The Imprint of Education: a longitudinal cohort study of African alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program

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Aims of the Study

1. Understand the impact of the Scholars Program by measuring **Alumni impact on their worlds**
2. How to improve **the impact of Scholars as agents in the social and economic transformation of Africa**
3. Links between **socio-economic disadvantage**, **education** and **development**
4. Evidence of **individual**, **structural**, **contextual** and **programmatic** factors that mediate outcomes

The
Imprint of
Education

A 5-year longitudinal cohort study of Scholar Alumni

Learning Activity 1: Tertiary and Secondary School Alumni Quantitative Tracer Study (ATS)

5 Wave Survey

All Tertiary Alumni & sample of Secondary Alumni from 2017-19

Countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda & 'Diaspora'

Learning Activity 2: Research-as-Intervention Qualitative Study (RAIQS)

Rapid Ethnography

Alumni Conference

In-depth Ind. Interviews

Keeping in Touch profiles

Key Informant Interviews

Social Network Interviews

Learning Activities 3-5: Contextual Learning

Insight: Transformative Leadership

Hindsight: Reimagining African Universities

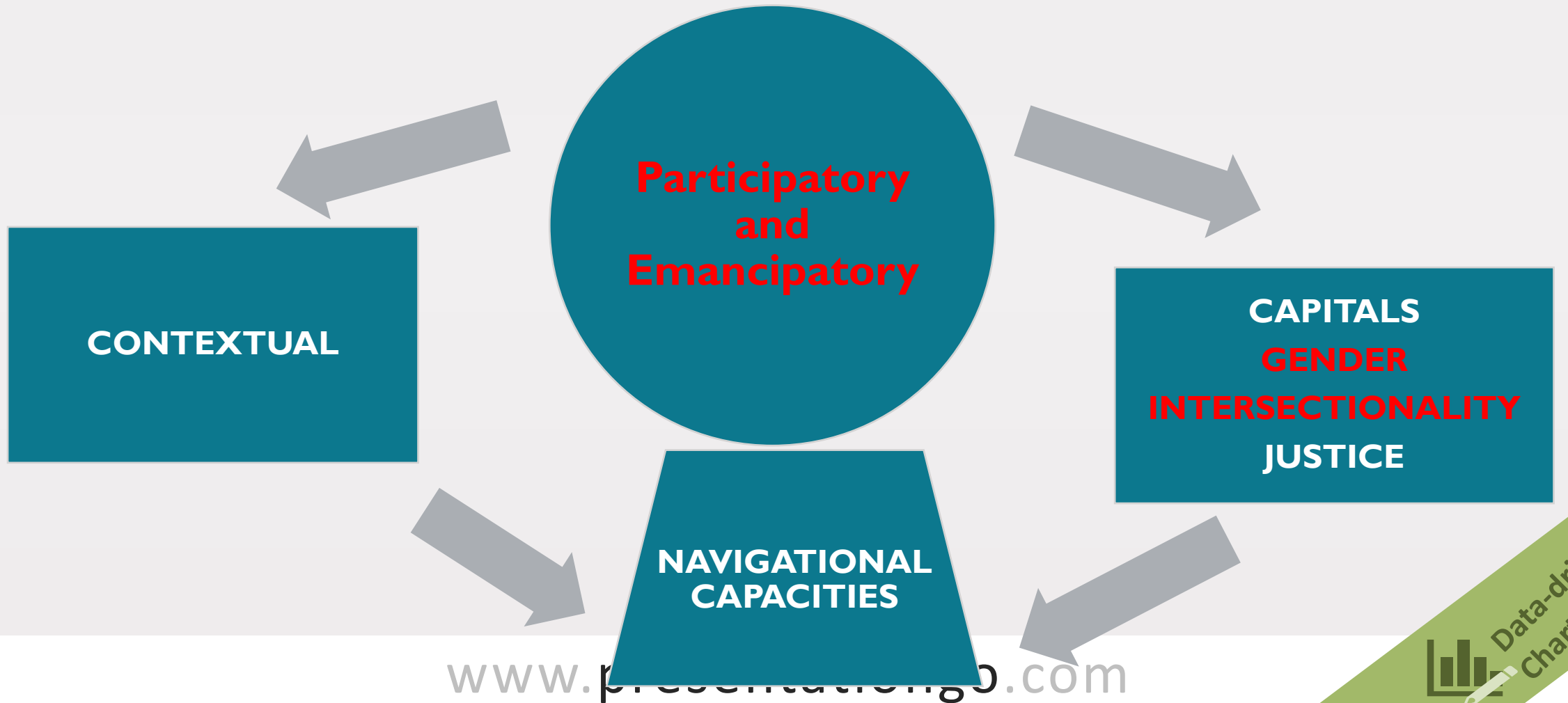**Foresight: Barriers to Youth Livelihoods**

