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**Elements of Popular Education in the learning activities of a new
social movement: a case study of the social movement Equal
Education**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters in Philosophy (Development Studies)

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Abstract

Activism contains many educational activities and opportunities for learning. This study investigates the ways in which people participate and learn through their involvement in new social movements. The case study is a social movement/NPO (Non-Profit Organisation) called Equal Education in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Besides lobbying government for policy reform, Equal Education mobilises learner and parent communities to engage with issues of education and learning and thus lends itself well to a study of learning through activism. Using theories of critical pedagogy, this study will outline components of popular education and then examine whether learning in the collective mobilisation of Equal Education exhibit any of these elements. Four months of field-research involving participant observation, interviews and document analysis, provided qualitative data that indicated that participant involvement has an impact on participants – widening their perspectives; increasing knowledge of community and socio-political issues; developing leadership capacity and organisational skills as well as allowing them to share their experiences and prior knowledge so as to contribute to the movement's production of counter-hegemonic content. Teaching and learning transpire both within specific intentional structures and informally through organisational activities and interaction. This is characteristic of learning in a popular education context as described by the literature. In contrast, the findings also indicated limited levels of bottom-up participation in agenda-setting as the leaders in the movement navigated the tension between efficiency and democratic participation.

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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I, **Ferron Pedro of 16 De La Rey Road, Parow Valley, Cape Town, South Africa** do hereby declare that I empower the University of Cape Town to produce, for the purpose of research, either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation entitled *Elements of Popular Education in the learning activities of a new social movement: A case study of the social movement Equal Education* in any manner whatsoever.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
EE	Equal Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
RDP	Redistribution and Development Programme
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
DBE	Department of Basic Education

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Introduction

Popular education has been a key component of progressive social movements throughout their history (Valley, 2007). Through their involvement in mass action and organisational strategy, participants in social movements that entail strong elements of popular education increase their critical awareness of power relations and social issues (Flowers, 2005). In South Africa, 'new social movements' have emerged in the post-apartheid context as an attempt for ordinary people to be active citizens and genuinely engage in democratic processes by leveraging popular power to ensure that their needs are addressed (Ballard, et al., 2006). This participation has been given depth as people learn through collective mobilisation. The considered challenge to the status quo and the rendering of a democratic alternative is at the heart of popular education. The case study, Equal Education (EE), includes a wide range of community participants who collectively mobilise to work for changes in the formal education system. This study aims to describe elements of popular education in contemporary activism; to gather and document the views of participants on their work in EE – specifically on what they perceive to have learnt or gained from their participation - and then to evaluate their stories in terms of theories of critical pedagogy

1.1. Service delivery and new social movements

My work with Equal Education was initiated by an interest in the activities of post-apartheid new social movements as sites of the struggle for survival of the poor and marginalised in South Africa. Though the South African economy has grown steadily since 1994, the quality of life for the average poor South African has not. In fact, the disparity between rich and poor has grown since the end of apartheid and the opening up of the economy (Terreblanche, 2009). In 2006 "the poorest 20 per cent of the population, which is approximately 10 million people, received only 1, 7 per cent of the income... [while] the richest 20.0 per cent of the population...received 72.5 per cent of total income" (2009, p. 109). The introduction of a service delivery model based on private sector principles, particularly cost-recovery strategies (like pre-paid electricity meters) have meant that many poor people have struggled to afford basic services like water and electricity (Bond, 2000). As a result of government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, the rapid implementation of international trade agreements and the consequent rise in cheap

imports, considerable jobs have been lost, especially in the manufacturing sector (Kotze, 2004). In the context of government's failure to deliver basic services adequately, the implementation of cost-recovery policies and privatisation of services as well as high levels of inequality and high unemployment rates, the last decade has seen a huge upsurge in the number of service delivery protests in the country. As material conditions remained unchanged and in some cases deteriorated, post-apartheid optimism turned into frustration. As a result of perceived government failings, poor communities became dissatisfied and frustrated and as a result, many new social movements have emerged and have begun to organise around issues of the delivery of basic needs and services like housing, electricity and water. Distinct from liberation movement organisations that fought against the apartheid government, new social movements have come about in opposition to post-apartheid state policies and actions (McKinley, 2006). New social movements in this context are those groups that organise to challenge service delivery failures and grievances relating to HIV/AIDS treatment, land redistribution, water and electricity cut-offs, housing evictions, forced removals and education failures (McKinley, 2006). Social movement activist and author, Ashwin Desai, describes these new social movements as being "the only relevant post-1994 social force challenging the very distribution of power in society, not sticking to gradualist, corporatist and nation-building script" (Desai, 2003). Though disruptive to the current social order, some argue that the mobilisation of new social movements is in fact good for democratic consolidation in South Africa because their activities increase the leverage of citizenry and increase political uncertainty and in doing so, keep politicians vigilant and responsive to the needs to citizenry (Ballard, et al., 2006). In this light, activism in social movements can be seen as an important way for ordinary people to participate in democratic processes.

1.2. The Crisis in Education

Service delivery failures extend to the provision of quality education for South African children. Graeme Bloch writes: "There is no shortage of evidence showing how badly the South African education system is performing. International comparisons evaluating literacy, numeracy and science ability clearly show that South African children are not getting it" (2009, p. 17). This is marked in the most recent assessment tests administered by the

Department of Basic Education which reflect that “the national average performance of Grade 6 pupils was 28 per cent for literacy and 30 per cent for numeracy; Grade 3 pupils scored an average of 35 per cent in literacy and 28 per cent in numeracy” (Anthony, 2011). A review of literature on the current state of education in South Africa reveals that there is some consensus among researchers around why the South African education system is failing so badly. Critics argue that there are a number of reasons for the poor educational outcomes including the legacy of apartheid, poor policy choices, hasty implementation of OBE, high levels of poverty and inequality in society in general, perceptions of recalcitrance on the part of teacher unions resulting in the neglect of learner interests in favour of the interests of teachers, inadequate teacher training and skills shortages in the teaching profession which lead to ineffective and mismanaged schools, infrastructure backlogs, poor communication between the Department of Basic Education and schools as well as inadequate engagement by government with communities (Maree, 2010). There is clearly a growing public distress about the quality of schooling, poor annual Grade 12 exam results as well as the failures of Outcomes Based Education. South Africans are desperate for significant reform in the education system (Bloch, 2010). Recently there have been many instances of service delivery protests in the form of stay-aways, teacher strikes and school vandalism in response to the indecent conditions of schools and the failing schooling system in general (Gernetzky, 2011) (Shaw, 2010) (Ndoni, 2010) (Ndoni, 2010) (Carlisle, 2010) (Blaine, 2010) (Barbeau, 2010) (Barbeau, 2010) (Hweshe, 2008) (Masombuka, 2008). In 2008, community activists set out to identify the exact conditions of schooling for learners in Khayelitsha, the biggest township in Cape Town. As anticipated, they found that schools in Khayelitsha, like in many other poor communities in South Africa, were “under-resourced, under-staffed and overcrowded – factors which have a significantly negative impact on academic performance” (Equal Education, 2011). As a result of these findings, the researcher-activists, calling themselves Equal Education, began organising to support teachers and learners in communities struggling to overcome these difficulties in Khayelitsha.

1.3. The historical context of struggles for equal education

The struggle for equal access to resources in public education is not a new phenomenon. The unequal and racially-divided schooling system was a main concern for the anti-apartheid struggle and schools became an important space for mass mobilisation and struggle against the apartheid system in general (Sisulu, 1987). The 1976 Soweto uprisings that spread throughout schools across the country occurred in direct response to the Bantu Education Act and associated policies – in particular the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction alongside English (Endresen, 2010). South African movements for radical educational reform during the 1980's were part of a broader liberation movement against social injustice and the system of apartheid. By 1989 workers were including literacy and education in their demands to management (Endresen, 2010). Many school children and civil society organisations working in education were affiliated to The United Democratic Front (UDF), a historically significant anti-apartheid movement. These organisations organised and attended the National Consultative Conference in 1985 where the non-formal alternative called People's Education for People's Power was developed (Endresen, 2010). People's Education for People's Power connected education and broader social concerns (Endresen, 2010). People's Education for Peoples Power was the South African version of popular education already seen in Latin America (Endresen, 2010).

The concept of People's Education was seen as a substantive alternative to the inferior education programmes offered to black students (Motala & Valley, 2002). People's Education emphasised participatory discussion, critical thinking and political consciousness as opposed to rote-learning and the authoritarian culture of discipline prevalent in most South African schools (Motala & Valley, 2002). This concept was heavily influenced by Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and the radical social movements of Latin America (Motala & Valley, 2002). Many thought of People's Education as more than just an alternative curriculum but also as the "a vehicle for conscientisation, promoting critical thinking and analysis" (Valley, 2007, p. 42). The emphasis was on an increasing people's awareness of social, political and economic realities and improving their ability to analyse their context and affect social change (Valley, 2007).

Proponents were demanding that democratic governance structures be put in place in schools and student representative councils and also that parent-teacher associations be established. There were calls for radical changes in order to democratise power-relations and create spaces for marginalised people, including children, to contribute to decisions that would affect their lives. Civil society strategies for democratic change were guided by key principles of People's Education which prioritise equality, economic restructuring, democratic participation, inclusiveness and transformed social relations between the empowered and disempowered (Valley, 2007). Education in this vision for society was community-orientated and involved engaging critically in society while working towards equal access to resources for all.

1.4. The Case Study: Equal Education

Like the social movements throughout history, Equal Education (EE) was formed in response to the workings and failures of state institutions and market mechanisms to meet the needs of poor people. Initiated in 2008, EE started with a research project which sought to identify the conditions of schooling in Khayelitsha. Since then EE has developed into a social movement which comprises academics, community activists, school learners and other community members who were interested in improving conditions around issues ranging from broken windows in schools, learners' late coming and corporal punishment. In addition, the movement has lobbies for legislation on school libraries and minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure (Equal Education, 2011). High school learners – known as 'Equalisers' – make up the largest proportion of members and play a central role in the activities of the organisation. Along with parents, teachers, activists and community members, Equalisers in EE aim to improve their schools as well as develop as community youth leaders (Equal Education, 2011). In general within EE the term 'activist' is used for any volunteer or staff member of the organisation irrespective of their level of involvement, For example, Equalisers attending education programmes and participating in campaigns are called activists and spoken about as leaders in their schools. For the purpose of this thesis I use the word "activist" to mean a member holding a leadership position or one heavily

involved in organising campaigns, while I use “participant” to refer to individuals who attend any of the EE programmes. The ways in which staff members and volunteers describe themselves within EE is not uncomplicated but a discussion of this is outside of the scope of this thesis.

Chapter 3 will look more carefully at the work of Equal Education and its role as a new social movement.

1.5. Organisation of thesis

As previously stated, the objective of this thesis is to describe some of the dynamics of learning through activism within a selected social movement and to evaluate these dynamics in terms of literature on popular education. The thesis will be organised into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the research questions and the objectives of this thesis in the context of the historical struggles for social justice and change in South Africa’s education system. It provided an overview of the history of struggles for justice in education in South Africa. It briefly introduced the case study, Equal Education as a new social movement. It also explained the specific motivation for this research. Through a review of relevant literature, Chapter 2 examines the theory on learning in new social movements. I divided the literature into four issues that are consistently addressed in the field: (i) What are the key elements of popular education; (ii) what learning can take place in new social movements; (iii) what kinds of knowledge may be acquired and produced in new social movement, and (iv) who can play the roles of educator and learner and what power relationships should exist between different kinds of participants in the new social movement. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach used in this research. It explains the importance of using mixed methods in order to provide a close reading of the case study. The research design is described and includes participation observation and semi-structured life story interviews. In this chapter, the ethical parameters and generalizability of the study are also considered. Chapter 4 presents a summary of the data collected and Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the findings in reference to the literature and theory on popular education.

The emergence of new social movements is good for democratic consolidation because they increase democratic participation and increase the accountability of political leaders (Ballard, et al., 2006). In terms of South Africa's developmental aims, it is necessary to interrogate the impact of new social movement activism on participants, particularly those on the margins of society and even more pressingly to consider the impact of the educational value of these activities. The focus on Popular Education has historical significance since it was deeply embedded in liberation politics and struggles for social justice during the fight against apartheid (Valley, 2007). If new social movements represent the way in which the poor and disenfranchised members of society articulate their demands today, it is useful to look at the influence and relevance of popular education on these activities as well as other ways in which educational practices are articulated in this context.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The literature available on the processes of learning and the forms of knowledge acquired and transmitted in the activities of social movements in a post-apartheid context is sparse (Cooper, 2005). Research has focused mainly on the implications of new social movement action for political stability and democratic consolidation¹ but little has been written on the processes of learning and the forms of knowledge that these movements produce. It is important to articulate the way in which NSM's impact on the learning of those who participate in them, as well as how they provide new opportunities for learning. I will examine the nature of learning in the Equal Education movement, in an attempt to contribute to the growing field of research which looks to learning outside the formal academy, in particular learning in social action. There is a respectably-sized literature on the influence of popular education in anti-apartheid movements of the 1970s and 1980s² but not as much on its influence on contemporary social movements. This research aims to contribute to this growing body of literature by describing the nature and potential benefits of the kinds of educational practices in the new social movement context.

Service delivery protests are located in a broader context of dissatisfaction with state policy in the same way protests for People's Education in the 80's were part of a movement opposing generally unjust apartheid policies. In many new social movements, a philosophy of people's education has been influential in their strategies for change. In the process of reflecting on dominant discourses and acting in counter-hegemonic ways, these new social movements echo the work of Paulo Freire and the Latin American social movements which he influenced with his vision for popular education (Valley, 2007). Furthermore, aspects of learning outside formal education institutions can make a valuable contribution to general pedagogical theories and practice (Gallacher, et al., 2006). Gallacher, Edwards & Whittaker identify key themes for future research in learning outside of formal academia including learner-educator power relations and the occurrences of resistance and struggle and their

¹ See Ballard, Habib & Valodia 2006

² (Mashimba, 1990) (Motala & Valley, 2002) (Randall, 1993) (Zille, 1987) (Valley, 2007)

implications for learning (2006). These themes are significant in my research. In the following section I examine the literature to describe learning in popular education. I discuss the ways in which people learn in community or social action according to theorists. The literature on the learning in social movements deal in different ways with the following questions:

1. What are the key elements of popular education?
2. What learning can take place in new social movements?
3. What kinds of knowledge may be acquired and produced in new social movement?
4. Who can play the roles of educator and learner and what power relationships should exist between different kinds of participants in the new social movement?

Organising the literature into these themes allowed me to better understand the dynamics of learning in social movements so that I could record relevant issues in the descriptions of learning programmes in EE and participants perceptions of their learning experiences.

2.2. What are the key elements of popular education?

Many of the themes emerging from contemporary popular education theory and practice have their origins in the work of Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire is generally considered “the inaugural philosopher of critical pedagogy” (McLaren, 1999). Though popular education practices predate Freire’s work³, his work and legacy have been largely responsible for its global reach (Kane, 2010). Critical/ Freirian pedagogy is sometimes used synonymously with popular education and the concepts share the same historical roots and underlying principles. However, critical pedagogy refers more closely to the *theory* developed around popular education practises with the aim to implement critical methodologies in the public schooling system in the United States of America. In both realms – critical pedagogic theory and popular education practise - Paulo Freire has had an enormous influence on educators who work with people who are poor, oppressed and exploited.

