 percent of the parents indicated that they preferred local, with 6 percent indicating that they aspired to working

abroad and 8 percent responding that they did not mind either. Compared to only 6 percent among parents, 40 percent of the youths aspired to working abroad while 49 percent preferred to work locally and the remaining 11 percent did not mind either locally or abroad. This shift in the livelihood aspirations could be attributed to the increased influence of the information and communication technologies, which is one of the major manifestations of Globalisation. Also, the youths were less tied to work and family commitments and could therefore afford to be more adventurous. Surprisingly, the majority of both parents and youths would rather remain in the country than work abroad. This might be due to the fact that the sample was mainly drawn from the lower socio-economic groups, the majority of whom preferred to work locally. The aspirations of the parents / guardians residing in different localities, to work abroad or locally is depicted in Table 17.

Table 17: Parents' / Guardians' Aspiration to Work Abroad or Locally by Current Residence

Residence of respondent	Whether parents / guardians aspired to work abroad or locally			Total
	Local	Abroad	Either	
Urban Low Density	4	0	3	7
Urban Medium Density	10	0	1	11
Urban High Density	91	10	10	111
Peri-Urban	2	0	0	2
Rural District Council	110	5	9	124
Rural Resettlement	25	1	1	27
Rural Commercial Farming	24	3	1	28
Mine	12	0	1	13
	278	19	26	323

Table 18 indicates that only four out of the 27 youths from the urban low-density areas and 8 out of the 29 from the medium density areas wanted to work locally, with the majority indicating a preference for livelihoods abroad.

Table 18: Youths' Aspiration to Work Abroad or Locally by Current Residence

Residence of respondent	Where do you prefer to work?			Total
	Local	Abroad	Either	
Urban Low Density	4	17	6	27
Medium Density	8	10	11	29
Urban High Density	81	53	14	148
Peri-Urban	17	6	3	26
Rural District Council	32	32	5	69
Rural Resettlement	13	12	2	27
Rural Commercial Farming	13	9	0	22
Mine	9	6	0	15
Total	177	145	41	363

The minute proportion of the parents (6%) who preferred to work abroad compared to 40 percent of the youths, suggests a shift in the aspirations that may be attributed to a change in the livelihood opportunities. Responses in Table 18 indicate that a larger proportion of youths from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to aspire to work abroad. Table 19 presents responses of youths regarding whether they preferred to work locally or abroad.

Table 19: Preferred work location of youths by gender

Gender of youths	Residence of youths	Where youths preferred to work			Total
		Local	Abroad	Either	
Male	Urban Low Density	2	10	4	16
	Medium Density	4	6	5	15
	Urban High Density	42	28	5	75
	Peri-Urban	9	1	2	12
	Rural District Council	17	16	3	36
	Rural Resettlement	6	5	1	12
	Rural Commercial Farming	7	4	0	11
	Mining Community	6	3	0	9
	Total	93	73	20	186
Female	Urban Low Density	2	7	2	11
	Medium Density	4	4	6	14

	Urban High Density	39	25	9	73
	Peri-Urban	8	5	1	14
	Rural District Council	15	16	2	33
	Rural Resettlement	7	7	1	15
	Rural Commercial Farming	6	5	0	11
	Mining Community	3	3	0	6
	Total	84	72	21	177

Over 48 percent of the youths from the urban low-density areas aspired to work abroad, compared to 40 percent of the youths from lower socio-economic groups.

Has there been a widening of the gap between the aspirations of the youths from poor and those from better-off socio-economic groups before and after economic liberalisation?

In the empirical survey addressing this question, the major indicator used to determine the socio-economic categorisation of the sample was their residence. Due to the development policies of the colonial era based on racial discrimination, Zimbabwe developed a dual economic system in which rural areas remained largely underdeveloped, while urban areas were divided into highly crowded 'townships' meant for the majority black people (the high-density suburbs), the medium density suburbs meant for the Asian and Coloured communities and the affluent sparsely populated suburbs for people of European origin. While the some indigenous black people have moved into both the urban medium density and low density, the European and Asian communities have not moved to the rural and high-density suburbs. The residential area of people has continued to be closely related to their socio-economic status. Other indicators of socio-economic background used in the study include background characteristics of the respondents such as, educational qualifications, professional qualifications, and livelihoods.

