**Statement of Ethical Clearance**

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between November, 2015 and March, 2016 and the locations of the fieldwork/research are specifically Kabba (being a town), Okene (a town) and Lokoja (being a city), all in Kogi State, a North-Central region of Nigeria. Kogi State is one of the 36 states that make up Nigeria (See Map of Nigeria showing Kogi State being the study areas). The consent of the institutions concerned was sought and a formal approval letters was obtained (gatekeepers’ letters) to conduct the research. This enabled the researcher to proceed to the different sites where the research participants are located. Thus, accessing and recruitment of participants on arrival on the field was enabled.

The starting point for preparation for the fieldwork began with the approval of this research by authorities of the selected higher institutions. The next step was to obtain ethical approval from the School of Social Science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Thereafter, the researcher proceeded on fieldwork. On arrival in the field for the in-School, the researcher visited key administrators (the Registrar and Provosts) of each of the selected institutions for further discussion and reminder about the need to conduct the research in their locality. For the out-of school respondents, the researcher approached the selected young people for the individual in-depth interviews. As for the out-of school participants, there was no formal letter of approval; the individual consent of the young people was sought as they were between the ages of 18 and 28. In this case, the respondent’s personal approval to participate was through verbal communication. The out-of School young people were located at different forms of apprenticeship programmes or engaged in some form of economic activities. The study considered the geographical accessibility of respondents in terms of travelling to the research sites. Considering this factor, the snowball sampling method was employed in recruiting the out-of school young people for the in-depth interviews (IDIs). As with those in-schools, research participants were briefed on the research objectives and invited to participate in the FGDs and interviews. The interviews were designed to exclude the interference of staff members. This was to ensure a free and conducive atmosphere for the young people to voice their opinion. The administration of questionnaire, in-depth interviews and the FGDs used the random and cluster sampling techniques to select the desired number of respondents for the study. The researcher visited those classes to be involved in the study during school hours and sought the consent of students in those classes and negotiated time for the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires.

In these recruitment processes, the research took note of the total number of respondents (both males and females) expected for the study. Following the suggestions of Mason (2002) on qualitative sampling, this study also included the use of purposive sampling. The process began by identifying students within the specified age range (18 and 28 years), who were invited to take part in the study. This enabled the researcher to determine their ‘information richness’ and to negotiate convenient times and venues with those willing to participate in the in-depth interviews and the FGDs respectively. This exercise enabled the researcher to meet with the potential participants for the questionnaires, individual interviews (in-depth interviews) and the FGDs. In each of the institution, the FGDs were undertaken in two sessions: males’ and females’ session. The researcher ensured a relaxed atmosphere in which they could freely discuss the topics for the study.

The study also emphasized the ethical commitment of the study in ensuring that the principles of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent were upheld throughout the study. It further considered the issue of reflexivity for enhancing credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. .