³ The term was used in the early 20th century by socialist leaders working for universal literacy and socialist education in Latin America (Kane, 2010)

2.2.1. Freirian pedagogy

Freire's critical pedagogy uses the Marxian concept of praxis, denoting a combination of theory and practice, to explain the processes of learning which would most benefit the oppressed or marginalised. He says that it is through the praxis – "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" that one can be liberated from oppression (Freire, 1970, p. 51). For Freire, the value of experience and experiential learning cannot be underestimated. Learning is the process through which experience is transformed into knowledge and used to discover the unknown (Macedo, 2000). The learning process involves learners reconstructing their experience to gain a better understanding of the context in which they live. Reflecting on one's experience itself is a new experience and this becomes an on-going learning process defined by reflection, action, further reflection and so on (Endresen, 2010). Freire argues that, "To achieve this praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate (or will abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues, and instructions" (Freire, 1970, p. 66). There is an intrinsic value placed on the content of the learner's experience and reflection in the learning process. In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues that the orthodox methods used in formal education are oppressive and what he calls a 'banking model' of education (Freire, 1970). Teachers 'deposit' knowledge into learners who are viewed as vacant receptacles that must uncritically receive and absorb the knowledge (Freire, 1970). In this sense, the learner is passive and subject to domination by the teacher. He argues that these kinds of education models reproduce social relations between an oppressive dominant class and the oppressed classes at the margins of society (Freire, 1970). In response, he outlines an alternative education model which he calls the 'problem-posing' model (Freire, 1970). In this model the teacher-student relationship is transformed so that "[the] teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also, teaches. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all [participants] grow" (Freire, 1970, p. 80). Freire says that the relationship between teacher and learner needs to be redefined so that both groups are able to learn and teach simultaneously (Freire, 1970). This process of

learning allows participants to have the agency to become critically aware of the world and the way they exist in the world. It involves understanding that, in fact, reality is in process and that individual transformation as well as social transformation is possible (Freire, 1970).

In practice, problem-posing education involves facilitators raising issues that are relevant to the participants, sharing any scientific or technical knowledge they might have, using dialogue to discover new insights with learners and begin to move from private or individual experiences to broader or public issues (Macedo, 2000). Both student and teacher are in the process of learning and recognise that their knowledge and understanding is incomplete (Freire, 1970). They become partners who are also constantly questioning and coming to understand the purpose of learning (Macedo, 2000). The problem-posing model works through a process of dialogue which is not simply a technique but the social component of learning and knowing, that is, coming to know through explanation and discussion with others (Macedo, 2000). Constructing knowledge through dialogue and the act of allowing the views, experiences and knowledge of educators and learners to surface, distinguishes incidental learning from purposeful education (Macedo, 2000). Dialogue permits people to name the world for themselves, in other words to describe their social reality in their own terms as opposed to an engagement where some empowered people 'name the world' on their behalf (Freire, 1970). Such dialogue is essential to a pedagogy that is forged with and for oppressed people. Freire argues that people transform the world through naming it and so, through dialogue, teachers and learners are active in transforming the world. Common reflection followed by action in the world results in social transformation. In this problem-posing way, educational activities and socio-political action are allowed to include the perspectives of all participants, reflecting how they are situated in the world, and thus enabling these activities to be truly representative and inclusive.

2.2.2. Principles of Popular Education

There is no single definition of popular education; the concept exists fluidly based on a set of principles and characteristics which make certain practices identifiable as falling within the popular education tradition and others not. Within popular education, learning is not

necessarily institutionalised and formal but includes learning activities which may be incidental, informal and non-formal (Foley, 1998). In order to come up with a working definition for the purpose of this thesis I have considered the work of a number of contemporary researchers. To simplify analysis, the complex characteristics in this section can be summed up by the three broad features of popular education posited in the work of Crowther, Martin & Shaw: (i) Popular education is rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people; (ii) is overtly political and critical of the status quo and (iii) is committed to progressive social and political change (1999).

2.2.2.1. Popular education is rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people
A key feature of popular education is that it is focused on the popular or 'ordinary' population and involves efforts aimed at empowering ordinary people, including efforts to build capacity and social capital (Flowers, 2005). It is concerned with serving "the interests of 'ordinary' people, as perceived by 'ordinary' people" as opposed to mainstream approaches led by elite groups (Flowers, 2005). Popular education is about making education accessible to grassroots communities. It is also based on the principle that the knowledge, values and perspectives of grassroots communities should shape the content of the curriculum (Flowers, 2005). This means that lessons are built on the issues and experiences of the learners as opposed to materials privileged by experts. This translates into education which is centred on the learner (Foley, 1998). The participants direct the learning as well as practise critical-thinking and problem-solving (Flowers, 2005). Learners are constantly reflecting on what is learnt and experienced (Flowers, 2005). There is also an emphasis on critical analysis and increased public awareness of social issues (Foley, 1998). Within popular education practice the knowledge of participants is valued as legitimate and there is an active attempt to undo biases and prejudices which favour elite and dominant groups. There is a special focus on story-telling so that learners can come to know, understand and tell their own stories (Flowers, 2005). Creating and retelling stories imbues learners with agency to make and perform their history and culture; as opposed to merely being passive recipients of dominant culture (Flowers, 2005). There is a focus on material or content which helps participants understand their context and assists communities to act in their own strategic interest (Foley, 1998). Other methods used in popular education include

social learning games, social skits, brainstorming, simulations, dramatizations, cooperative learning, demonstration and practice and problem-posing which all aim to increase participation and democratic principles which are at the heart of popular education practice and its vision for society (Wiggins, 2011) (Foley, 1998).

2.2.2.2. Popular education is overtly political and critical of the status quo

In her argument for a more holistic synthesis between popular education and critical pedagogy, Wiggins conceptualises popular education as a “as a philosophy and methodology that seeks to bring about more just and equitable social, political, and economic relations by creating settings in which people who have historically lacked power can discover and expand their knowledge and use it to eliminate societal inequities” (2011, p. 38). Popular education is never politically neutral, though ideologies in popular education movement are varied (Kane, 2001). Within movements practising popular education, facilitators raise questions and discussions rather than simply presenting predetermined solutions. These questions are not neutral and the ideologies are made explicit with certain ends in mind (Kane, 2001). Popular education has the aim of fostering democratic participation, attempting to empower marginalised groups and developing communities while strengthening the capacity of local leaders (Flowers, 2005). For popular education practitioners, reflecting on the privileged place of elite or dominant interests and knowledge in traditional educational settings is vital (Flowers, 2005). In typical settings, they argue that elite perspectives are privileged at a cost to other sources of knowledge and perspectives (Wiggins, 2011). Popular education practices oppose discourses and ideologies of domination, where positions of inferiority may be internalised by the individual through historical relationships of production and power (Foley, 1998). In order to overcome this domination, popular education involves developing a critical consciousness in which people understand themselves as social actors in a complex and contradictory struggle for autonomy and liberation (Foley, 1998). This requires an opposition to the status quo – which is disempowering to marginalised populations – and inevitably leads to social mobilisation (Flowers, 2005). The methodologies used in popular education are based on the principle that education should always start with what people know because each individual already has a great deal of knowledge. It is based on the idea that “the wisdom

gained through life experience is in no way inferior (and in some cases is superior) to the knowledge gained through formal study” (Wiggins, 2011). Active participation and inclusion is significant because a greater learning is possible when each individual participates and offers their own wealth of knowledge to be shared. The methodology is based on the idea that all participants require opportunities to see and reflect on their reality (Wiggins, 2011). Through the practices mentioned above, and others like them, popular education allows participants to experience new and dynamic social relations and thus come to a different understanding and expectation of reality (Wiggins, 2011).

2.2.2.3. Popular Education is committed to progressive social and political change

Popular education is closely linked with social movements and issues of social justice in the interests of marginalised communities (Foley, 1998). A characteristic of popular education is the emphasis on learning through action with the ultimate goal of social change, as well as resisting dominant ideologies and hegemonic ways of thinking (Flowers, 2005). An important element of popular education includes a focus on learning, in particular in relation to a collective and emancipatory struggle (Foley, 1998). The methods employed in popular education enable participants to take action in their learning and pursue alternatives in their vision for society and for their futures. Participants are empowered and encouraged to strive for further power in their lives (Flowers, 2005). Through social action, learners can undo the ways in which they have internalized oppressive ideologies – a key feature of popular education practice. In this way new emancipatory or oppositional ideologies are able to subvert dominant ideologies that perpetuate negative messages about the levels of knowledge of oppressed people (Foley, 1998) (Wiggins, 2011).

2.3. What forms of learning can take place in new social movements?

Social movements commonly emerge as community members come to see that the most effective strategy for overcoming social and economic hardships or marginalization is through collective action and solidarity within a movement. (Walters, 2005). This is subject to the particular set of political and economic conditions that occur to drive the social movement to action (Foley, 1998). Learning is a necessary condition for the survival of social

movements because of the nature of their work, which involves overcoming grievances within often difficult contexts (Walters, 2005). Mobilising individuals into collective action requires organisational skills often learnt through the very process of organising (Stromquist, 1998). The oppositional ideology and discourses common in the local politics of the social movements foster significant learning opportunities (Foley, 1998). So in the processes of mobilization where there is opposition to dominant – often oppressive – discourses and efforts to create awareness of issues and demands, learning and teaching are natural outcomes (Stromquist, 1998). They communicate information learnt on issues with community networks as well as society at large (Foley, 1998).

The process of learning through social action can occur at different levels within social movements with a feedback loop of teaching and learning by leaders and members (Stromquist, 1998). These can be realised through formally planned information and training programmes, informal discussion groups and in some cases even engagement in formal school-type settings (Stromquist, 1998; Ismail, 2009). Incidental learning can occur informally through participation in organisational activities or through intentional educational programmes (Walters, 2005). Walters notes that educational and organizational practices are often intertwined (Walters, 2005). In less formal ways, knowledge is produced, for example, through “debates over meeting agendas, the planning of meetings, campaigns and demonstrations, and exchanges over strategies and tactics” (Walters, 2005). During its most active period, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) held workshops, public meetings, youth camps and demonstrations in order to disseminate information and educate the public and activists on HIV/Aids and its treatment (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). Banners, leaflets, t-shirts and songs all played a role in educating the public on prevention, treatment and management of HIV/Aids (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). Similarly, members of Abahlali baseMjondolo – the shack dwellers’ movement in Durban – reported that important learning happened in their activism (Pithouse, 2006). Activists learnt in a wide-range of settings: as participants in meetings, viewing struggle documentaries, through discussions, debates and workshops, by painting banners for protests, writing press statements as well as using the press to inform wider audiences of what they were doing (Pithouse, 2006). Pithouse explains that learning happens because of

the democratic and participatory nature of their activities and the on-going, reflective discussion of issues affecting participants (Pithouse, 2006). In the process, discussions and debates moved from their immediate grievances to wider social issues so that participants could locate their struggle in the context of South Africa's current political economy and its historical roots in colonialism and apartheid (Pithouse, 2006). Pithouse explains, "Sustained collective reflection on the experience of struggle continually advances the understanding of what has to be fought and how it has to be fought" (2006). He documents an example where Abahlali's members came to better understand their struggle because of collective mobilisation and reflection. In the beginning, many residents of Kennedy Road perceived their hardship to be the result of 'Indian' racism and preferential treatment. As residents connected and increased their awareness of their shared reality, people of different races came to identify with the struggle of other working-class members in their community which led to increased solidarity across racial divisions (Pithouse, 2006). This process of collective reflection gave direction to their activities and influenced their strategies (Pithouse, 2006).

Collective reflection fosters social solidarity; an important foundation on which movements are built. Support and solidarity is what increased the resilience of activists infected and affected by HIV/Aids in the TAC (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). In TAC, the support of fellow members gave individuals the energy and courage to take charge of their lives (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). They also learnt important information in the movement, allowing them to act in healthy and life-sustaining ways. They were encouraged not merely to survive but to live a fulfilled, meaningful life; connected to a supportive activist community (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). This solidarity was based on an 'economy of caring' involving a free exchange of kindness and generosity (usually of time and energy as opposed to money) (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). Endresen and von Kotze argue that the learning activities in TAC were able to drastically change the outlooks of HIV-positive members, "from a death-defying to a life-affirming attitude" (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005, p. 436). They attribute this change to the "strong bonding between equally excluded and socially stigmatized people" and argue that this community of the excluded is what empowered individual TAC activists (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005, p. 436).

2.4. What kinds of knowledge may be acquired and produced in new social movement?

Social action can help participant in social movement programmes “unlearn dominant, oppressive ideologies and discourses and replace them with oppositional, liberatory ones, even if such processes of emancipatory learning are inevitably complex and contradictory” (Mayo, 2001). Gramsci’s concept of hegemony describes the way in which “power relations become the ‘common sense’ of the whole social order” (Cooper, 2005). He argues that members of a society internalise and perpetuate dominant ideologies through the “lived process of political domination” (Cooper, 2005). This process of hegemony involves coercion (force by state apparatus) and consent (produced by ideological apparatus) (Fischman & McLaren, 2005). Gramsci claims that this consent stems from the prestige of dominant groups who hold superior positions and functions in society (Gramsci, 2005). He argues that it is the task for revolutionaries to create a counter-hegemony which could challenge the ruling class and that “that ordinary men and women could be educated into understanding the coercive and persuasive power of capitalist hegemony over them” (Gramsci, 1971 in Fischman & McLaren, 2005). Social movements are ideal locations for the emergence of new knowledge including ideologies, religions, and scientific theories (Walters, 2005). Eyerman and Jamison explain that it is “in the creation, articulation, formulation of new thoughts and ideas—new knowledge—that a social movement defines itself in society” (Walters, 2005, p. 10). This knowledge influences the participants within the social movements as well as outsiders who are impacted by its work. Significant knowledge is also produced through the interaction of the new social movements’ and the traditions and values of old movements and concepts (Walters, 2005) .

This type of learning and interaction with other social movements can be seen in the example of the TAC. For the TAC movement to achieve its goals, it was not only necessary for activists to understand the content of their particular struggle for HIV/Aids treatment, but also to discuss and learn about wider issues such as the dynamics of class struggles and issues of hegemonic power so that they could counter the systemic inequalities that result in unequal access to healthcare. (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). There is a distinction between the instrumental and the critical knowledge gained in social movements.

Instrumental knowledge is required for organisational activities and short-term survival while critical knowledge is the group and individual understanding of their social context and the forces creating advantage and disadvantage (Stromquist, 1998). It is this deeper understanding of the connections between social, economic and political forces that is of most value for a thriving social movement (Foley, 1996). Identifying the wider social problems and long-term solutions is at the core of what leads to the kind of empowerment associated with mass movement activities, increasing self-confidence, understanding context and mobilizing around it (Stromquist, 1998).

Social movements are educative for participants in the movement as well as for broader society because by acting to change or resist social norms, participants create new conventions, and through their “moral or counter-hegemonic work may become the common sense of an era” (Walters, 2005). In the case of TAC, participants contributed to public knowledge in terms of their experiences of the links between “individual health and access to nutrition and public policy, between growing personal confidence and esteem and democracy, and between living while being alive and collective action for justice” (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). Through TAC’s ‘treatment literacy campaign’, activists and members of the public were learning scientific and technical aspects of the disease and activists, when interviewed, displayed an in-depth knowledge of all aspects of the disease including its spread, symptoms, daily management as well as treatment options. Endresen and von Kotze observed that difficult scientific information and complicated biomedical facts were being accurately explained and discussed by activists (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005).

The significance of communicating so that participants understand fully is highlighted by Endresen and von Kotze in their work with TAC. Central to Freire’s critical pedagogy is questioning and reflecting on one’s experience in order to create new ideas and knowledge. Endresen and von Kotze argue that when educational activities are designed and delivered in local languages and also by those who themselves are affected by HIV/Aids, the information is communicated with the authority of their own experience and a combination of “emotion and rational understanding, empathy and the ability to explain scientific issues

simply” (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005) According to these authors, the insight of activists with intimate knowledge and experience of the illness were far beyond what outside facilitators could offer. Further they argue that peer education and support from fellow activists has a powerful influence on the sexual practices and lifestyle changes of members (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005).