Influence Goals

1. How higher education institutions can attract and support **DIVERSE** young people to change Africa

2. How **PATHWAYS** from university to dignified and fulfilling work can be better understood, strengthened and scaled

3. How young African **WOMEN** can lead transformation

4. How **GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESS AND FUNDERS** can better support student success.

THEORETICAL FRAMING

Participatory and Emancipatory

CONTEXTUAL

CAPITALS
GENDER
INTERSECTIONALITY
JUSTICE

NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITIES

Data-driven Charts

Intersectionality

A combination of social identities, including race, social class, gender, and sexuality intersect to form "interlocking systems of oppression" (Hill-Collins 1993) that affect the ways people see the world around them, their individual and group life chances.

Various forms of marginality such as poverty, gender, disability, religion, geography and age, intersect in a matrix of oppression or domination

Intersectionality

Feminist scholars embrace intersectionality as a useful tool for analysis, advocacy and policy development that addresses multiple discriminations and helps us understand how different sets of identities impact on access to rights and opportunities in communities and institutions.

African feminists embrace the concept of intersectionality because of its synergy with postcolonial critiques of power relations and its departure from a "unitary view of 'women' to include co-constructed identities, significantly race and social class, that shape relative power in families and communities.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality theory provides a bedrock for our analysis across this study.

Analysing reciprocity through an intersectional lens enables recognition of the power imbalances and hierarchies at work in African contexts, operating at different levels and taking multiple forms, from "gender relations, asset ownership and resource rights" to "patriarchal systems, political decision-making, age, race and ethnicity, among others"

Intersectionality

Analysing transformative leadership through an intersectional lens will help us understand how alumni in their practice of leadership experience both privilege and discrimination at the intersection of various marginalised identities.

Analysing emancipatory research through an intersectional lens facilitates the inclusion of marginalised groups in the research process, so that Alumni participants become agents in the research process and exercise ownership over knowledge produced about them and their lived experience (Lynch 1999).
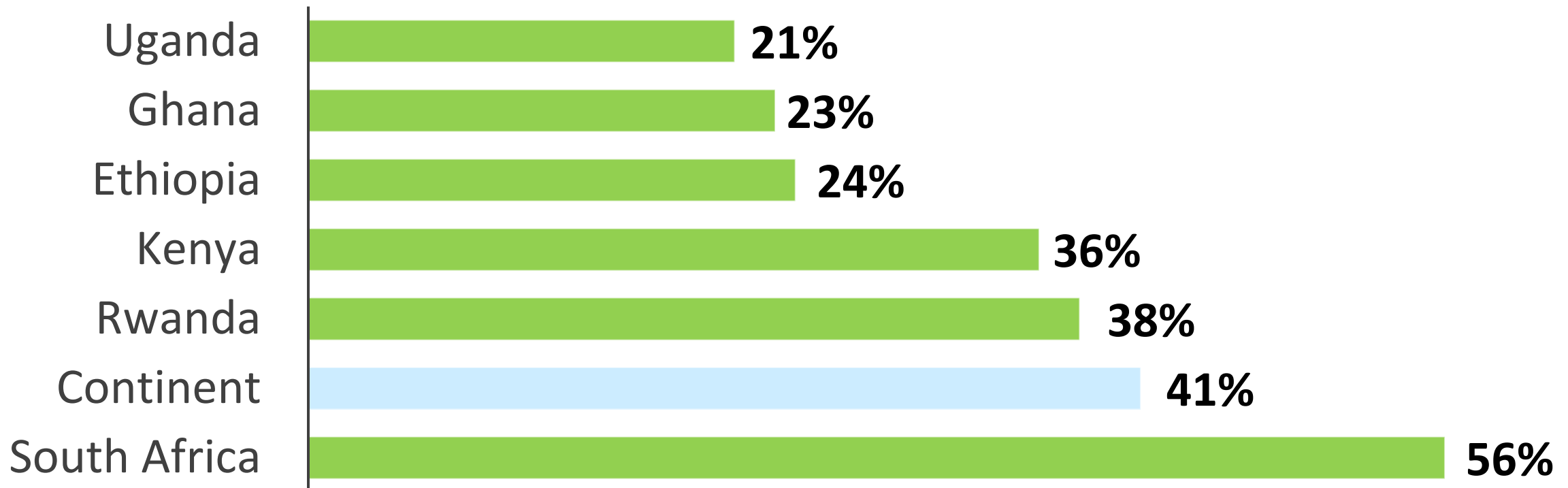
Participatory/Emancipatory Research