2.1.7 Widening of gap in educational aspirations

Did parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher educational aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?

Table 20 presents the educational aspirations of parents when young, by residential area.

Table 20: Educational aspiration of parents when young, by current residential area

Area of Residence		Education level aspired to						Total
		Primary	Junior Certificate	'O' Level	'A' Level	Degree	No response	
1.	Urban Low Density	0	0	3	0	4	0	7
2.	Urban Medium Density	0	0	7	0	4	0	11
3.	Urban High Density	2	4	63	4	37	1	111
4.	Peri-Urban	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
5.	Rural District Council	8	1	74	5	33	3	124
6.	Rural Resettlement	5	0	17	1	4	0	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	2	2	15	3	2	4	28
8.	Mining Community	0	0	9	3	1	0	13
	Total	17	7	189	16	86	8	323

Almost 27 percent of the parents aspired to continue with their education up to university level and attain degrees. Among those living currently in urban low-density areas, eight out of the 18 (i.e. approximately 44%) aspired to acquire degrees, compared with ten (i.e. over 55%) who aspired to stop at 'O' level. Among those living currently in urban high density and rural district council areas (i.e. low socio-economic level), almost 30% of them had aspired to continue with their education and attain university degrees. This is comparable to youths from urban high-density areas, 30% of who aspired to attain degrees. Although people residing in these areas are classified under the low socio-economic groups, their socio-economic status is higher than the labourers who reside in resettlement and commercial farming areas as well as those in mining communities. Here, the aspirations were much lower. Almost 73 percent of such parents did not aspire to go beyond 'O' level.

2.1.8 *Did youths from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher educational aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?*

Table 21 shows the educational aspirations of youth by current residential area.

Table 21: Educational aspirations of youth by current residential area

Area of Residence		Highest educational level aspired to								Total No.
		'O' Level		'A' Level		Degree		Not sure		
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	Urban Low Density	1	4	2	7	24	89	0	0	27
2	Medium Density	6	21	4	14	19	65	0	0	29
3	Urban High Density	31	21	9	6	10	72	1	1	148
4	Peri-Urban	4	15	7	27	15	58	0	0	26
5	Rural District Council	16	23	7	10	45	65	1	2	69
6	Rural Resettlement	9	33	5	19	12	44	1	4	27
7	Rural Commercial Farming	11	50	5	23	6	27	0	0	22
8	Mine	5	33	1	7	9	60	0	0	15
	Total	83	23	40	11	23	65	3	1	363

Overall, over 65 percent of the youths aspired to get degrees, compared to less than 27 percent among parents. The only noticeable low educational aspirations are among youths residing in commercial farming communities. As was the case with parents, youths from urban high density and rural district council areas, had aspirations that are comparable to those residing in medium and low-density urban areas. Table 22 classifies socio-economic background in terms of youths' fathers' job.

Table 22: Highest educational level aspired to by youths by father's job

Father's job	Highest educational level aspired to										Total
	'O' Level		'A' Level		Degree		Not sure		No response		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Unemployed	2	17	3	25	7	58	0	0	0	0	12
Unskilled	22	25	11	13	55	62	0	0	0	0	88
Semi-skilled	11	18	5	8	43	71	1	1.5	1	1.5	60
Professional	0	0	4	8	40	88	1	2	1	2	45
Don't know	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	2
Not	26	28	10	11	57	61	0	0	0	0	94

applicable											
Pensioner	4	25	1	6	11	69	0	0	0	0	16
Self employed	18	39	5	11	23	50	0	0	0	0	46
Total	83	23	40	11	23 7	65	2	0.5	2	0.5	363

When categorised in relation to the father's livelihood, a large proportion of youths from lower socio-economic groups still aspired to high levels of education. The educational aspirations of youths were therefore consistently high, irrespective of their socio-economic status. The data indicates that the educational aspirations of the youths were much higher than those of their parents when they were youths, which indicates an upward shift in the educational aspirations. However, there does not seem to be a widening of the gap between the aspirations of the youths from higher and those from the lower socio-economic backgrounds as hypothesised.