2.5. What power relations should exist between different kinds of participants in the new social movement?

Within a critical pedagogy tradition, the role of the educator is not only to help participants in naming the world but also to trust that oppressed people have the ability to reason and name the world for themselves and that this contribution is legitimate, showing a respect for ‘popular syntax’ (Flowers, 2005). In reference to their work with TAC, Endresen and von Kotze argue that adult educators should work in solidarity with participants by, for example, producing research that would help increase consciousness of underlying values at play in their work, teaching for the purpose of producing knowledge collectively as well as contributing to the conditions that add insight and further encourage action. They argue that this pedagogy must be political and have the agenda of the poor at its centre (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005). The relationship between political leadership and mass following were a key concern for Marxist thinkers like Gramsci and Lenin. They raised questions about who educates whom, who learns from whom and who holds the power in these relationships. On investigating Gramsci’s ‘proletarian’ hegemony that would oppose dominant power, participants in worker study circles were largely passive in their learning and were guided and led by the radical intelligentsia (Cooper, 2005). Similarly for Lenin the role of the radical intelligentsia was to reflect study and draw conclusions from theory. This is the way in which they would be conscientised. The mass of workers would achieve political consciousness through mass action – ‘sensuously’ in their experience and practice of struggle (Cooper, 2005) . So for Lenin, different kinds of knowledge were contributed by two different groups of people- experiential knowledge from ordinary workers and theoretical knowledge by radical intelligentsia.

In modern popular education practice these issues still remain significant. Based on the fundamental principle – that members of oppressed groups are able to manage their futures – dogma and hierarchy are avoided (Wiggins, 2011). Popular Education practice is based on the idea that egalitarian social relations within broad contexts should be exemplified in the educational setting. This means that in order to break down the hegemony of dominant positions over workers or learners, through popular education practices, people are encouraged to think for themselves in order to gain autonomy as well as learn to exercise their power. Wiggins argues that many of these practices rely on the behaviour of the teacher and the willingness of the powerful to share power. The quality of the teaching is based on an openness to learn alongside the traditional notion of sharing one's knowledge (Wiggins, 2011). Methods of power-sharing or encouraging equality within the learning context include listening and accepting all ideas without judgement and avoiding privileging some remarks over others, sitting in a circle as opposed to the traditional classroom layout with the teacher in the front of the room as well as valuing the language and discourses in which members participate (Wiggins, 2011). The principle is that the facilitator does not have greater authority than participants, and thus decisions would not be made for the group but the group would be encouraged to come to decisions collectively (Wiggins, 2011). Posing questions to the group and giving participants the time to share their experiences and opinions means that learning can happen dialogically with more equitable social relations. For Freire, the opposite of freedom – oppression – was the repression of reflection or a “culture of silence” (1970:12). In order to gain freedom through liberatory education, learners had to unlearn oppressive and dominant ideologies. In critical pedagogy, reflection on the oppressive and dominant ideologies within society is central to the process of individual as well as social change. The role of the teacher is to encourage learners to consider their actions and as a result of this process of reflection, act more consciously and be more aware of the ideologies they aim to undo. Questioning and reflecting on hegemonic power structures and the authority of some members of society over others is significant in this model of learning. Freire speaks about ‘conscientisation’ which is the process in which learners think critically about the status quo, envision alternatives in which oppressed people are empowered and take action to build a new kind of society (Freire, 1970). It involves a transformation from passive indifference to critical and active awareness of power relations and other social issues (Flowers, 2005).

Conscientisation is a learning process that radically changes the way people perceive their reality; a process in which people find their value and vocation and in which they learn to think of themselves as agents in history (Thampi, 1973). This process is necessarily political and enables marginalised people to overcome barriers which hinder them from seeing the realities of their social context and becoming active in transforming it (Thampi, 1973). Critical pedagogy advocates for the 'self-liberation of the masses' (Thampi, 1973). This means that there is a focus on agency and mobilisation so that, once exploitation is perceived, people can become active in overcoming exploitation through mass organisation (Rafi, 2003). Through 'conscientisation' learners also come to see that they have the capacity to acquire skills and expertise to be able to organise and take action for change (Endresen, 2010: 58). These kinds of learning experiences are not always recorded or even consciously employed by the organisers of a social movement, but happen through an increased awareness of the nature of struggle and through raising the political consciousness of participants (Stromquist, 1998). The strategies and activities of social movement usually expose deep social problems and the significant aspects and failings of the state (Stromquist, 1998).

Freire also makes ontological claims in his work. He says that conscientisation is necessary for both those who are oppressed and for the oppressors, and is part of becoming more fully human. In their current roles, both groups are crippled and need to achieve liberation (Freire, 1970). Historically, oppressive power relations result in alienation and a dehumanisation of oppressors and the oppressed. Collective emancipation occurs when both the oppressed and the oppressors are freed from their false views of the world; when they overcome alienation and affirm their fellow "men and women as persons" (Freire, 1990, p.26). The principles of cooperative learning and the communal nature of popular education are central in Paulo Freire's work and influence. Endresen and von Kotze describe their observation on the Treatment Action Campaign in these Freirian terms. They explain that within TAC there seemed to be an endorsement of the African philosophy of 'Ubuntu' where "your well-being is contingent upon my care, and your misery is a reflection of my actions (or the lack of them)" and that this is the way in which people can become more fully human (Endresen & von Kotze, 2005, p. ref).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

To understand the nuanced processes of learning that can occur in a new social movement, this study focused on one particular case. This allows one to decipher where and how learning can take place in this particular context (Schwandt, 2007a). For the case-study, I worked within the organisation to provide observation data from the field (Parker, 2004). The research could be classified as both an exploratory and descriptive case study since I will provide a detailed account of the movement and offer insight into the factors facilitating popular education in the planned and incidental learning practices within the movement (Jupp, 2006). This chapter describes the steps I took to gather research data on learning processes in Equal Education.

3.2. The Case Study

My initial contact with Equal Education was at the “People’s Summit for Quality Education” hosted by EE at the University of Cape Town in June 2010 where various stakeholders in education met to discuss issues and attend seminars around the crisis in the South African education system. I attended the summit in my capacity as a student leader of another organisation at the university. At this event, the presence of the equalizers and local activists was notable. I observed clear attempts to give a wide range of stakeholders a platform from which to be heard and participate, for example by having lectures translated into from English into Xhosa. What was also clear was that the EE members – mainly school learners - seemed to have remarkable confidence and political knowledge. I was uncertain as to whether this was due to their involvement in this social movement. Equal Education thus seemed to offer a good opportunity to explore how new social movements function as learning spaces, especially in poor communities.

EE describes itself as a social movement “dedicated to campaigning for quality and equality in South African education, particularly public schools” (Equal Education, 2009). Its constituents include school learners, teachers, parents, activists and community members.

The movement was initiated in 2008 when a group of activist-researchers conducted a research project on schools in Khayelitsha – a working class community in Cape Town (Equal Education, 2011). They found that schools in Khayelitsha lacked resources had high learner to teacher ratios and many other difficulties – all of which had a significantly negative impact on academic performance (Equal Education, 2011). This small group then formed EE with the aim of creating a citizen’s movement to support teachers and learners in this community and others like it. Its membership is made up of school learners, teachers, parents, activists and community members (Equal Education, 2009). Overall management of the organization is the responsibility of the coordinator who provides strategic leadership and performs key tasks such as fundraising and budgeting. There are three other departments – the Policy, Research and Communications (PCR) Department; the Youth and Campaigns Department and the Administration Department. PCR is responsible for monitoring and evaluating government education policy; communicating with the public and with members of the movement on important issues relevant to education and also for conducting research and collecting significant educational data. I volunteered predominantly in this office and also attended a number of seminars and meetings organised by the PCR department. This office produced the information booklets or ‘fact sheets’ used in the youth group session as well as *The Equaliser* magazine which EE uses as a means for political education. The aim of the fact sheets were described to me as “inform[ing] equalizers of the issues South African education currently faces in a way that is accessible to them. This will form part of the wider project to empower equalizers to confidently stand up for the issues” (Wilkinson, 2011). The Youth and Campaigns Department is tasked with coordinating weekly youth group meetings which serve as the primary vehicle for the intellectual and political education of EE’s youth members – the Equalisers. For EE, Equalizers represent the entry point into communities and these youth groups are able to introduce the organization to parents, teachers, community leaders and other young people in the local community (Equal Education, 2008). This department also coordinates the campaigns around issues affecting communities directly. This office has the most direct communication with school-going learners and parents. The student-facilitators who ran youth group sessions did so from this office and were mentored by the permanent staff working there. This forms part of EE’s mandate to be “leader[s] in youth leadership development” (Equal Education, 2009, p. 4). Finally the administration department is responsible for financial management and

organisational logistics. I had little contact with the administration office except when resources were required for youth group sessions or research. The stated aim of EE is to participate in “evidence-based activism for improving the nation's schools” (Equal Education, 2011). This means that many staff members and volunteers are involved in research and policy analysis to inform strategy. There is constant monitoring of media and parliamentary meetings on education issues and all members are kept up to date via email. This information is also made accessible to members through fact sheets, *The Equaliser* and in seminars and youth group sessions led by staff members and senior facilitators.

After offering my assistance as a volunteer, I was welcomed into the organisation and given free research access to all events, meetings and even placed on the staff mailing list⁶. Acknowledging my dual position as volunteer and research student, when I required information for research or recorded observations, I sought verbal consent from the participants involved. EE's transparency was very beneficial while conducting my research and motivated me to continue with this line of research. The willingness of staff to be interviewed and participate in my research was a major practical consideration for choosing EE as the focus of my study. My experience of the EE staff was that they were receptive and open to being studied and for their work to be reviewed. This is not surprising since one of EE's objectives is to encourage transparency from government. Furthermore university students form a large portion of intern recruits often volunteering and conducting their own research simultaneously. EE relies on a pool of young researchers and students to assist in much of their work. Like the other student interns, I was given permission to record my observations of all meetings and programmes. The leadership publicly commit to supporting the education of young South Africans and were eager to support me in my studies. During my fieldwork, EE was engaged in activities with specific educational outcomes and activities where education was not the explicit outcome. The work with specific educational outcomes included regular youth group meeting, camps and study meetings; staff seminars as well as workshops with parents. Other activities included campaigns – with a public awareness component – to insist government adopt minimum norms and standards for

⁶ See Appendix 1: Initial email correspondence with EE

school infrastructure into law as well as research and reviews of education policy. I first focused on those activities with explicit educational outcomes – specifically youth groups and mass meetings. In order to try to understand incidental learning in non-educational activities, I also considered how general organisational involvement may produce learning outcomes. During this time the main campaign was focused on lobbying and ultimately taking legal action against the Ministry of Basic Education demanding that National Minimum Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure were adopted into law by the Department of Basic Education (Equal Education, 2011).

3.3. Research methods

Fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). For this study, I volunteered to work at the Equal Education headquarters in Khayelitsha for four months (August 2011 to December 2011). In order to produce in-depth descriptions of the real-world context of this social movement, it was necessary to work closely with participants and involve myself in their daily activities. The realities and details of their experiences inform my description and analysis of the movement. I worked alongside and had hours of contact with the participants under study in their own environments including the converted Equal Education offices in Site C Khayelitsha; off-site work in schools in Khayelitsha, the *Bookery* – the headquarters for the school libraries campaign – in Roeland Street in Cape Town CBD as well as the IDASA offices which housed the Community Leadership programme in Spin Street in the Cape Town CBD.

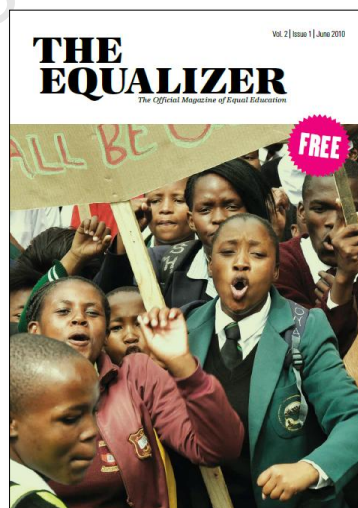
As a volunteer intern, I was heavily involved in the organisational activities and culture of the movement. I was able to immerse myself in the natural context over this extended period of time and provide a thorough description and analysis of learning practices (Parker, 2004). The research was intended to be the kind of “naturalistic inquiry” that involved a “discovery-oriented” approach – with very little intrusion on the setting being studied and no restrictions on what the outcomes of the research would be (Patton, 2002, p. 39). The research design was consequently fluid and dynamic. I aimed to investigate the everyday experiences of participants in the social movement and how this to contributes to their

learning. After weeks of observation, I decided that I would have to participate as a facilitator to be able to describe the kinds of planned educational activities that were organised by the movement. Participant observation involved listening, conversation, interviewing and getting actively involved in the learning setting of EE youth groups and mass meetings (Payne & Payne, 2004). I wanted to understand how activists make sense of their everyday activities and develop meanings from their interactions within the movement. In order to understand learning processes in EE from the participants' own perspective, I conducted interviews with four participants (Miller & Brewer, 2003). This was the broadest way to look at incidental learning in this context.

3.3.1. Document Review

In order to gain a broader understanding of the organisational activity of EE and the people involved, my first source of data was documentary material produced by the movement. I reviewed a wide-range of documents including internally circulated research material and reports as well as publicly available documentation including back issues of *The Equalizer* magazines, press releases, annual reports and other media coverage⁷. This served to inform my preliminary analysis and create a framework within which to undertake the second and third cycles of fieldwork

Figure 1: Cover of *The Equalizer* magazine



⁷ Equal Education (Annual Report, 2008), pp. 1-17; Equal Education (Annual Report, 2009), pp. 1-17; Equal Education, 'What is EE?', in Equal Education <http://www.equaleducation.org.za/what_is_ee> [accessed September 2011]; Equal Education, Letter to schools requesting affidavits for case on Minimum Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure Case, 2011), pp. 1-2.

3.3.2. Participant and Non-Participant Observation

Within EE, there are three kinds of planned educational activities for members of movement: seminars, youth group sessions and mass meetings. Every Friday at Equal Education, staff members, community leaders, community librarians, senior Equalisers met in the Wendy house – a large wooden room – on the grounds of EE headquarters to share lunch provided by EE. During these lunches, the Coordinator and senior staff would make administrative announcements; give updates on current campaigns – at this time usually on the state of the case against the Department of Basic Education – as well welcome new members and visitors. After lunch, we attended a weekly seminar in the same venue. I attended numerous seminars with topics including a discussion on the education crisis in the Eastern Cape (specifically how civil society should best engage with government) led by board member and former MEC for Education in Gauteng, Mary Metcalfe; a discussion on the work of the *Bookery* and the implementation of libraries in eleven schools around the city as well as a workshop on Equal Education's pending court case against the Department of Basic Education to compel the adoption of minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure into law. These seminars included debates, role-play and lectures on education topics relevant to EE's work and were a significant site of political education for EE members. The seminar I will describe was about privatization of education in South African and around the world.

I also attended youth group sessions weekly during my time at EE. Approximately 50 Grade 10, 11 and 12 youth group members or 'equalizers' attended the meetings. These sessions were run by a group of 4 or 5 facilitators called 'Equal Educators'. According to EE, the aim of the weekly Youth Group meetings was to educate learners on issues relevant to EE campaigns and to "build social and political consciousness [as well as] encourage debate among members, using current affairs, politics and examples from history" (Equal Education, 2008, p. 9) The structure of the sessions varied from week to week but the sessions always centred around a particular theme. The themes included school governance and management, teachers and the teaching profession, unequal schools and unequal outcomes and finally a session where Equalisers reflected on the issues that most concerned them during that school year. I also attended a mass meeting called by the EE staff on the

topic of corporal punishment in schools which was placed on the agenda by the EE Leadership Committee. Approximately 100 school learners representing a number of schools in Khayelitsha were present. For the purpose of this study, I chose to describe and analyse observations of one of the youth group sessions as well as a mass meeting. The youth group session I will discuss was on the topic of school infrastructure and the minimum norms and standards campaign.