1. **"Recognises** the value of **engaging** in the research process those who are intended to be the beneficiaries, users and **stakeholders** of research" (Biggs)

2. **Key feature - location of power,** commitment to the democratisation & demystification of scientific research

3. **Community** members as knowledgeable **collaborators**

4. **Underlying values -** action-oriented, dialogue, relevant and iterative, justice (Lewin – 'The Northern Tradition')

5. **Core elements:** Mutual respect and trust, accountability and reflexivity, participative and interactive, placing the participant at the centre (Freire – The 'Southern' tradition)

The continent has high levels of poverty but those countries in the study are somewhat above the average poverty rate

Proportion of people who live below the poverty line

Country	Percentage
Uganda	21%
Ghana	23%
Ethiopia	24%
Kenya	36%
Rwanda	38%
Continent	41%
South Africa	56%

Ethiopia has the lowest gender equity score, and South Africa the highest
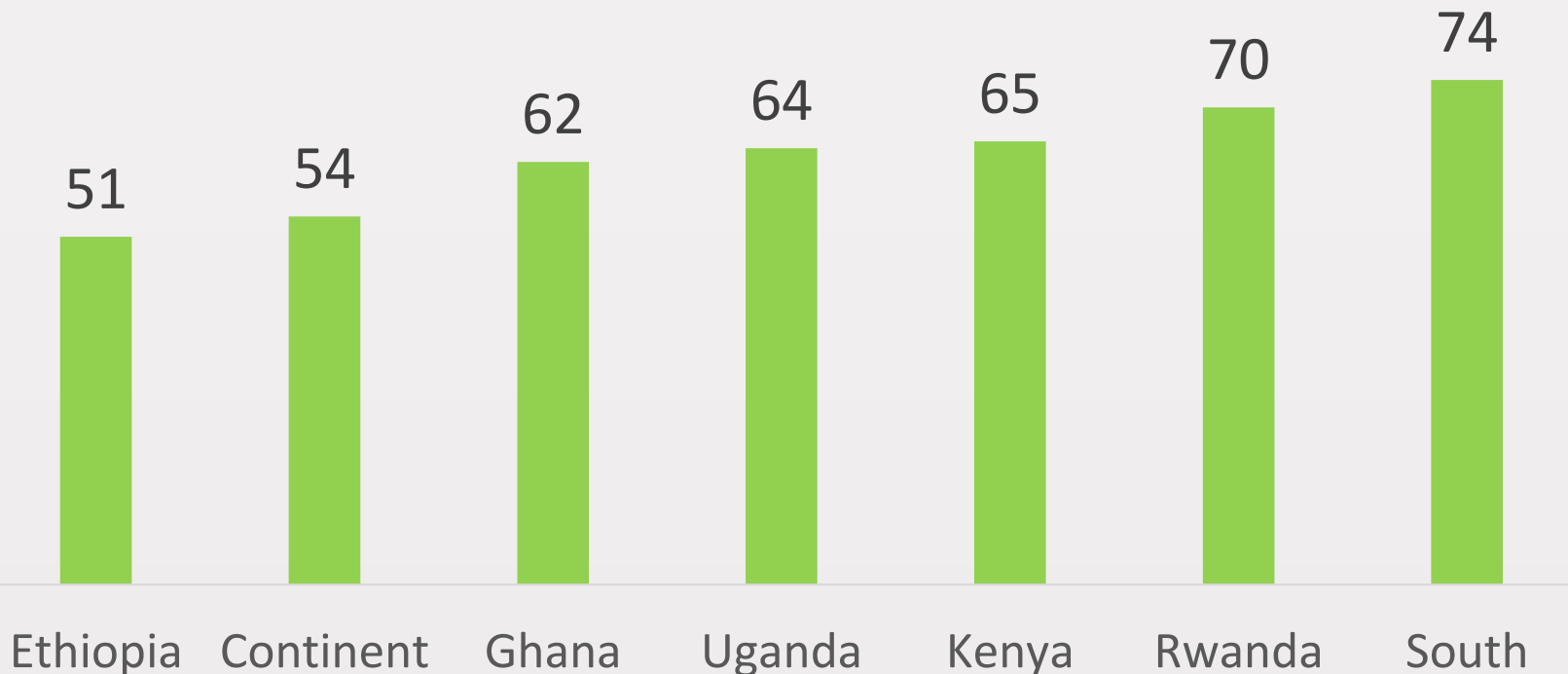
Gender Equity Score