2.1.9 Do girls who aspire to proceed to higher levels of education tend to come from higher socio-economic backgrounds than boys?

Table 23 shows the educational aspirations of youth by gender and current residence.

Table 23: Educational aspirations of youth by gender and current residence

Residence of youths	Highest educational level aspired to	Gender of youths		Total
		Male	Female	
Urban Low Density	'O' Level	1	0	1
	'A' Level	2	0	2
	Degree	13	11	24
	Total	16	11	27
Medium Density	'O' Level	2	4	6
	'A' Level	1	3	4
	Degree	12	7	19
	Total	15	14	29
Urban High Density	'O' Level	13	18	31
	'A' Level	2	7	9
	Degree	59	48	107
	No response	1	0	1
	Total	75	73	148
Peri-Urban	'O' Level	0	4	4
	'A' Level	1	6	7
	Degree	11	4	15
	Total	12	14	26
Rural District Council	'O' Level	11	5	16
	'A' Level	4	3	7
	Degree	21	24	45

Residence of youths	Highest educational level aspired to	Gender of youths		Total
		Male	Female	
	Not sure	0	1	1
	Total	36	33	69
Rural Resettlement	'O' Level	4	5	9
	'A' Level	2	3	5
	Degree	6	6	12
	Not sure	0	1	1
	Total	12	15	27
Rural Commercial Farming	'O' Level	6	5	11
	'A' Level	4	1	5
	Degree	1	5	6
	Total	11	11	22
Mine	'O' Level	4	1	5
	'A' Level	1	0	1
	Degree	4	5	9
	Total	9	6	15

Overall, 68 percent of the male youths compared to 62 percent of the females aspired to university qualifications. The only areas where a higher proportion of females than males aspired to university were in the Rural District Council, Commercial Farming and Mining Communities. From the data in Table 23, there is no evidence to suggest that girls who aspire to proceed to higher levels of education tend to come from higher socio-economic backgrounds than boys.

2.1.10 Did parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher professional qualification aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?

Table 24 shows the highest professional qualification level of parents when they were still youths, by current residence.

Table 24: Highest professional qualification level of parents when youths, by current residence

	Residence of parent	Highest qualification level aspired		Total	
		None	College	University	
1.	Urban Low Density	0	3	4	7
2.	Urban Medium Density	0	7	4	11
3.	Urban High Density	8	67	36	111
4.	Peri-Urban	0	1	1	2
5.	Rural District Council	14	79	31	124
6.	Rural Resettlement	5	18	4	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	8	18	2	28
8.	Mine	0	12	1	13

Total	35	205	83	323
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As in the case with educational aspirations, professional qualification aspirations were generally high among parents from both high and low socio-economic backgrounds. It is only the respondents from the Rural Commercial Farming and Mining communities who had noticeably lower professional qualification aspirations. Only three out of 41 of the parents from these communities aspired to go to university, compare to those from other communities, over 40 percent of whom aspired to university qualifications. The lower aspirations among the farming and mining communities could also be due to their general low level of education. Children in commercial farming communities particularly had the least opportunities to go to school throughout the colonial period. Most of the children were expected to work on the farms as illiterate labourers who would not demand higher wages or go to towns and cities to seek better livelihoods.

2.1.11 Did youths from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher professional qualification aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?

Table 25 presents the highest professional aspirations of youth by current residence.

Table 25: Highest professional aspirations of youth, by current residence

	Residence of Youth	Highest professional qualification level aspired by youth			Total
		College	University	No response	
1.	Urban Low Density	4	23	0	27
2.	Medium Density	11	18	0	29
3.	Urban High Density	42	104	2	148
4.	Peri-Urban	9	17	0	26
5.	Rural District Council	22	47	0	69
6.	Rural Resettlement	12	15	0	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	16	5	1	22
8.	Mine	4	11	0	15
	Total	120	240	3	363

Compared to less than 27 percent among parents, over 66 percent of the youths aspired to get university qualifications. This is consistent with their responses regarding educational qualifications. The only group that had a higher proportion who did not aspire to attain university qualifications is that from the Rural Commercial Farming communities. A higher proportion of youths from the higher socio-economic background (over 73%) aspired to go to university than those from lower socio-economic groups (just under 65%).