During the field study, I was able to move across the spectrum of non-participant and participant observation – sometimes participating actively and other times resolving to simply observe and record the sessions. Because protest action is social, occurring dynamically and in process, detailed observation notes are required (Schwandt, 2007). However, in order to gain greater understanding of the complex human process of learning, it was also sometimes necessary to be an ‘active observer’ without note-taking (Schwandt, 2007). I took on some of the roles and responsibilities of an ‘insider’, for example acting as facilitator in some of the youth group sessions. I was also accommodated when I asked to be excluded from the activities in order to record observation for research purposes. The youth group was able to continue its activities as it normally would and I was able to record learner activity in its natural setting. I took photos and recorded the sessions with an audio recorder while taking notes. I made use of an inconspicuous recording device, with the consent of participants, to ensure that my approach could be as unobtrusive as possible. A potential limitation of this method is that participants may edit responses because they are being recorded. In an effort to elicit natural responses, the recording device was made inconspicuous during the process of discussion. However, there is no scenario where research can be totally unobtrusive and subjects are always impacted by the fact that they are now being observed. As a participant in the sessions, I was also able to extend my observation by asking questions which would clarify what was being observed. (Lewis-Beck et al., 2011, Jorgensen, 1989) To further engage with the meaning of the observation I engaged in sustained dialogue, sometimes even after a session was finished, in order to gain a greater understanding of subjective experiences of participation (Payne and Payne, 2004). For this mass meeting I was able to participate as a facilitator of two small group sessions as well as photograph the activities in the large group sessions. I facilitated one of these groups

with the help of an EE staff member and an Equal Educator. Participation as a facilitator was one way of obtaining access to the sessions as well as gaining an in-depth understanding of the learning activities of youth groups. Participant observation also helped me understand when and how learning activities fall within the popular education tradition.

3.3.3. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews were used to gather and document the views of participants on their participation in EE – specifically on what they perceived to have learnt or gained from their activism. Interviews were semi-structured and included open and closed-ended questions. The interviews were guided by key questions under 5 key themes:

1. What is learnt?
2. Who learns?
3. Who teaches?
4. What is the relationship between learner and teacher?
5. What is the impact of this learning on the learner and work of the movement?

The interview was designed as a biographical interview revolving around the theme: experiences of formal and informal learning in a lifespan. This was based on the premise that their biographical information and their social context is interlinked with how participants experienced learning in the movement (Endresen, 2010). The aim was to be non-directive and allow participants to express the value of their experiences with limited prompting. I divided the interview into early childhood, primary school, high school and post-school experiences. The semi-structured nature of the interview also allowed the respondents a measure of agency in choosing the extent to which they would elaborate on different areas in their lives. The respondents got involved in the movement at different stages of their lives but the aim was to allow them to reflect on their perspectives of their own learning before and after their involvement in Equal Education.

In order to capture their stories of learning, I asked open-ended questions which led to extended reflection from participants. My position as researcher was actively empathetic

allowing the interviewee to interpret their experiences (Jupp, 2006). The interviews were tape recorded and later the recording was transcribed to ensure that I had positioned myself as an empathic, active-listener as interviewees told their stories (Jupp, 2006b). For the duration of the interview, I attempted to suspend my views on the subject and focus on encouraging interviewees to understand and interpret their experiences in their own words (Patton, 2002). However, I have not overlooked the potential impact my subjectivity and influence might have on responses. Though I had worked with some of the participants for a few months, this was a relatively short period and I was certainly positioned as an 'outsider'. The result was a text that is a cultural "collaboration involving the consciousness of researcher as well as subject" (Jupp, 2006, p. 4).

The sample included a member from each of the four sub-groups within EE. Based on my observation, the role and identity of members within EE depends primarily on which group they fall into – equaliser, community leader, equal educator or staff member. These groups have organisational meetings together, come from similar socio-economic backgrounds and also socialise with each other. For this reason, I used a purposive sample based on the four levels of participation within the organisation so that the analysis could reflect perspectives from a cross-section of membership within the movement. It was necessary to interview a representative of each of these groups in order to get an in-depth understanding of the learning objectives, activities and outcomes of the movement from a variety of perspectives. The benefit of a small but purposive sample is gaining an in-depth understanding of their experiences. Asking well-situated people in EE for recommendations and contact details for interviewees – the snow-balling strategy – also led me to find information-rich informants who could add valuable perspectives. The four representatives would describe different organisational activities depending on their point of involvement and so indirectly had varied insights into what incidental learning can occur in these organisational activities. The first group consists of the school learners who are members of the movement, participate in youth groups and are recipients of the reading and learning support material from EE. These members call themselves 'Equalisers'. The second group is comprised of participants in the Community Leadership programme who facilitate youth groups and assist in the organisation of campaigns. They are referred to as 'Community

Leaders' or CLs. The third group includes graduates of the gap year programme who now attend tertiary institutions and act as senior facilitators and community leaders within the EE movement. These members will be referred to as 'Equal Educators'. The final group of members is made up of the intellectuals and leaders who work as permanent or long-term staff members involved in the running of the different sectors within the movement. In order to secure an interview with participants at all levels I used the snowballing technique where I was able to get the names of new contacts from each person interviewed. After contacting a number of staff members and student facilitators, I received a positive response from a staff member as well as a participant who I had met at the Summit in June 2011 and who then referred me to a willing Equaliser. I was able to connect with the Equal Educator after I volunteered at youth groups and had worked with the PCR department for a few weeks.

3.4. Data analysis

I documented my observations and transcribed the interviews on learning within the movement and then coded these according to the themes that emerged from the literature review and from the data. In order to effectively organize the data collected I made use of Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDA) - namely the open source software tool "Weft QDA". This process involved using the software to import the data which consisted of interview transcripts and field notes. Based on the literature review, I identified key analytical themes and coded passages of the text data with reference to these themes. The themes were:

1. Knowledge/ Content: What knowledge is disseminated or produced?
2. Learner-role: Who learns or receives knowledge?
3. Teacher-role: Who transfers or teaches knowledge?
4. Power: What is the perceived relationship between learner and teacher?
5. Impact: What is the perceived impact of learning in EE

I then isolated the coded data and was able to organize and analyse themes and patterns in these texts. I used the elements of popular education and the definition provided by Crowther, Martin and Shaw: (i) Popular education is rooted in the real interests and

struggles of ordinary people; (ii) is overtly political and critical of the status quo and (iii) is committed to progressive social and political change (Martin, 1999) as an analytical framework to analyse the extent to which popular education was visible in the observation and interview data. The findings that follow include direct quotations and extracts of observation that illustrated the themes found in the data. These key statements give insight into the broader experience of learners in the movement.

3.5. Limitations of study

With limited time and resources, compromises were made which result in certain limitations in this study. In qualitative inquiry, there is always a concern regarding bias. Having worked closely within the movement, the ability of the researcher to provide an unbiased account of the organisation is at issue. As a result, it is important to reiterate that the personal experiences and insights of the researcher are part of the nature of this research. The gains of this approach include access to information which would be out of bounds of a so-called objective observer or quantitative researcher. The interpretive nature of qualitative research requires mindful reflexivity, acknowledging and making explicit the presence of one's own perspective. In this case, the content of my study reflects my own concern for the agency and conscientisation of marginalised communities. My political and socio-economic position as a so-called 'Coloured' female student from a previously advantaged institution – the University of Cape Town – undoubtedly had an influence on my interactions with different members of the movement. A particularly important limitation was the fact I could only communicate in English when most participants spoke Xhosa as their mother tongue. This limited my access to subtle messages during observations and limited the extent to which some interviewees could express their views.

Furthermore, this case may not be representative of the learning strategies or impact of the complex range of active new social movements in the Western Cape, but it does attempt to contribute to the wider literature on the new social movements and non-formal education strategies (Cooper, 2005) (Ismail, 2009; Endresen & von Kotze, 2005) (Pithouse, 2006). Equal Education shares many characteristics with a wide-range of new social movement as

characterised in a cross-study of the literature and can be regarded as a fairly typical and representative example of a post-apartheid new social movement (Robins, 2008; Ballard et al, 2006; Ballard et al, 2005). The fact that I could only interview one person per participant group does limit the representativity of my sample. The sample was also stratified based on my perceptions of similarities between functional groups which is certainly biased by my personal limitations and time with each group. I approached a number of EE members for interviews and narrowed these down to the final four interviewees based primarily on their availability. The four participants represent a candidate from each of the four roles within Equal Education. This allowed me to get varied perspectives from representatives in different roles within the movement.

3.6. Ethical consideration: consent and confidentiality

The shift from volunteer intern to researcher raised certain ethical difficulties. Though my initial agreement with the organisation was that my role there was as student researcher, my position as volunteer made the role inconsistently clear. It was important to obtain consent from all participants who would be involved in my research, especially when I was recording data either with photographs or note-taking. I obtained consent to observe youth group sessions from the Deputy Youth Coordinator – Brad Brockman and at the beginning of the first youth group session I attended, I asked facilitators to explain to the learners that I would be observing their session for my school project. She explained this to learners in Xhosa – their mother tongue – to ensure that they would understand. They were asked if anyone objected and everyone agreed that it was fine. I did not obtain consent from learners at the mass meeting because of the size of the group. The meeting was open to the public; though specifically aimed at the learner community in Khayelitsha. I did obtain permission from Brad Brockman to attend and was also asked to facilitate two of the sessions. Prior to interviewing stakeholders I explained the nature of my research and asked them whether they would be willing to part of my study. A number of candidates, in fact, preferred not to be interviewed. The final four interviewees were willing and agreed to be part of the research study. They signed consent forms. In order to interview the one

participant who was under the age of eighteen, I first obtained permission from the deputy director of Equal Education who agreed and also agreed to explain it to the learner. I explained that I would use pseudonyms in the study to protect their confidentiality. Since the nature of the interview was not particularly sensitive, the interviewees agreed that I could share my findings with other Equal Education staff on completion.

University of Cape Town

4. Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings collected from the observations and interviews done in the field study. Many issues arose during the field research but the data presented here focus on the nature of learning in the new social movement and how this may or may not fit into a popular education paradigm. The chapter is divided into two parts. First I describe observations of the seminar and equaliser meetings. Second I describe the responses by the participants I interviewed on their histories and experiences within the organisation.

4.2. Findings from observations of planned educational activities

Staff members and senior activists organise seminars, youth groups, mass meetings and produce *The Equaliser* magazine as a way of engaging and educating young Equalisers and community members. I attended weekly seminars. The youth group sessions I observed took place at Thembelihle Senior Secondary School in Khayelitsha and were attended by representatives from different schools in Khayelitsha from Grades 10, 11 and 12. Mass meetings are open to all equalisers and I attended a meeting at Thembelihle Senior Secondary School in response to grievances raised by youth leaders on instances of corporal punishment at schools in Khayelitsha.

4.2.1. Seminar

After lunch on Fridays, staff and equalisers met in the Wendy house for the weekly seminar. This seminar was led by the coordinator who spoke English. He opened by reminding the members to take the seminars seriously and always bring pens and paper to take notes. The coordinator led the discussion on privatisation asking questions and inviting the audience to respond. The room was generally split into equalisers alongside the left wall and the staff members alongside the right wall. Usually staff members and sometimes senior facilitators answered and commented during the seminar. Most other participants listened quietly, with very few taking notes. After a short discussion on a definition of privatisation we watched a 3-minute YouTube clip from CNN on celebrity tutors. We continued the

discussion led by the coordinator. He asked a number of questions including, “What is privatised in our schools?” and “How do we define property?” He tried to engage the left side of the room by asking some community volunteers what they thought the definition of property was. A community volunteer responded that he did not know the answer, giggling and guessed “a thing”. The staff members helped him, explaining that property involves a social relationship and agreement on ownership. The coordinator proceeded with a short lecture on the global privatisation of education. After this presentation he continued the discussion asking participants what they thought about privatisation and why it happened. An equal educator explained that she thought middle class schools in South Africa were essentially private because the school fees were so high that they become exclusive. She said that the norm is that you could not speak if you do not have money and people with money have all the power. Another equaliser said that he had spoken to parents and it seemed to him that in public schools when parents pay school fees they feel like they have a right to complain but if they do not pay fees they feel like they cannot complain about schools. The coordinator rounded up this discussion saying that many good points were made. He then presented a short lecture on privatisation of schools in India by poor communities and showed a longer video on the business models of private American colleges. After the video, the seminar ended with small groups continuing private discussions in the Wendy house.

4.2.2. Youth Group

Near the end of the school day, I joined EE facilitators on a minibus taxi commissioned by EE to take us to Thembelihle Senior Secondary School which was a five minute drive from the EE office. We were met by learners waiting in the school quad. I was escorted to a large classroom. Here we moved desks and chairs; put up posters on the walls for one of the activities and set out the food for the snack break. At 15h00 the facilitators gathered the learners in the smaller, adjacent classroom to begin the session. The session began with a facilitator – a UCT student who grew up in Khayelitsha – acting as a representative from the Minister of Basic Education’s office. She addressed approximately fifty equalisers in Xhosa. The equalisers were seated closely in small desks, the spill-over standing alongside the classroom walls. Standing next to me, a fellow facilitator quietly translated what was said

into English so that I could follow. The presenter explained the minister's position on the norms and standards policy and why it had not yet been adopted into law, asking them to be patient. The equalisers were not permitted to respond at this stage, but the crowd impatiently listened to the 'department representative' and made it clear, with jeering and dismissive hand gestures they were not impressed with her explanation. At the end of this talk, the equalisers were divided into small groups, according to their grades, to read and discuss the fact sheets handed out to each member⁹. I joined a grade 11 group. We took chairs from the classroom and formed a circle in an isolated corridor of the school. A facilitator stood in the centre of the circle and instructed learners to read through a fact sheet, with each learner taking a turn to read a paragraph – written in English – out loud. After each sub-section, the facilitator stopped the reader and, speaking in Xhosa, explained what had been read. A brief discussion followed, predominantly in Xhosa, where the facilitator would test the extent of the learners' understanding of the content just reviewed. Next, the equalizers were led through a classroom which had been transformed into a gallery of photographs and posters depicting the current state of the country's infrastructure, including pictures of both well-resourced schools and under-resourced schools, and were asked to fill in the captions of these pictures on the blank poster paper stuck on the walls of the classroom. They responded to questions such as: 'What difference do you think having water and electricity makes at a school?' and 'Do you think learners actually need libraries? Why not just have computers?' Soft music played in the background as learners quietly walked around the room reading and writing about school infrastructure. Learners were given food and something to drink as they exited the make-shift gallery and took a break, eating and talking in the second classroom. After all the learners had finished the activity, they met in the second classroom for the final activity. In this session, learners were able to respond to the facilitator who had acted as the government official. Learners described their problems with the department's explanation about why norms and standards for school infrastructure had not yet been promulgated. Following this, facilitators led the discussion with learners on how they experienced infrastructural backlogs in their schooling and interpreted the significance of the campaign for learners currently attending schools in Khayelitsha. Learners explained what difference they thought

⁹ See Appendix 2: Fact sheet 3 for Youth Group

water and electricity made at school and what use libraries and computers may be for learning. Facilitators then asked a final series of questions, testing what was learnt and handing out leftover snacks as rewards for correct answers. Through a combination of role-play, reading, writing, discussion and debate, participants learnt about policies on school infrastructure and also about the movement's campaign to insist that government promulgate minimum norm and standards for school infrastructure into law.