Gender Equity Index

(education, reproductive healthcare services, law, institutional representation, legal rights, household rights)

0 = complete inequality

100 = complete equality

Ethiopia	Continent	Ghana	Uganda	Kenya	Rwanda	South Africa
51	54	62	64	65	70	74

Disability rates in sample countries are lower than the global average of 16%; our sample is much lower

Disability data

Continent 6%

Ethiopia 9%

Ghana 4%

Rwanda 5%

South Africa 8%

Uganda 12%

Survey sample
3%
(mostly sight)

Interview sample
0,02%
(sight)

Being African is the most important aspect of identity

Secondary Alumni

African – 29%

My gender – 23%

Religion – 17%

Age – 10%

Tertiary Alumni

African – 57%
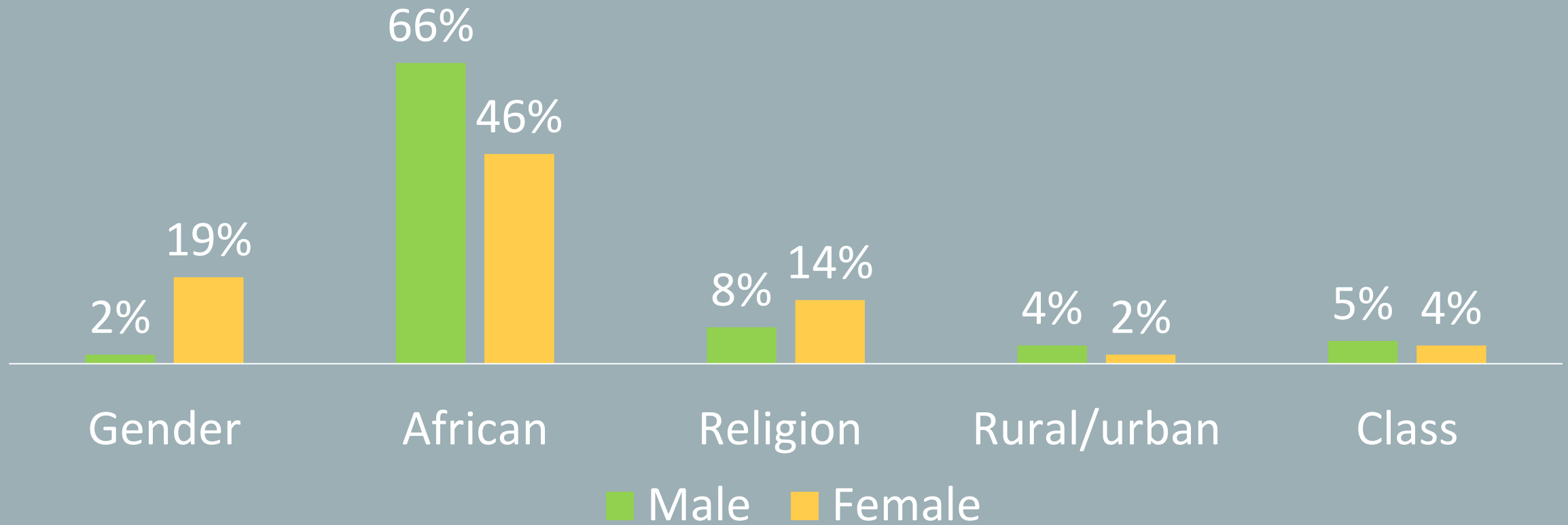
My gender – 11%

Religion – 11%

Age – 5%

Progress and Pitfalls

23 to 29 July, 2023
Diamonds Leisure Beach & Golf Resort
Diani Beach, Kenya

Tertiary Alumni's most important descriptor by sex

Females were more likely to choose 'my gender' than males

The Spirit of Kanju: leaders transforming Africa

Leadership as:

- Collaboration
- Action
- Innovation
- Love/Ubuntu

Alumni Behind the Lens

-19 alumni (11 women)

-Cellphones, ring lights, mics

-Interview leaders

What is social network interviewing?