2.1.12 *Did parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher livelihood aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?*

Table 26 shows the level of job aspired to by parents when they were still young, by current residence.

Table 26: Level of job aspired to by parents when young, by current residence

	Residence of respondent	Level of job aspired to			Total
		High	Medium	Low	
1.	Urban Low Density	4	2	1	7
2.	Urban Medium Density	3	7	1	11
3.	Urban High Density	25	67	19	111
4.	Peri-Urban	1	1	0	2
5.	Rural District Council	31	77	16	124
6.	Rural Resettlement	1	22	4	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	3	13	12	28
8.	Mine	1	9	3	13
	Total	69	198	56	323

Although both parents and youths the livelihoods were asked to indicate the specific livelihoods they aspire to, the different jobs listed have been clustered in rank order from High to Medium and then Low for analysis purposes. Just over 21 percent of the parents aspired to high-level professional jobs such as Medical Doctor, Managing Director and other high professions.

2.1.13 *Did youths from higher socio-economic backgrounds have higher livelihood aspirations than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?*

Table 27 shows the level of job aspired to by youth, by current residence.

Table 27: Level of job aspired to by youth, by current residence

	Residence of youth	Level of job aspired to				Total
		High	Medium	Low	Any job	
1.	Urban Low Density	20	4	3	0	27
2.	Medium Density	18	7	3	1	29
3.	Urban High Density	94	41	11	2	148
4.	Peri-Urban	15	6	5	0	26
5.	Rural District Council	32	26	8	3	69
6.	Rural Resettlement	14	9	0	4	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	4	7	9	2	22
8.	Mining Community	4	7	3	1	15
	Total	201	107	42	13	363

Among the youths, over 55 percent of them who aspired to high-level jobs across a wide range of professional fields. When considered on their own, almost 68 percent of the youths from the higher socio-economic groups aspired to high-level professional jobs, compared to 53 percent among those from lower socio-economic groups. Among the youths from the Rural Commercial Farming and Mining communities, less than 30 percent of them aspired to high-level professional jobs. Over 40 percent of them aspired to low-level jobs such as: Clerk, Secretary, Farm Worker, and Bus Driver. Almost 52 percent of the youths from these communities aspired to middle-level jobs. The proportion of those who aspired to high-level jobs was even lower among parents, only less than 10 percent of whom had such inclination. However, a lower proportion of parents (just over 36%) had aspired to low-level jobs, while over 53 percent aspired to medium-level jobs, particularly teaching and nursing. Among both parents and youths, the educational and qualification aspirations were slightly higher than the livelihood aspirations. This was especially pronounced among the youths, over 66 percent of whom aspired to university qualifications while the proportion that aspired to high-level professional jobs was 55 percent.

Responding to the question whether they preferred to be self-employed, given the chance, over 94 percent of the youths indicated that they would. The popularity of self-employment among the youths was also consistent with the parents' aspirations for their children. 66 percent of them aspired for their children to become self-employed. Less than 10 percent of the parents aspired their children to work in either the public or private sector of the economy. This is in spite of the fact that these are the two sectors that currently employ the bulk of the working population in the country. However, since the introduction of economic liberalisation in the early 1990s, the number of people engaged in self-employment enterprises has risen sharply as retrenchments have increased in the formal employment sector.

2.1.14 Are youths from higher socio-economic backgrounds more likely to get extra tuition / lessons than those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?

Table 28 presents the youths who had received extra tuition, by current residence.