Figure 2: Thembelihle Senior Secondary School¹⁰



¹⁰ Photo by Kim Copitch (2011)

4.2.3. Mass Meeting

After lunch, staff and facilitators drove to Thembelihle Senior Secondary school to attend an organisation-wide mass meeting. The stated aim of this meeting was to make learners aware of their rights, explain the illegality of corporal punishment in schools and to develop strategies to combat corporal punishment in the different schools represented at the meeting. The agenda for the meetings was circulated beforehand¹¹. The meeting opened with EE songs sung by the equalizers and led by their elected leadership and was followed by a lively opening game. I observed from the side-lines with staff and older facilitators. Senior facilitators then explained the next activity. Equalisers were asked to share their own experiences of corporal punishment in school and at home to a neighbouring learner. These small conversations happened in Xhosa and learners were reluctant to speak to me in English, giggling when I approached them. Soon, three speakers from Bulumko High school addressed the mass meeting explaining why the meeting was called as well as describing their personal experiences of corporal punishment. They addressed the crowd in Xhosa but I was told by a learner that they were explaining how being part of EE sometimes resulted in them being targeted for abuse and unfair treatment by teachers. Following this, learners and facilitators split into randomised groups and completed a worksheet prepared by staff in their groups¹². Along with a staff member and senior facilitator, I participated as a facilitator in the last two sessions. First, I joined a group of fifteen equalisers in a nearby classroom where we read through a worksheet produced by EE staff. These information worksheets explained South African law on corporal punishment in schools. Learners struggled to understand these laws and asked me to explain difficult words. The other facilitators and I were unprepared for these questions but having tutored English to second-language speakers before I was able to explain the concepts in terms they could seemingly understand. There were also a number of comprehension-style questions to answer and with limited time, I divided the learners into smaller groups and assigned one question to each group. A representative from each group read their collective response out loud. Their responses indicated a basic understanding of their rights to a non-violent school environment. We hurriedly finished just as staff members told us to reassemble in the quad again.

¹¹ See Appendix 3: Agenda for mass meeting

¹² See Appendix 4: Worksheet 1

Finally learners were asked to join up into their school groups in order to complete a second worksheet and discuss ways to organise a campaign to put a stop to corporal punishment in their schools¹³. I joined a school group and with the learners worked through the last worksheet. This worksheet contained narratives on the campaigns led by local school learners in the 1980s to end corporal punishment in their schools at a time when it was legal and widely used. The equalisers were asked to discuss ways in which they could organize to stop corporal punishment in their schools now. At this stage of the meeting, the learners I spoke to were visibly restless and distracted. We were moved outside and without a Xhosa-speaking facilitator to translate I struggled to communicate effectively with learners. We read the story and some learners brainstormed to come up with strategies to combat corporal punishment in schools today. After spending quite some time struggling to maintain group cohesion, the session was abruptly ended when transport for learners arrived. Some ideas for strategy and new campaigns were generated. These were collected by EE facilitators and staff members with the aim of having them inform the future strategy of the movement.

Figure 3: Equalisers listening to learners speak about corporal punishment at mass meeting



¹³ See Appendix 5: Worksheet 2

4.3. Findings from interviews of participants in different organisational roles

In order to understand the extent to which learning occurred through organizational involvement, I interviewed four key stakeholders at each level of the organisation: an Equaliser, a member of the community leadership programme, an equal educator as well as a staff member. As stated these interviews focused on the life stories of the interviewees¹⁴. In this section, I highlight key quotations from the interviews which reflect the interviewees' current involvement in the movement, their perceptions of learning activities in the movement and what learning they have experienced from their involvement so the quotations may not be presented chronologically as they occurred in the interview¹⁵.

4.3.1. An Equaliser

I interviewed a 17-year old Equaliser from Makhaza in Khayelitsha. She has held a leadership position within the EE committee structures and attends a relatively well-resourced school on the Cape Flats. She became involved with Equal Education in Grade 9, at the insistence of a friend. We spoke about her perspectives on her education before she joined *Equal Education*, what she has done with EE since she has joined and what she thought she had learnt in her activism so far. In order to understand how she learns and works within the movement I asked the interviewee about her current activism in the organisation and her role in the movement. She explained what she was involved in at the time:

I'm mobilizing...which is recruiting more Equalisers. I always feel like that they teach us how to become leaders so you mustn't be a leader in Equal Education only. Also, in your community, set the example. So I also mobilize the learners, my friends from different schools – like, "You must join". (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

I asked if the interviewee knew about the most recent EE campaign and what she thought about it, and she replied by describing the campaign as follows:

¹⁴ See Appendix 6: Interview Schedule

¹⁵ Quotations are transcribed directly from audio recordings with errors in Standard English included in this text.

... [The] minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure... which is the Minister of Basic Education created a policy for minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure and she said that that policy would be adopted by 1 April 2011 but until now at our school we don't have school infrastructure. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

When asked what will happen if the Minister does adopt the policy into law the interviewee explained that,

It's really gonna put the pressure to the minister to make action; to do action because she is always talking but she don't do action. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

This part of the interview gave me an indication on the depth of the Equaliser's involvement in the organisation and her understanding of the campaigns, demonstrating that she had gained certain knowledge of policy through her work with EE.

Similarly, the interviewee indicated some of the lessons she felt she had learnt through her involvement in EE and the kind of lessons she had learnt from older members. She explained that by observing and interacting with other activists she viewed as role models, she was able to model their behaviour in her own activism:

...many of the staff members... they are like energetic in their activism. They're like very powerful and one thing and when you look at them, I wish I can be like you. They are very energetic. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

I asked what exactly she has learnt from the movement and who she thought taught her the most. She responded that:

All the facilitators tell us about the education, what happened in the apartheid time and they told us that in the Eastern Cape they are like mud schools which is dangerous structures and all that stuff. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

The interviewee spoke about EE helping her and other learners to recognise that change within the community was necessary and possible. She spoke about a shift in her perception after joining EE, explaining that she now felt entitled to some of the basic rights that have not been provided by government in the past.

Equal Education is very helpful to us because we notice...they notice things that we didn't notice which is - we didn't care. No matter that we didn't have libraries in our schools. They came with this campaign and then our minds were like, we don't have libraries at our schools so we have to be part of this campaign because also our school's education is very poor. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

In addition, the interviewee described her role in collecting learner feedback and ensuring that school-going learners have agency in informing decision-making processes within the movement. She explained the nature of decision-making and information-sharing within learner ranks:

...we as the leadership committee go back in our fellow learners and feedback that we were in the leadership committee and we discussed this and this and this and what do you think about that? And then we're gonna write it down and then we gonna go back to the leadership committee meetings and explain to them. "I've been to the meetings with my fellow Equalisers and the meeting was good and... we discussed on that day - they didn't like this and this and this. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

The respondent also described an example of learners questioning the authority of adult staff by challenging an instruction which they did not feel represented their interests:

At that time everyone was allowed to go but this time we have to elect like maybe 5 grade 10s or 5 grade 11 in each school to go to youth group and then the other ones will attend the mass meetings. Yes, so, but that rule - we didn't like it, as like learners, you see. We gonna miss the other ones so we all going. If I was grade 11, all the

grade 11s go to youth group meetings every Thursday. So actually at the youth groups we come from different schools and different backgrounds. We discuss what the challenges we face at our schools and like come with solutions... The staff members...we said we didn't like that rule. It would separate us and then all that stuff. And they were telling us that it's because of the transport and all those things. But no man we don't care. We want to be there. All of us want to be. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

When asked about the motivation behind her involvement in EE when the interviewee's school was not under-resourced, the interviewee responded:

Because, like, sometimes when I talk I feel so, like proud because I can - although I'm not that perfect in English - but if ever we get together, like black learners from Luhlaza and all those stuff - they can't read. They're doing grade 12. They can't read. They can't write. They can't like, they can't read English. They can't - they're very ashamed of their face. Even in youth group, if ever they include something to read and then we had to include that, they would be so ashamed at themselves because they can't talk English. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

4.3.2. Member of the Community leadership Programme (CL)

I interviewed a participant in EE's community leadership programme. He is one of fourteen students who matriculated in 2010 and hoped to improve their marks by repeating the year and being part of the programme. Each year Grade 12 learners apply for this programme and around 15 people are accepted. Acceptance into the programme depends on involvement in EE and other civil society organizations, as well as what the motivation for being part of the programme is. According to the respondent, the community leadership programme aims to improve participants' Grade 12 marks in order to increase their chances of admission to a tertiary institution. The interviewee explained that he was advised to participate in the programme instead of look for work as he had intended:

I can say they opened up my mind and I was like maybe they are right. What's the point of me trying to find work? Am I even sure I will even find work? And that was how I got involved in the programme. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

He explained how the programme works and what is expected of him. The Community Leadership programme is an intensive learning programme where students are taught from 8am to 5pm every weekday except on those days where they act as facilitators for EE Youth Groups or CLs (Community Leaders). The CLs facilitate EE Youth Groups and act as role models to younger Equalisers. He explained this role as he saw it:

I facilitate a group of young people – young Equalisers in grade 9s. I won't say that's the only role I play for grade 9s. Even the Grade 12s, 11s, 10s and 9s are looking at me as a mentor or role model and I must try by all means to show them the right path. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

He also referred to his own mentoring within the movement.

In the programme we are given mentors... If you have problems at home or at school, they speak to their mentors. Is there any way that they can help us? Especially if I am writing something or have to deliver a speech and then I ask my mentor what I should do about this and that and that. With my mentor, eish...it's hard because he is always busy. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

This direct mentoring was one way in which CLs were supposed to learn how to be community activists and learners. I asked what he thought were the most important lessons he had learnt through his involvement. He answered:

Things about the education system. Because I didn't care much about having a few textbooks in our school because I thought, "Thank you I don't have to be one of the people who read in front of the whole class". But I didn't think it would be for my own benefit and that I wouldn't benefit just listening to another person reading while I don't have the actual book in front of me so I started to see I have to have my own book and then I thought each and every learner must have their own book. And then I wanted to get rid of the mentality of people who were like we can't read because we don't have textbooks and I wanted to give each and every person his or her own

book and see what would people complain about if they had their own books. And I saw EE and I saw much different stuff and they like taught me politics and some different stuff and I saw Zapiro for the first time. They showed me different things (Interview 1, CL: 2011).

In our discussion I asked the CL what skills he was learning in EE. He explained:

This is my third year in EE. There's a lot of stuff I've learnt from Equal Education. I've learnt a leader doesn't quiver. If you stand on top of his head and let him know you are on top of his head a leader must stand up and say "I won't quiver" to you. To lead by example. You must have respect for yourself if you want respect from other people. And then education is the key to success. And then how to deal with young people and even with older people. And how to communicate. And what to say and what not to say. How to improve your self-esteem; how to behave. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

The respondent explained that his experiences in EE has led to personal change in terms of how he viewed himself and also taught him the technical skills he needed in order to lead younger members of the organisation:

We led our school and as time goes on we started to see stuff from a different point of view...EE was more like a crèche for me. I never went to pre-school. And it was like a pre-school...a place where I got some foundation of how to be a good person. It showed me how to be a leader to be exact, how to run meetings, how to manage people, how to make people listen to you when you are talking, if you are alone and there are a hundred people and how to make them listen. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

In this interview the CL described experiences which shifted his perceptions of his own life and the social context of his life.

4.3.3. An 'Equal Educator'

I interviewed a 20-year old former Equaliser and current university student from Khayelitsha. He became involved in *Equal Education* when he was in Grade 10. In 2008, an

Equal Education staff member came to his school and recruited him to the movement, after having known him from his active involvement in other school organizations. The first meeting he attended was at the time of the 2008 xenophobic violence in Cape Town. Referring to this meeting, he explained *“It made me see the xenophobic attacks in a different way”* (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

The respondent emphasised the contribution of the Equalisers in the movement and described the participation of learners in an early campaign:

We were responsible for communicating to our principal and our teachers – making surer they understood the campaign. And it was the same thing with other campaigns which EE ran in 2009. We’re responsible for making sure that everyone knows about them. (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

The Equal Educator explained the role distinctions within the movement and how this affects activist education:

My role is also to learn. You are right that it is also to educate. This is how I see Equal Education. You have PCR, Coordinator’s office, Youth and then you have Admin. PCR gets the information from parliament and from every place. They take the information and they try to fix it so that every staff member in EE understands it. And it’s the same with the coordinators office, they have information that they get and they try to simplify it so that everyone, every staff member at Equal Education gets it because not everyone has a university degree at EE. Then they simplify it. Then we take it. And we read it and when understand it; we also try to simplify it so that our equalizers are able to understand it. And that’s the process of learning at Equal Education... (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

He described past and current experiences of learning in the form of leading campaigns, addressing different stakeholders at different levels as well as being encouraged to read about a wide-range of topics made available in the movement. He explained what is expected of Equalisers and members of EE:

We also encourage them to read newspapers and to get information themselves so that they are able to share it. It's the same with us as facilitators. We are responsible for making sure we read newspapers and get informed about education system in the entire world; what is happening in Chile; what is happening in Nigeria. It is our own responsibility. Equal Education is not going to serve it to us on a silver platter (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011).

The EE-member explained very clearly that he believed that what he had learnt in EE has allowed him to positively impact his local community and that he was an example of how EE strengthened the capacity of the community and its leaders to solve local problems.

I saw actual direction in Equal Education and I thought let me just... see where this movement is going to. I think I was very...I was moulded by Equal Education to really become a leader. To be able to stand in front of people and tell them stuff... They actually showed me that I'm a great leader...The entire movement. I don't only mean the staff. Even the other members. The Leadership Committee...I remember the first time I met ... [the former Head of Youth Groups]. He came to me and told me, 'You're a great leader, you know that. When you speak in front of people...Its very powerful'. That was the first time anybody had ever said that to me. I spoke in many youth groups but I didn't see myself as a leader. When he told me that I was a great leader, that's when our friendship started (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

He explained the impact of the organisation on the local community about of one particular campaign:

[EE members] were helping the school had more than 500 windows which were broken so when we spoke with the Department of Education, the department said, "We are going to fix the windows in 2010. This was in 2008. So Equal Education fought for the learners to get windows in their schools... And they did get them. (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

The interview revealed that this participant considered involvement in EE to have increased his capacity to critically reflect on his social context. The respondent explained that he observed similar changes in the other Equalisers.

...Some [Equalisers] join Equal Education to make friendships but in the long run they understand the problems that they are facing. It's an enlightenment when you join Equal Education. You start realizing, shit this thing which I am getting – it's not right. You stop saying "Okay, I'm getting this education. Maybe I deserve it for living in the townships" That's the mentality which many learners in the townships have. So you don't think it's right for you to complain about anything. So when you join EE, it's like an enlightenment. The funny part – even while you are being enlightened by this entire thing – they teach you that in order for you to be able to express yourself, you should not do this thing in a violent way. You should do this in a proper way which is very ethical. It was new for many of us. Because we knew organisations such as COSAS which used violence and they would march in the streets and like start throwing rocks and stuff. So Equal Education was not promoting violence. At first it was confusing – why not use violence? But then we started to understand it. That's why even new learners are part of Equal Education because they say that this organization wants change but is not promoting for learners to use violence and stuff.

(Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

4.3.4. A staff member

I interviewed a staff member who had been involved with EE for almost two years. He first volunteered for the organisation and soon became employed as the head of one of the campaigns. This respondent argued that without the necessary skills levels, participants in the movement cannot effectively criticise government or offer solutions to problems of service delivery. In this staff member's view:

How do you say that the intellectual reservoir we have in Equal Education is enough to go and tell the education department that, hey we have solutions? We could do a better job than what is being done by the department when the department supposedly has all the skills that management has. (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011)

He described the importance of on-going learning within the movement for creating meaningful change:

I think we understand the problems well. I think we have a lot to learn. That acceptance that we have a lot to learn in solving the problems that we see is what makes us different. Like in everything else there are ups and downs. I think we can do better and we speak about this all the time. (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011)

The staff member described the self-reflective nature of the movement by explaining the lessons he had learnt himself. He explained that he thought in order to achieve social change; participants need to develop skills and improve management within the organisation in order to link community knowledge with expert skills. He reflected that,

If you're looking at the poor, you feel [you] have a solution and they should listen but not maybe thinking if they are the problem then they are also maybe part of the solution. So you need to balance; you need to involve them a bit more in getting the solutions rather than telling them what the solutions are...Socially there is so much one learns... There is a lot to learn. We don't have all the skills; we're trying to build the skills. (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011)

The interviews revealed the varying perspectives of members within the organisation with common some themes revealed, including, members' ongoing learning and skills development as well as perceptions that the movement has a role to play in capacity-building within the local community in which it works. There were also similar views on the learning and power dynamics within the movement. I will discuss these common themes further in the next section.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, I address the two research questions I aim to answer. First I describe the elements of popular education as observed in the planned education programmes. Second, I describe the respondents' perceptions on their personal experiences of learning through their involvement in EE and the extent to which these experiences fall within a popular education paradigm. I use the three broad characteristics of popular education articulated by Crowther, Martin and Shaw as the framework in which to answer these questions: (i) Popular education is rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people; (ii) is overtly political and critical of the status quo and (iii) is committed to progressive social and political change (Martin, 1999)

5.1. What are the elements of popular education in the non-formal education programmes that were observed?

5.1.1. Popular Education as rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people

In popular education, the content of the curriculum comes from the experiences and aspirations of ordinary participants. The knowledge and experiences of ordinary people is treated as significant, in the same order as the knowledge traditionally privileged by conventional education (Martin, 1999). In fact, within popular education, the social reality of participants is prioritised over the expertise of teachers or the imperative of policy (Martin, 1999). The learner is treated as an activist and active contributor to the learning process. The popular education method challenges traditions that get in the way of learners being active citizens (Martin, 1999).

The seminars, in general were presented by staff members in a lecture format with content prepared by the presenter. The one exception was the seminar on the court case where learners and staff members role-played the trial with two groups preparing arguments for each side. In the seminar I described in the findings section, the discussion was dominated by staff members and university students. The coordinator did attempt to engage a wider

range of participants but the younger learners and community leaders were not comfortable sharing their views. This may reflect what Freire calls the reproduction of social relations between dominant classes and oppressed classes in the education setting (Freire, 1970). Critical pedagogists would argue that the Xhosa-speaking, community activists – as opposed to English-speaking staff members – were replicating their positions on the fringes of society in this meeting and this would have been entrenched by the banking education model of the seminar. The seminar format allowed informed staff members to share technical information about privatisation in education, and gave less space for dialogue and raising issues relevant to the everyday experience of participants. Had these elements been included, a more varied set of participants may have voiced their perspectives. Active participation and inclusion is significant in popular education because practitioners argue that there is greater depth in learning when the context is conducive to all participants contributing (Wiggins, 2011). This allows participants to see and reflect on reality from a variety of perspectives (Wiggins, 2011)

At the youth group session, I found that learners were at first engaging passively with the material presented: they were required to listen to the facilitator acting as the department representative, read the fact sheets aloud and then listened to the information translated and explained in Xhosa. Learners spent the bulk of the first half of the session listening and for the most part, it was unclear to me if they understood or were interested in the issues being discussed. Learners did become more active and engaged with the issues when they were given the opportunity to respond to the information in the mock gallery activity and also during the discussion and question session which followed. Learners produced posters explaining their views and experiences on how limited access to facilities like well-stocked libraries and computer labs affected them. They also wrote about how learners in the Eastern Cape, who were forced to learn in mud schools, struggled. Participants expressed their views on the disparities between rural and urban infrastructure and the high number of schools operating below basic functionality in the Eastern Cape. They wrote about their perceptions of government's treatment of schools and infrastructure, about why inequality exists and how learners who learn in schools resourced better or worse than the ones they attend are able to learn. They reflected on their own activism and motivation for being part

of EE and the role they could play in working towards improved schooling. In this way learners were able to tell stories about their experiences and include their own history and culture in the curriculum (Flowers, 2005). Information was presented in terms of the everyday experience of learners, focusing on their schooling experience in Khayelitsha. The session focused on topics related to the EE campaigns and were presented in a way which reflected the interests of the participants and the schools in their local community.

Similarly, the subject of the mass meeting – corporal punishment – was chosen as a result of reports by Equalisers who witnessed and experienced corporal punishment in their schools. The meeting was called as a direct result of learners' struggles to ensure their right to safety at school was protected. Mass meetings, in general, are called when issues affecting members of EE and the general school-going community are raised. This is characteristic of popular education that is rooted in the experiences of ordinary people. Part of the meeting involved making sure learners who might be vulnerable to abuse knew their rights and were empowered to act together in response to illegal actions taken by some teachers. Equalisers were asked to discuss and write down their perspectives on corporal punishment, including what they thought of the effectiveness and ethics of corporal punishment. Participation was limited by learners struggling to understand the difficult legal language in the English texts given to them and much time was spent deciphering the meaning of the language. Because of the limited time available, only a few learners were selected to read out their responses to the discussion points in the worksheet. The mass meetings are held in response to learners raising pertinent issues affecting the community but meetings are called by staff members and student facilitators. This means the agenda is mediated by an elite group of leaders, predominantly living outside of the community, who decide which issues require the attention of the organisation. This was also reflected in the content and language used in the information sheets. An aspect of popular education that was visible in the mass meeting was an attempt by EE leaders to support leadership through school committees. Learners were asked to come up with a strategy to overcome corporal punishment in their different schools and were encouraged to plan a self-organised initiative. This was limited by the short amount of time allotted for this task as well as the limited buy-in from learners present at the mass meeting.

Despite clear traces of popular education, I observed that most of the learning activities in these sessions were not bottom-up or negotiated in an inclusive way. To a large extent it followed the banking model that Freire criticizes, where authorities deposit information into learners who are treated as passive receptacles. Learners listened, memorised and then repeated what they were taught. The fact sheets developed for the purpose of the youth group session and the worksheets developed for the mass meeting were both written in English. This is not the vernacular of the majority of members which is indicative of the distance between the production of learning material and the participants. Learners have some input but ultimately English-speaking staff members have decision-making power in what is learnt and how. Freire argues that in order to subvert unequal power relations in learning practices, facilitators would have to trust that learners have the ability to reason and regard their experience, knowledge and reflection as intrinsically valuable (Freire, 1970). This requires a redefinition of the learner-teacher relationship that is not reflected in the sessions I observed. If both groups were able to learn and teach simultaneously, learners would have greater agency to become critically aware of the world and the way they exist in the world (Freire, 1970).

5.1.2. Popular Education as overtly political and critical of the status quo

Within popular education the political purpose is explicit. Equal Education has an explicit stance that public education in South Africa is in crisis and that the worst affected are poor South Africans. The status quo in this context involves the unequal levels of schooling in South Africa as well as poor service delivery by government in addressing backlogs. The youth group session focused on EE's Minimum Norms and Standards campaign. The fact sheet detailed the current state of school infrastructure in South Africa. It highlighted some of the statistics that reflect the current situation:

The most recent government report on school infrastructure in South Africa - the 2011 NEIMS report - found that of all public schools in South Africa: Only 7% have libraries. 3, 544 have no electricity supply. 2, 402 have no water supply. 11 450 still use pit-latrines. 90% have no stocked computer centres. 95% of public schools have no stocked and functioning laboratories. There are also the 500 mud schools, built out of

dangerously unsafe buildings. These are mainly in the Eastern Cape.” (Equal Education, 2011)

At the youth group session, learners’ were unsympathetic to the department position that it takes time and consensus to promulgate infrastructure norms and standards. Learners spoke about how they felt it was unfair that they did not have the same access to resources as wealthy learners and argued that with better resources they would be able to do as well in school as their wealthier peers and also go to university. Reflecting on their social reality during the youth group, participants expressed their views on the differences between rural and urban infrastructure at schools and reflected an awareness of schools in the Eastern Cape which were not functioning optimally due to lack of infrastructure and other basic resources. Discussions explored how inadequate resources affected their own learning and that of other learners, particularly in rural areas who had even less access. The campaign and the content of the session were not aimed at radical political change, nor were they expressly critical of fundamental economic or social orthodoxies. The learners, in general, seemed to have aspirations of being as wealthy as the middle class learners who had access to the resources they did not. There was limited talk of broader progressive socio-political change in this session. The main issue was pressuring government to promulgate into law a policy which outlines the minimum infrastructural criteria for schools. In part, this session and the campaign were about ensuring the civic rights of the public by increasing the capacity for people to hold government accountable. As the fact sheet explains, “They will do this by following very exact timelines and targets. If they don’t, then learners, teachers and schools can take the government to court. They are not able to do this now because norms and standards are not yet law” (Equal Education, 2011) . By making information about policy transparent and by pressuring government to do the same, learners and teachers would better be able to access their rights to quality education. Learners expressed their support for the campaign and described hopes that in future government would provide better facilities in poor areas such as Khayelitsha.

Similarly, in the mass meetings, Equalisers were asked to discuss and write down their perspectives on corporal punishment including what they thought of the effectiveness and

ethics of corporal punishment. The content of the discussion and worksheets encouraged learners to think for themselves and assert their rights to non-violent discipline in school; in contrast to the historically violent and authoritarian culture still prevalent within the South African schooling system. Equal Educators also spoke in counter-hegemonic terms during the seminar on privatisation when two students described how poor parents feel disempowered to demand good services if are unable to afford school fees. The equal educator also said that she thought that wealthy public schools were essentially privatised because their school fees were so high. In these cases topics had the potential to influence how participants understood their context and assist them to act in their own strategic interest (Foley, 1998). The seminar session also revealed another element of popular education: facilitators raised questions and discussions and were explicit about their political motives. For example, in the case of the mass meeting, facilitators did not present any predetermined solutions to the problem of corporal punishment in schools and did not attempt to be neutral in characterising it as a problem for learners in poor communities (Kane, 2001).

5.1.3. Popular Education as committed to progressive social and political change

Popular education must be directly linked to social action for progressive ends. I observed evidence of learning in social action as well as education for community leadership in the youth group and mass meeting. Youth groups are facilitated by older Equalisers as part of their work as community leaders who must mobilise and educate younger Equalisers and school learners. At the mass meeting in which I participated, speakers shared personal experiences of corporal punishment, legal information was distributed and worksheets were prepared in which learners could explore the legality of corporal punishment and put a stop to it in schools. Reconstructing their experiences and listening to the experiences of other learners enables to gain a clearer understanding of the context in which they live. Reflection on one's experience is central to a Freirian pedagogy where the learning process is defined by praxis: reflection that leads to action which leads to further reflection and so on (Endresen, 2010). The meeting was also aimed at organising learners and ultimately getting feedback from them in order to inform organisational strategy. Leadership committees from the different schools were asked to take what they learnt in the meeting to put into action a

plan to protect learners from corporal punishment in their schools. Learner suggestions included a petition or anonymous feedback system which EE could use to hold teachers accountable. The seminar and discussion was educative to me as an observer because it was the first time I considered why parents may have been remaining silent when their children receive bad treatment at schools. In the seminar and the mass meeting, learners reflected on the ways they, or people they knew, have internalised oppressive ideologies, for example learners feeling that they deserve corporal punishment when they misbehave or that they deserve worse schools because they less money to be able pay for better schooling. The mass meeting and seminar presented opportunities for learners to consider themselves in relationship to these ideologies and question the status quo (Flowers, 2005).

5.2. To what extent do the experiences of participants in EE fall within a popular education paradigm?

5.2.1. Popular Education as rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary people

In popular education, learning through organisational involvement is rooted in the real interests and struggles of ordinary members of the organisation. Popular Education practice is based on the idea that egalitarian social relations within broad contexts should be exemplified in the educational setting. The extent to which ordinary participants are able to inform strategy, exercise power and act as decision-makers within the movement reflects the extent to which their experiences and aspirations manifest in organisational learning. The organisation of power was a key theme that emerged from the interview with all respondents.

The interviews indicated various incidents that showed learning through organisational involvement. In his interview, the Equal Educator argued that learning within the movement was negotiated between bottom-up and top-down strategies. He stressed that young learners had many leadership opportunities within the movement as well as opportunities to participate in decision-making. The most apparent example of this was given by the youngest interviewee, the Equaliser. She explained a scenario in which school learners

defied an instruction from staff members to limit the number of people allowed to attend youth group sessions; rejecting this unilateral instruction and referring to it in terms of “separating [the learners]” (Interview 4. Equaliser: 2011). This is significant since she also explained that at these youth group sessions learners “discuss what the challenges [they] face at [their] schools [are] and... come [up] with solutions” (Interview 4. Equaliser: 2011). The Equaliser spoke about the ways in which ordinary learners are able play a role in decision-making and have an input in the activism of EE when representatives in the Leadership Committee inform them about what staff members have discussed and then listen and write down their concerns and opinions which are then taken back to the EE headquarters.

Within the Community Leadership Programme, the focus is largely on individual achievement and ambition, both of which are tied closely to market-related skill acquisition for a selected number accepted into the programme. These learners repeat their Grade 12 year in order to improve their results, attend university and increase the likelihood of finding more lucrative employment. Learners are taught in an affluent part of the CBD and this curriculum is largely divorced from the community experience. This contrasts with the community activism component of the programme. CLs are also expected to lead youth group sessions and mentor younger Equalisers in Khayelitsha and Kraaifontein. The Equal Educator expressed the view that facilitators of youth groups and older EE-members have the distinct responsibilities to teach younger Equalisers. He explained that:

To try and have camaraderie with [Equalisers] is difficult. Facilitators not abusing their power because some of the Equalisers may be attracted to people in power and there is a rule; facilitators must not date Equalisers ‘cause of that power relationship’ (Interview 1, Community Leader: 2011).

He explained the distinction between Equalisers and CLs and compares CLs to parents and Equalisers to children:

Well, let’s say for example I’m dating an Equaliser and I sleep with the Equaliser and the Equaliser is pregnant. Firstly, the parent of that Equaliser sent their child to Equal

Education thinking that he or she was...they are giving us their child because we are going to also parent their child. Now instead of parenting them – it's like we committed rape. (Interview 1, Community Leader: 2011)

The distance enforced between Equalisers and facilitators indicates that facilitators hold significant power within the organisation and closeness is perceived to be dangerous for the young learners who they argue are vulnerable in this relationship. The roles, as the CL explained, contrast with the egalitarianism characteristic of popular education where learners must be viewed as active and equal citizens. These roles are problematised in the EE context because here, learners are children and, as opposed to an all-adult context, there are greater fears that learners are vulnerable to exploitation. This does mean that there is a limit to the extent to which the content of learning can be embedded in the concrete experience of learners since the experiences and knowledge of child-activists are not seen as equally legitimate because they are not yet adults. These distinctions are subtle, but if young Equalisers must be protected because they are not fully developed, it follows that this will also mitigate the extent to which their contribution is seen as valid. The CL's view was echoed in the interview with the older Equal Educator. He explained that older facilitators are expected to keep a personal distance from learners and commit to not using their status or power to take advantage of younger EE members. The EE facilitators are aware of the distinction between Equalisers and facilitators and when asked about this, the respondent explained:

To be a facilitator you run programmes. You are no longer an Equaliser. You take a role of so-called "adult". You are an Equal Educator. You educate about the stuff which you've learnt. You actually supposed to learn more so that you will be able to explain it to the Equalisers... Equal Educators educates the Equalisers and Equalisers...It's not a big difference but there is a difference. The Equaliser gets the information from the Equal Educator. (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

This linear, top-down dissemination of information is typical of the 'banking' pedagogic model. However the respondent also explains a feedback loop where Equalisers are able to inform facilitators and staff about their experiences at schools:

The Equaliser is also responsible of taking that information and also sharing it with other people. And also, it becomes a vice versa thing where the Equaliser shares information with the Equal Educator because they know a lot of stuff which us, as Equal Educators, we don't know like...such as situations in their school... so it becomes a vice versa thing where they tell us what they are currently facing and stuff. . (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

This explanation gives insight into how the social reality of learners can potentially enter the movement's work and direction. The tensions between traditional and popular configurations of power within the movement continue to emerge in the interview as the respondent explains his experience of the organisation in its early development:

[The meetings] were mostly led by the Equal Education staff in 2008...But in 2009, they had a crisis committee which [is] what we know now as the leadership committee of Equal Education which comprises of learners from different schools. I was also part of the crisis committee for my schools. And we sat down and we discussed issues like problems we viewed as a problem... We were actually also taking part in youth groups, assisting the facilitators. . (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

The structure of the movement and its organisational culture result in learners having an impact on strategy and movement activity, only insofar as the older members, with more intellectual and social capital, consent.