Social Network Interviewing (SNI) is a methodological research and intervention innovation:

- Involves interviews conducted by research participants with members of their community and networks without the presence of the researcher.

- …has as its goal some form of intervention or emancipation for those who are participating.
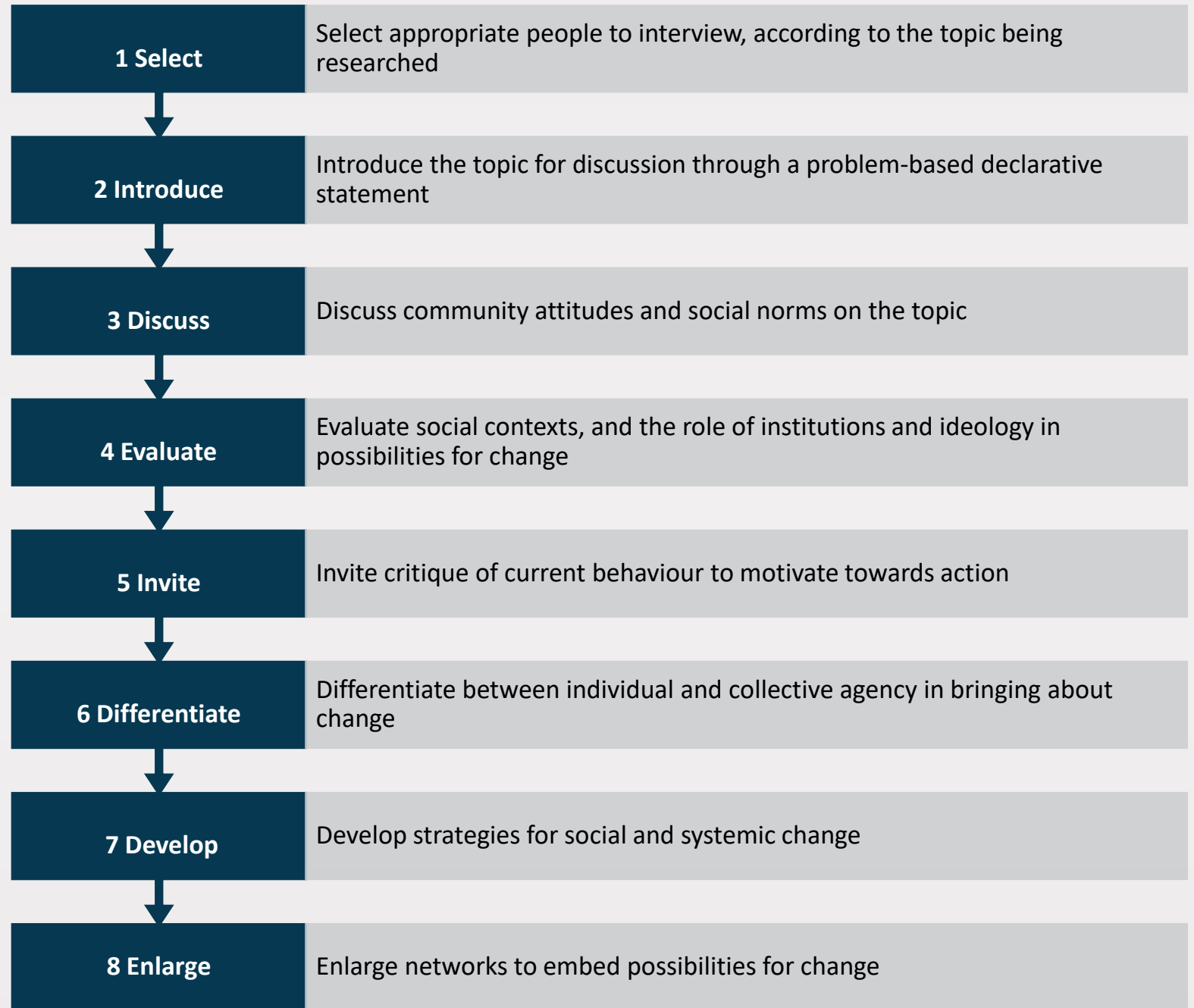
Why social network interviewing?