Table 28: Extra tuition for youth, by current residence

	Residence of youths	Whether they had received extra tuition / lessons		Total
		Yes	No	
1.	Urban Low Density	20	7	27
2.	Medium Density	16	13	29
3.	Urban High Density	68	80	148
4.	Peri-Urban	9	17	26

	Residence of youths	Whether they had received extra tuition / lessons		Total
		Yes	No	
5.	Rural District Council	32	37	69
6.	Rural Resettlement	16	11	27
7.	Rural Commercial Farming	2	20	22
8.	Mine	4	11	15
	Total	167	196	363

As the competition for jobs has intensified, parents have increasingly sought ways to improve their children's chances of succeeding in the examinations. The strategies range from seeking places in private schools that tend to have better facilities and more qualified teachers, to arranging for extra tuition for children. In some instances, teachers have been accused of deliberately not doing enough during the normal lessons so that more children can come for extra tuition that they offer to supplement their salaries. From the sample of youths interviewed for this study, over 46 percent of them indicated that they had received some form of extra tuition. When analysed by gender, 48 percent of the females compared to 44 percent of the male youths had received extra tuition. From the sample of parents, just over 5 percent indicated that they had received extra tuition during their time at school. There has therefore been a noticeable increase in the number of youths receiving extra tuition today compared to when the parents were youths.

Among the youths from the urban low and medium density areas, (higher socio-economic background) over 64 percent of them had received extra tuition compared to only 16 percent among the youths from the rural commercial farming and mining communities. Youths from the higher socio-economic background all resided in urban areas where there were more opportunities at various schools and colleges, as well as from private individuals (usually teachers offering such services). The number of youths who had received extra tuition in each socio-economic group depended on how many parents could afford the fees. Many parents from the lower socio-economic groups were even finding it difficult to pay the normal school fees. Economic liberalisation had resulted in a significant increase in school fees at both private and government schools. Only 25 percent of the youths whose fathers were unemployed received extra tuition, compared to 71 percent of youths whose fathers were engaged in high-level professional jobs.

Table 29 presents the type of extra tuition received youth, by current residence.

Table 29: Type of extra tuition received by youth, by current residence

Residence of respondent	Type of extra tuition received				Total
	Mass	Individual / Private	Both	None	
Urban Low Density	8	12	0	7	27
Medium Density	6	9	1	13	29
Urban High Density	60	4	3	81	148
Peri-Urban	8	0	0	18	26
Rural District Council	30	1	1	37	69
Rural Resettlement	16	0	0	11	27
Rural Commercial Farming	2	0	0	20	22
Mine	4	0	0	11	15
Total	134	26	5	198	363

Almost all the youths who had received private extra tuition were from the low and medium density areas. Again, this is because of the expenses involved.

3 Discussion

The study indicates that there has been a shift in the qualification structure of the youths before and after economic liberalisation. The aspirations of the parents when they were youths are consistently lower than those of youths today. This conclusion is drawn on the basis that parents represent the pre-liberalisation youths while responses of today's youths represent the post-liberalisation period. However, the aspirations of youths between the two generations were also influenced by other factors that are not related to economic liberalisation. For instance, the educational qualifications and socio-economic background of today's youths were much higher than those of their parents. Since the educational background of parents seems to be related to the aspiration level of their children, this could partly explain the higher aspirations of today's youths, in comparison to those to the pre-liberalisation period.

The data collected indicates that generally, the aspirations of today's youths were consistently high, irrespective of their socio-economic background. Differences were however noticed among the commercial farming and mining communities, whose aspirations much lower than those of youths from the urban medium and low density areas. It was also noted that low socio-economic background children from the urban high-density and peri-urban areas had aspirations

comparable to those of higher socio-economic background children from urban medium and low-density areas.

In terms of education, qualifications and livelihoods, the low aspirations could be due to the lack of career guidance and counselling among the children who attended the poor schools in commercial farming and mining communities. The children seemed to lack information, role models and exposure to influence their career choices. This is evident in that poor children who attend affluent schools seem to have higher aspirations, similar to those of children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. In some cases, while children from higher socio-economic backgrounds have high career aspirations, they actually tend to have a 'care-free' attitude towards their schoolwork. This is particularly true of children whose parents have attained higher socio-economic status even though their educational and professional qualifications are low. It appears the parents present themselves as role models of economic success without academic qualifications. They seem to feel that their future livelihoods are secure and therefore do not need to work that hard at school. On the other hand, children from poor backgrounds tend to work harder at school so that they can escape the poverty trap.