A similar tension between the agency of community members and the movement's effectiveness was explored by the staff member. The staff member indicated that ordinary community members had significant power in the activities of the organisation and in the process of how members learned from each other. Distinguishing the organisation of the movement from that of a company in the private sector, he explained, *"In a movement you need to be a bit more democratic than you do in business... business is normally quite focused. The NGO world is sometimes all over the place"* (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011). He described this democratic power-sharing as less efficient than the practises in the private

sector. However, he also explained the merits of having grassroots participation and learning in the movement:

What really happens out there is that the people that are professionals, people that are sort of middle class - people who think up solutions - don't really understand them. I have been rather fortunate, of being amongst the haves and the have-nots and the have-more as well. The one thing that I can see... there are people who think that they know something about what needs to be done yet they really don't. I have learnt a lot. I expect a lot of the assumptions I had were probably wrong. (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011)

He placed value on the experiences of ordinary people in informing a suitable strategy for the movement and described his experience of the alternative as potentially harmful. The respondent expressed a tension between efficiency and effectiveness in how the movement is able to make an impact and also on its inclusive and grassroots nature. He explained:

The thing is you have to marry a lot of things. If we look at the Equalisers, the guys from the township, they identify problems. But for mistakes not of their own making, they are not in a position to really come up with solutions. Because solutions are more complex. There are legal issues. There are constitutional issues... There are inefficiencies in the running of government. These are not issues we can take to schools and say, right what is your movement of 100 000 people, are you able to give solutions. What we do is to be able get the strength of the constituency and to try and marry it to the law. (Interview 3, Staff Member: 2011)

Though he recognised that only community members are able to express their experiences and interests, he does not recognise this kind of knowledge and experience as being able to solve the complex problems which face them. This reflects thinking shared by some Marxist theorists that the proletariat would achieve consciousness through mass action and 'sensuously' in their experiences of activism while the intelligentsia would contribute through theoretical knowledge (Cooper, 2005) .

5.2.2. Popular Education as overtly political and critical of the status quo

The participants who were interviewed held varied and contradictory political positions. The Equaliser, for example spoke about race from a reactionary position when she explained that it plays a role in the school she goes to because “*where there are black learners, there is a lot of violence and gangsterism but where there are ‘white’, ‘coloured’ or ‘Indian’ children, there is not as much violence*” (Interview 4. Equaliser: 2011). Though there was a reference to historical liberation struggle figures –Steve Biko – the Equaliser did not attribute apartheid policies to the fact that her parents did not have access to education but explained that it was because they were poor (Interview 4. Equaliser: 2011). This shows that there is a complex and perhaps incomplete interpretation of historical factors which inform current inequalities.

A shared experience that emerged from the interviews with the Equaliser, CL and Equal Educator were that they all realised over a period of time in the movement, that some service delivery was acceptable and some not. The Equal Educator explained that after joining EE he realised that he did not deserve a poor quality education simply because he lived in a township. Similarly, the interviewees explained that they were working for learners in the Eastern Cape who had to learn in mud schools that were potentially dangerous and that the significance of this was only made clear to them since they started work in EE. Learners show evidence of what Freire called ‘conscientisation’: the process in which learners think critically about the status quo; envision alternatives in which oppressed people are +empowered and take action to build a new kind of society (Freire, 1970). The Equal Educator explained an enlightening experience when he met parents on a trip to schools in the Eastern Cape:

It’s very painful and sad to see those conditions and I think the court case is going to be very helpful. And I was looking at the meetings I had with those parents and seems as if the parents are committed in making sure that... their kids get a proper education because they are saying they didn’t get a proper education and so they would like their kids to get it. (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

As discussed in the popular education literature, these kinds of learning experiences are not always recorded or even consciously employed by the organisers of a social movement, but happen through an increased awareness of the nature of struggle and through raising the political consciousness of participants (Stromquist, 1998).

5.2.3. Popular Education as committed to progressive social and political change

In the interviews all the participants spoke about their involvement in campaigns. To varying degrees, the interviews revealed incidents of learning with the explicit purpose of empowering communities to engage in social action. The Equaliser I interviewed, speaking about her experience as a young leader said:

It's very difficult and challenging and at the same time you learn more and you achieve more because at some time like maybe Equal Education [staff members] felt like you not doing your work as leaders and you have been trying your best and do your best but they felt like you not doing your work as a leadership member. You're trying but those learners- they're saying that this is very small, you have to do more. You feel very small but at the same time you have to like to believe in yourself and do what they told you to do even if you're calling a meeting at school - it's not that easy because you have to take care of the books, you have to study and you have to call meetings at the same time and maybe the meeting will be like, people will be like, the meeting will, they won't concentrate and do what you told them to do and they will make a noise and all that stuff. It's very [true] it's all about believing in yourself and showing that you are going to do what you're told to do. (Interview 4, Equaliser: 2011)

The CL also talked about the difficult responsibility of being a leader and how his experiences have increased his capacity to lead. He explained:

... And if they ask me for things I must try my best to answer and if I don't know things I must not lie I must say maybe it's this and I must try to refer to them to people who know. I think my role is to lead young people on the right path and not

let them lost their right way and maybe say no you better go that way and because I have gone that way and I was fumbling this way. (Interview 1, CL: 2011)

The Equal Educator explained how his decision to join EE was based on the observation that the commitment to social action was visible:

I saw actually direction in Equal Education and I thought let me just... see where this movement is going to. I think I was very...I was moulded by Equal Education to really become a leader. To be able to stand in front of people and tell them stuff... They actually showed me that I'm a great leader... (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

He also explained one of the campaigns and the role learners played in organising and implementing the campaign:

In 2009 we had a campaign which was 'The Late-coming Campaign... Then I remember this one time in the leadership committee, we wrote down the problems and then next time we met EE compiled the information about late-coming and telling us that is a serious issue in South Africa. It was the learners taking responsibility this time...And it was very impressive in my school. I remember this one time...we ran it for four or three weeks but the first week it was running in my school, my principal was very supportive of it. And me, and the other people who were in the leadership committee of EE that year we were actually made to lead the campaign in our school. (Interview 2, Equal Educator: 2011)

The link between learning and social action is explicit in these interviews as is to be expected in an active social movement. According to the staff member I interviewed, the learners – Equalisers – make up the largest proportion of the movement and are always actively involved in the campaigns. Their action is thus central to the activity of Equal Education in their community. Freire argues that praxis or “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” is the way in which learners on the margins of society can be liberated from oppressive social relations (Freire, 1970, p. 51). Social action is part of how learners undo oppressive ideologies they may ordinarily have internalised as natural (Foley, 1998).

5.3. Summary of research questions

5.3.1. What are the elements of popular education in the planned education programmes that were observed?

The observations of seminars and Equaliser youth groups and mass meetings revealed several features of popular education. The youth group and mass meeting involved content which reflected the social reality of learners and which was aimed at serving the interests of marginalised groups, namely, school infrastructure in poor communities and illegal corporal punishment. The mass meeting also aimed to help increase the capacity of community leaders by informing them of their legal rights and helping them to strategize to combat corporal punishment in their schools. Both group sessions were pointedly critical of the status quo regarding government policy and teacher practices. The sessions linked to social action by encouraging learner activism to change state policy and the behaviour of school teachers and principals. There are certain elements of these group sessions which counter this tradition, however. In terms used by Freire to describe his banking education model, the pre-determined content in these sessions was 'deposited' by facilitators to learners who were presumed to be ignorant. The legal and policy knowledge of facilitators and staff were privileged as legitimate, with far less space and time allocated for the contribution of learners' knowledge and experience. While learners and facilitators often verbally communicated in their vernacular, written material was made available only in English. Critical thinking around problems was also limited, as solutions were decided by staff and older members of the organisation and then explained to learners in youth groups.

5.3.2. To what extent do the experiences of participants in EE fall within a popular education paradigm?

The interviews underlined tensions between mainstream and popular pedagogies in the learning activities of the movement. Within the popular education paradigm, participants explained the ways in which their activism challenged the status quo, particularly unequal service delivery of education based on material wealth. All the interviewees explained in different ways how the current quality of education in poor communities undermined social justice and that their activism aimed to rectify this. The interviews indicated that members

believed that the organisational activity of EE was central in increasing the capacity of community leaders and thus resulted in grassroots development. There was also a certain level of acceptance of the current hegemony which requires market-related skills development; 'human capital development' and the acquisition of personal wealth. Furthermore, participants accepted the prevailing language norms – proficiency in English as an indicator of status and education level. Reference was also made to hierarchical power dynamics typical of employer-employee relations within organisations and paternalistic relations between older activists and younger learners. These reflect ideological trappings outside of the popular education practices of progressive social movements. The evidence suggests that there are many ways in which popular education takes place within this particular social movement but that there also exists subtle complicities in unequal power relations common in a highly unequal society like South Africa. In the next section I will discuss this and further implications of these findings.

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5.4. Implications for learning in Equal Education

5.4.1. The role of educator

Popular education works from a premise that there is a plurality of knowledge and that the experiences and activities of ordinary people within civil society constitutes legitimate learning practises (Martin, 1999). In the case of EE, attempts to form partnerships between learner and educator were undermined when educators fell into the trap of banking teaching, thereby posing the risk of depoliticising the subject and replicating the repressive power structures that the movement seeks to undo. In popular education the aim is not to deny the unequal power-relations inherent between educator and learner, but to make these explicit so that it is part of the learning experience (Martin & McCormack, 1999) Martin explains that “[e]ducators are more often part of the problem than part of the solution or at any rate that they cannot be part of the solution until they see how they can compound the problem” (Martin, 1999, p. 9).

To counter the ‘epistemological filtering’ predominant in traditional educational settings, the educator must actively work to understand the learning dimension that exists in social life. In order to work towards progressive and representative education, educators in social movements should work to “make the educative elements of people’s collective experience, i.e. what they learn in the process of social and political action, more systematically educational” (Martin, 1999). Constructing a curriculum which reflects this collective experience is not a simple task but requires critical reflection and the deconstruction of social and political action. Critical reflection and active engagement were not always apparent in the role of educators in EE. Empathy and mutual trust did occur incidentally and sporadically between different educators and learners and there was also recognition that Equalisers were partners in learning. This was, however, not reflected in a systematic way within the planned education programmes or organisational activities, and only a particular cluster of knowledge was legitimated. In order to exist as a movement which presents the will of community members and not an elite group speaking on their behalf, the movement must be self-reflexive and engage in structured dialogue with learners in order to gain access to this plurality of knowledge within the movement and its community.

5.4.2. Paradoxes of representativity within EE

The extent to which popular education is practised within a social movement is a political choice that determines the extent to which the movement embraces a genuinely popular kind of politics. Popular education requires critical awareness of deeply entrenched patterns of privilege and subordination. Analysis of learning within *Equal Education* showed that this level of critical awareness fluctuated, and participants revealed that in significant ways these patterns could be overlooked and thus re-entrenched. In a movement where the majority of members are learners, there is clearly a determined effort to include learners in decision-making processes through the democratic structures of leadership committees. This representation is limited by the extent to which the power and privilege are not made explicit. While there are clear progressive tendencies within the organisation, the role of race, class, gender and, significantly in this context, age is implicit rather than actively addressed. Without critical awareness and active reflection entrenched relations of power are uncritically reproduced.

5.4.3. The centrality of human agency

Critical pedagogy advocates for the 'self-liberation of the masses' (Thampi, 1973). This means that there is a focus on agency and mobilisation so that, once exploitation is perceived, people can become active in overcoming exploitation through mass organisation (Rafi, 2003). Within popular education, it is central that the learners are recognised as activists within their social context. This means that there is a central belief in the capacity of people to choose for themselves and to act to make a difference within their social reality. A central concern for the curriculum of progressive social movements is challenging what gets in the way of learner as active citizen. This challenge is amplified in this case by the fact that, unlike many other movements, *Equal Education* has a large child-learner membership. This presents a particular challenge and raises moral issues around the agency of children and their role in civil society. A crucial role in learning within this movement involves understanding the ways in which freedoms are limited for all members, including the child-learner population.

5.4.4. Social capital

One of the benefits of learning within a democratic movement are the alliances and community networks that form within schools, class formations, NGOs and teachers. The social cohesion and solidarity that forms within community movements result from the direct participation in collective action. Martin explains Putnam's definition of social capital as "bonds of affiliation and collective action which in turn establish norms and social trust and facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit" (Martin, 1999, p. 14). The social cohesion within Equal Education reflects an intrinsic value placed on human relationships and reciprocity, as well as addressing any inequality that may undermine this (Martin, 1999). The social capital fostered in EE has allowed for community capacity-building by forging solidarity between a wide-range of participants committed to a common political project – in this case, the struggle for quality education for all people.

5.5. Final Conclusion

The aim of this study was to document the learning activities within a social movement and analyse the extent to which these fit within a popular education paradigm. As a newly formed movement with a mix of complex structural elements, Equal Education is already playing a central role in the challenge to education service delivery failures. Besides lobbying government for policy reform, Equal Education mobilises learner and parent communities to engage with issues of education and learning. This activism contains many opportunities for learning within the movement. In order to conceptualise the kinds of learning described within the popular education tradition, I identified a list of elements of learning commonly found within this school of thought. I participated in field-research as a volunteer-intern in the organisation and collected data about learning activities from observations and interviews. I coded and analysed the data to show the extent to which popular education can be seen in the planned and incidental learning experiences of members in the movement. Belonging to the movement has personal impact on participants – widening their perspectives, increasing knowledge of community and socio-political issues, developing leadership capacity and organisational skills as well as allowing them to share their experiences and prior knowledge. Participants also share close links with fellow members of the movement. This contrasts with some of the restrictions placed on learner-

agency within the movement. Similarly, partial critical self-reflection regarding power-relations by members in the 'educator' role resulted in limitations in the practise of popular education within the movement. Social movements like Equal Education can deepen popular democracy and bring the concerns of marginalised communities to the fore. This study has shown the important role which popular education can play in the process of furthering the progressive agenda of social movements. I argue that in order for social movements to be genuinely transformative within marginalised communities, popular education must play a central role in its activities and strategies.

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Appendix 1: Initial email correspondence with Equal Education

Jonny Wilkinson <jonny@equaleducation.org.za>

7/22

/11

to me

Dear Ferron,

Michelle Adler forwarded me your email to EE and I think it would be great if you can volunteer with us. I could definitely use your Masters research skills. It just depends on the amount of time you are available.

Basically, I may need some help with drawing up several fact sheets which draw on information gathered by our Policy, Communications and Research (PCR) department. The aim of the fact sheets will be to inform equalisers (EE's young members still in school) of the issues South African education currently faces in a way that is accessible to them. This will form part of a wider project to empower equalisers to confidently stand up to the issues.