- It is a reaction to extractive, non-collaborative and objectifying research - Global North research.

- Helps the interviewer and interviewee gain new insight and potentially change their understanding - intervention.

- An alternative to the standard interviewing technique that could address shortfalls - emancipatory possibilities.

- Helps us understand behaviour by focusing attention on the relationships between individuals and society.

- Creates opportunities for the participants to engage in self-evaluation, in relation to those impacted by their choices and actions.

- SNI spreads the benefits participants accrue from their participation in activities related to the formal research process, to the larger community.

- Provides space for discussions of the effects of identities, culture, poverty and inequality on opportunity and behavior.

SNI AIMS

1) **Helps participants marshal their thoughts** about a particular issue, converting those thoughts into a critical mind set;

2) Exposes participants to a wider **network**;

3) **Facilitates helpful exchange** between participants and relevant community members;

4) **Develops** participant **capitals** through this exchange;

5) **Promotes identification and information sharing** among marginalised or disadvantaged young people and;

6) **Promotes reflection** for the purpose of positive internal/external and individual/collective action in participants

7) **Capacity/skills** development

Eight stages of Social Network Interviewing

1 Select	Select appropriate people to interview, according to the topic being researched
2 Introduce	Introduce the topic for discussion through a problem-based declarative statement
3 Discuss	Discuss community attitudes and social norms on the topic
4 Evaluate	Evaluate social contexts, and the role of institutions and ideology in possibilities for change
5 Invite	Invite critique of current behaviour to motivate towards action
6 Differentiate	Differentiate between individual and collective agency in bringing about change
7 Develop	Develop strategies for social and systemic change
8 Enlarge	Enlarge networks to embed possibilities for change

	Study of young fathers in Teenage Tata (Swartz & Bhana, 2009)	Youth risk-taking in loveLife (Swartz et al. 2011)	Strategies for student success in Studying while black (Swartz et al. 2018)
Aims of the study	1) To understand how young men living in poverty, and those involved with them, experience fatherhood; 2) To understand the factors that help or hinder young men's engagement in the parenting of their children.	1) To understand the value that young people associate with loveLife (a youth focused HIV prevention initiative in South Africa); 2) The factors that impact their life choices; 3) Their tolerance of risk.	1) To understand the social factors that aid or hinder students' success; 2) How race, class and gender impact on students' perceptions and experiences of success; 3) How students use personal and social agency to create opportunities and success.
Target population/target group	27 'Black' and 'Coloured' young men who were aged between 14 and 20 at the time they first became fathers.	61 youth aged between 18 and 23 who were involved in a loveLife programme.	80 first year students enrolled in university
Advantages of SNI	1) To assist in building the relationship and establishing rapport between young fathers and their community. 2)To provide a means of learning for young fathers that they might otherwise not have received.	1) To assist youth participants to reflect over time on their initial answers 2) To help youth reflect on problems associated with opportunity and risk 3) To establish social connections	1) Inspire identification 2) Motivate 3) Promote information sharing 4) Foster community support

Teenage Tata

SNI to study young fathers within their communities.

- Research participants interviewed members of their social networks; parents, extended family, family of the mother of the children, teachers, friends and religious leaders, based on questions collaboratively developed.

- What kind of father do you think I have been since my baby was born? What advice do you have for me about being a young father?

- Opportunity for young fathers to engage with people who share their lives about their feelings and thoughts related to fatherhood.

- Created space for the young men to engage in self-evaluation in relation to those impacted by their choices and actions.

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A grandfather commented to his young father grandson:

"The culture forced us to stand for you at the beginning when the family had to tell you that you make their child [pregnant]. So, they could not talk with you because of your age. That's how the culture made you a good father. But it also made you a bad father because of excluding you in many things".

This community elder speaks of how social networks shape behaviour. In another example, a friend shows how social networks support positive changes in behaviour by drawing attention to shortcomings in reflecting ways.

Studying while Black

Select Kinds of people to be interviewed (Choose 3-5):

1. A person from your home town who never went to university
2. A student you consider more privileged than you
3. A student you consider less privileged than you
4. A staff contact from your previous school
5. A person in a university leadership position
6. A recent graduate that you know
7. A student like you
8. A person who works at student support services
9. A student who dropped out of university this past year
10. A person you consider to have helped you get to varsity
11. A person you consider to have helped you over this last year of university
12. A family member who has been to university

II. Introduce	*Many students struggle to both enrol at and successfully complete university. This research study aims to find out why this is so and what could be done about it.*
III. Discuss	1. **Why is it important** for young South Africans to succeed at university? 2. In your opinion, what are **some of the struggles** facing university students in South Africa, and what are some of the reasons for these struggles?
IV. Evaluate	1. In your opinion, **what affects someone's success** at university? 2. **Who is responsible** for students succeeding at University?
V. Invite	1. From what you know of me (or students in general), **what do I do that stops (sabotages) me** from succeeding at varsity? What should I be doing?

VI. Differentiate	1. How does *racism and gender discrimination* affect student's lives? 2. How is *success* at university affected by *people's backgrounds*? (Prompt: gender, education, race, social class)
VII. Develop	1. In your opinion, *who should be helping students succeed at university*, and what should they be doing to help? 2. What steps have you taken (or are you taking) in order to be successful in your life?
VIII. Enlarge	1. *Who else should I talk to* that might be able to help me to be successful at university?

TIE Problem Statement

Many young graduates remain unemployed, unestablished in their own business or experience long delays to get to where they want to be, and often do not get the jobs or roles for which they studied or trained. This research aims to find out why this might be so and what can be done to change this

- **A prospective employer** i.e., a person/organisation you are likely to work with in the future (meaning you have made some effort to establish connections, or you have previously applied for an opportunity)

- **A desired employer** i.e., a person/organisation that you envision/dream of working with in the future

- **A mentor** i.e., a professional advisor with whom you have a relationship or someone who you want to mentor you in future

- **A job role model** i.e., a person/organisation whose career trajectory/position you admire and would like to follow

- **An entrepreneur** i.e., a full-time entrepreneur whose path you admire

- If you are currently working, **your current employer** i.e., a person/organisation that you are currently working for

- If you are currently studying, **your current academic advisor/supervisor** i.e., someone whose work or position you aspire to emulate, an academic role model or mentor *please consult ethics note below

- **Someone in systemic leadership** i.e., local or national government involved in youth policy, youth development, youth ministry, youth labour e.g., Minster of youth, Minister of labour, youth NGO worker

- **A 'high-flying' peer**, this is someone you know from your time at university, it could be a friend or peer who you deem to be successful in their career at present, including an entrepreneur

- **A 'low-flying' peer**, this is someone you know from your time at university, it could be a friend or peer who is now struggling to make a career – they feel stuck in life and are likely unemployed with no immediate prospects

- **HR consultant/Recruiter**, this is a Human Resource consultant/professional or Recruiter who works specifically with young people.

- **1 of your parents**, this is your mother, father or 1 of your main guardians growing up

- SNI can be extended to work with other marginalized groups around issues such as work, displacement, disability, mental health, and even civic engagement etc.

- SNIs bring together research and intervention and form part of a Southern approach to knowledge production.

- SNI is a rich addition to existing research and intervention methods… an evolving contribution toward the emancipation of both those researching and being researched in the Global South and beyond.

LA5 structural Barriers to youth livelihoods

1. 8 Young African Research Fellows
2. Co-constructed curriculum
3. Individual research papers
4. Podcast series: *Hustling the African Dream*
5. Virtual museum on youth livelihoods

✓ Space and place
✓ Time and change

✓ Bodies

✓ Money

What must change

Mastercard Foundation and Institutional partners need to do more work with Scholars to build an understanding around identities, and how they open up and limit opportunities in order to address structural barriers

A tweet to summarise

African alumni: bridging gaps & defying odds! From high agency aspirations in employment to low aspirations linked to challenges and unemployment. Amidst disparities, gender, identity and faith shape African Alumni unique paths. #AfricanAlumni #IdentityMatters #FaithMatters

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What we'd still like to know

1. In what ways has your university/scholarship experience addressed your primary identities? How could it address them better in the future for others? (African, Gender/Sex; Religion; Age)?

2. Should other identities that were rated lower also be addressed? (sexuality, ethnicity/race; geography – urban/rural)? How? Why?