Are you able to tell me how long you would be available for, and how many times a week? Maybe we could meet next week to chat. Would you be happy to come to our offices in Khayelitsha?

Best,
Jonny

University of Cape Town

NORMS & STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

We will not live up to our claim that every child is a national asset if we do not concentrate our efforts on tackling our immense infrastructural challenges.

Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga

EE is campaigning for minimum norms & standards for school infrastructure. This fact sheet will explain why. But first...

WHAT IS SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE?

Infrastructure – the parts that make up a working system. For example, infrastructure for hospitals include operating theatres, x-ray machines, ambulance bays, wards for patients, electricity and running water. Without these things, a hospital cannot run properly.

So school infrastructure is everything from electricity, toilets, safe buildings, libraries, computer rooms, safe classrooms, sports halls and fields, laboratories for science experiments, running water and fencing. Without these things, a school cannot work properly. For schools, we can also call infrastructure resources.

All schools in South Africa should have these things. But right now, the majority of schools in South Africa don't have these things. It is mainly rich schools that do. This needs to change.



WHAT ARE NORMS & STANDARDS?

Norms & standards are regulations that are passed by Ministers. Ministers are given the power to pass regulations by laws, such as the South African Schools Act. The South African Schools Act gives the Minister of Education the power to create regulations (norms & standards) for school infrastructure.

Regulations give effect to laws. In other words, without regulations some laws do not make an impact on society. The law says, for example, that all learners have the right to a quality education. But that doesn't explain what to do about mud schools. In other words, without regulations, the law can be quite vague about how to actually deal with problems in South Africa.

THERE ARE ALSO POLICIES, WHICH THE DEPARTMENTS USE TO GUIDE THEIR WORK OF CARRYING OUT THE LAW. HOWEVER, POLICIES ARE NOT LAW. THEY CANNOT BE USED TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE. BUT REGULATIONS CAN BE USED TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE:

Regulations (norms & standards) give the different departments a plan to follow. They help to apply the law to everyday life. But most importantly, once these regulations are signed into law, the government has to follow them. When the government does not follow the law, people can take the government to court to make them follow it.

The regulations EE is struggling for are the norms & standards for school infrastructure. They are regulations that list all the physical resources that schools need to run properly and give a quality education to learners. The regulations will also mean that no school can remain open without a certain level of basic resources.

WHY IS EE CAMPAIGNING FOR NORMS & STANDARDS?

Education is very unequal. Apartheid created inequalities along racial lines. The Bantu Education Act meant that education under apartheid did not escape this. Under apartheid, learners from different races were provided different levels of school infrastructure. A black child received much less than a white child. Many of these inequalities are still with us today, seventeen years into our new democracy.

DEFINITIONS

Regulations: A set of laws or rules.

This is vital when we consider the fact that school infrastructure, or resources, impacts on how well teachers are able to teach and learners are able to learn. Learners attending schools with better infrastructure tend to perform better than learners who come from schools with not enough resources.

EE has seen the importance of school infrastructure in creating a suitable environment where teaching and learning can happen. For this reason, FF is putting pressure on the Minister to sign into law norms & standards (regulations) for school infrastructure.

In 2010, the Minister adopted a policy that these regulations would be law by April 2011. However, five months after that date has passed they are still not law.

The Minister has said she needs the permission of all the MECs for education to make the norms & standards law. But this is not true. All she has to do is speak to them about it and get their thoughts.

CURRENT SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE SITUATION

The most recent government report on school infrastructure in South Africa - the 2011 NEIMS report - found that of all public schools in South Africa:

- **ONLY 7% HAVE LIBRARIES.**
- **ARE THE MUD SCHOOLS. THEY ARE MAINLY IN THE EASTERN CAPE.**
- **3, 544 HAVE NO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**
- **2, 402 HAVE NO WATER SUPPLY**
- **11 450 STILL USE PIT-LATRINE TOILETS**
- **90% HAVE NO STOCKED COMPUTER CENTRES**
- **95% OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE NO STOCKED AND FUNCTIONING LABORATORIES.**
- **THERE ARE ALSO THE 500 MUD SCHOOLS, BUILT OUT OF DANGEROUSLY UNSAFE BUILDINGS. THESE ARE MAINLY IN THE EASTERN CAPE.**

If there is no access to water, electricity or toilets, can we expect learners to concentrate on learning?

If there are no laboratories, libraries or computer rooms in schools, can we expect teachers to teach properly?

DEFINITIONS

MEC: MECs are people like Donald Grant. He has a similar job to Minister Angie Motshega but only in the Western Cape.

NEIMS: It stands for National Education Infrastructure Management System report.

WHAT DO NORMS & STANDARDS HAVE TO DO WITH LIBRARIES?

In 2009, EE began the Campaign for School Libraries. This was to bring attention to the fact that most schools in South Africa do not have libraries.

But this is only part of a bigger problem. EE has seen the importance of all school infrastructure in creating a suitable environment where teaching and learning can happen. Having norms & standards will mean that, in time, the government will have to give every school a library. But the government will also have to give every school running water, fencing, safe buildings, electricity, laboratories and computer rooms.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT EE NEVER THOUGHT THAT LIBRARIES WERE THE SILVER BULLET THAT WOULD FIX EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE NO SILVER BULLETS BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION. CAMPAIGNING FOR NORMS & STANDARDS IS A WAY OF FOCUSING EE'S STRUGGLE.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO HAVE NORMS & STANDARDS?

What will it mean to have norms & standards for school infrastructure? Getting minimum norms & standards won't solve all our problems. We won't have quality schools overnight. It will take some time for the government to make all schools look like proper schools. But the different provincial departments of education (PDEs) will have to make sure that all schools eventually look like proper schools. They will do this by following very exact timelines and targets. If they don't, then learners, teachers and schools can take the government to court. They are not able to do this now because norms and standards are not yet law.

Most importantly, all schools in South Africa will have a clear understanding of what facilities and resources they should have to provide a quality education to learners. They will be able to hold the PDEs responsible in making sure they are supplied with the necessary infrastructure and resources.

FACT SHEET CHALLENGE

1. What is the difference between policies and regulations?
2. Who passes norms & standards into law?
3. Whose permission does the Minister need to sign into law the norms & standards for school infrastructure?
4. Why do you think it makes sense for EE to focus on school infrastructure right now rather than making sure South Africa's teachers are motivated?

DEFINITIONS

Silver Bullet: When something is the only answer to a problem, it can be called a silver bullet. The word's low bullet comes from the story that only silver bullets can kill werewolves, and other mythical creatures.



Appendix 3: Agenda for Mass Meeting Monday 5 September 2011

Thembelihle High School, 3:30-5:30pm

Chair: Phathiswa Shushwana

Welcome: Songs and Opening (Leadership committee) (10min)

Bulumko Learners Share their story of Corporal Punishment (5min)

Game: Tell a story to your partner (10min)

Equalisers are asked to share a story from their own experience with the person next to them of a situation when they have been beaten by a parent, a teacher or anyone else as a form of punishment.

Break up into random groups to complete worksheet 1: (25min)

Each worksheet will have a group number on it. Equalisers must find their groups and facilitators will be assigned to each group.

Form into School Groups to complete worksheet 2: (30min)

Equalisers then break into their schools for the second worksheet related to equalisers organising to stop corporal punishment in their schools.

Other Announcements: (5 min)

[End]

Corporal Punishment

Worksheet 1: Understanding the Issue

5 September 2011

1. What is Corporal Punishment?

Corporal Punishment means deliberately inflicting physical pain against a person as a way of punishing them and forcing them to change their behaviour.

2. What does the Law say about Corporal Punishment?

Corporal Punishment is **ILLEGAL** in South Africa.

Section 12 of the Constitution states that:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right
 - a. not to be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause;
 - b. not to be detained without trial;
 - c. *to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources;*
 - d. not to be tortured in any way; and
 - e. *not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.*
2. Everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right :
 - a. to make decisions concerning reproduction;
 - b. to security in and control over their body; and
 - c. not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without their informed consent.

Section 10 of the South African Schools Act states:

(1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

3. Perspectives on Corporal Punishment

Write down what you think about the following statements. Discuss your answers as a group afterwards.

1. Classrooms are overcrowded and noisy. Corporal punishment is the only way to ensure that there is discipline in class and teaching and learning can take place.

2. It is ok for parents to hit their own children, but it is not ok for strangers or teachers to do it.

3. Corporal punishment is not ok. It is never ok to hit a child, ever. Doing so is a form of abuse and violation of his/her human dignity. Also, it is illegal and punishable by law.

4. Corporal punishment does not work. The best way to ensure that learners are well behaved is to encourage them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Also, there are other more forms of punishment, which actually help the school, like getting learners to clean and do gardening at school.

6. South African society is a violent society. Beating children is part of that violence. Parents were hit by their parents; and children will hit their children. Husbands hit their wives. If we want to stop violence against children, we need to address the reasons why our society is so violent generally.

Appendix 4: Mass Meeting Worksheet 2

Corporal Punishment

Worksheet 2: Organising against Corporal Punishment 5 September 2011

Students played a key role in the mass resistance of the late 1970s and 1980s which ended Apartheid and brought Democracy to South Africa in 1994. The way in which students organised themselves was through establishing Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at their schools. These were democratically elected student bodies, which united students, and through which students organised campaigns to transform their schools and the education system. Today we no longer have SRCs but instead have Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs).

What follows is a story from the 1980s about how one SRC successfully organised a campaign to end Corporal Punishment at its school. At the time Corporal Punishment was legal and widely used. The story is told by a member of that SRC.

Read the story below and think about what made the campaign a success and how we, as Equalizers, can organise a similar campaign in our schools.

“We had a lot of problems with corporal punishment at our school. The teachers were beating students for doing badly in tests, hitting them with their fists, even kicking them. The SRC decided that something had to be done.

The first thing we decided was to speak to the students about the issue. We went around to all the classes, and discussed what students felt. We noted examples where corporal punishment was abused. We found that many students supported the cane because they were not used to any other forms of discipline. So then we set up discussions, educating students about the problems with corporal punishment, the fact that it oppresses us, and does not develop self-discipline and so on. We also had programmes with sketches showing the problems.

At the same time, we thought it was important to get the support of the parents. Some of them believed in corporal punishment – they used to beat their children when they were angry. We took pamphlets around to parents, and discussed the issue with them. We also spoke to teachers, to get their opinions.

Many teachers agreed with us. But some said there must be other forms of discipline. We discussed some of these with the students. The discussions were very good; it really made the students think about discipline and what it means for them. Students felt that disciplinary action should be constructive.

After about two weeks of discussion and awareness programmes, we took the petition around to all the students, to the parents and to the teachers. The petition called for an end to the cane. It said that punishment should assist the

student and other students – like cleaning up the school, doing gardening in the school grounds, etc...

At first the principal was not too keen to listen to our demands, even when we presented him with the petitions, which showed we had mass support. So we called for a half day stay-away, and held a placard demonstration. Then he realised we were quite serious, and agreed to our demands.

I think it was a very good campaign. Firstly, we won the issue – there is no corporal punishment at our school now. Secondly, we really involved a lot of students – it was a very popular issue, and a lot of students actively helped us.

I think an important aspect was that it made the students really think about why corporal punishment was used, and what its effects were. This made them also more aware with the problems of our education system, and made them think about alternatives. The students started to take more responsibility, to see the importance of self-discipline.

Name of School: _____

Group Discussion Questions – HAND THIS SHEET IN TO YOUR FACILITATOR

1. Why do you think that the students were successful in ending Corporal Punishment at their school?
2. Is corporal punishment a problem at your school?
3. Are you prepared to campaign against Corporal Punishment at your school?
4. How will you organise this Campaign?

Think about how you would engage with other students, the RCL at your school, teachers, the principal, the Western Cape Education Department, the media.

Write down what the group decides:

Decide on a date and time to meet at your school and start working on the Campaign.

Some Ideas to consider:

- Ask your teacher or principal to see the school's disciplinary policy
- Write a petition to end corporal punishment at your school
- Perform a play for your school against the issue of corporal punishment
- Ask for a meeting with your principal or School Management Team to raise the issue of Corporal Punishment at your school.
- If there are serious problems at your school, collect detailed stories from learners at your school and present these to EE, your principal and your school's Circuit Team Manager (EE can help with these details).

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Appendix 5: Interview Consent Form

University of Cape Town

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Sociology

Consent Form

Title of research project: Learning in New Social Movements

Name of researcher: Ferron Pedro

Telephone: 082 565 2393

Email: ferron.pedro@gmail.com or pdrfer001@myuct.ac.za

Name of participant:

Nature of research: One narrative one-on-one interview on personal life history

Participant involvement:

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
- I understand that my personal details will not be included in the research and that I will not be personally identifiable
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have a right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of participant/guardian (if under 18): _____

Name of participant/guardian: _____

Signature of person who sought consent: _____

Name of person who sought consent: _____

Date: _____

How long did it take you to complete high school? Were you able to pursue what you aimed to?
Can you tell me about your Matric year?
What were the highlights of high school?
What were the biggest challenges of high school?
<i>Indicators: Books; Library card; Literacy; Numeracy; Play; Parental involvement; Community involvement; Extra support; Extracurricular development; Rural /urban; Educated/non-educated parents/guardians; Access to Toys, Access to technology, Language at home, Language at place of learning; infrastructure of school</i>
Early Adult life
What did you do immediately after high school?
Your life in the movement
How did you get involved in EE? Tell me about your journey in EE? What do you here now?
What have been the most significant lessons learnt in EE?
What have been the most challenging aspects of working in EE?

Appendix 7: Example of interview transcript (extract from interview with Equal Educator)

EE	It was different from the organizations which I had been involved in because they would just sit down and they would speak about stuff and we were told... I remember this one time we were invited by some organization by some organization...of pastors... which asked us what would be good for our school – for the safety of our school. My school was very violent. My high school. They were having these fights each and every year. So when learners were walking out there would be these gangsters who would be chasing one another with knives. So this organization came, they asked us what would we do to help stop violence.
FP	<i>Equal Education?</i>
EE	Another organization. And we gave them ideas but we never heard from them again... And this was something that I was used to. Organizations would come to us and act as if they going would stick with us forever but then do anything. But Equal Education was already doing something about the school in Luhlaza which was really amazing to me because it was a first actually.
FP	<i>What were they doing about Luhlaza?</i>
EE	They were helping...the school had more than 500 windows which were broken so when we spoke with the Department of education, the department said, “We are going to fix the windows in 2010”. This was in 2008. So Equal Education fought for the learners to get windows in their schools... And they did get them.
FP	<i>Can you tell me about the weekly meetings? Was there a leader? Who spoke?</i>

EE	[The meetings] were mostly led by the Equal Education staff in 2008...But in 2009, they had a crisis committee which what we know now as the leadership committee of Equal Education which comprises of learners from different schools. I was also part of the crisis committee for my schools. And we sat down and we discussed issues like problems we viewed as a problem. The first issue which we discussed in the crisis committee was the issue of [school]. They had a problem... they didn't have a Science teacher for many months. And they were doing...these were grade 12s and grade 11s. It's shocking for them not to have it. We discussed it and then... We were actually also taking part in youth groups, assisting the facilitators
FP	<i>This is when you were in Grade 11? Grade 12?</i>
EE	12... I saw actually direction in Equal Education and I thought let me just... see where this movement is going to. I think I was very...I was molded by Equal Education to really become a leader. To be able to stand in front of people and tell them stuff... They actually showed me that I'm a great leader...
FP	<i>Who is 'they'?</i>
	The entire movement. I don't only mean the staff. Even the other members. The Leadership Committee...I remember the first time I met Lwando (Head of Youth Groups). He came to me and told me, 'You're a great leader, you know that. When you speak in front of people...Its very powerful'. That was the first time anybody had ever said that to me. I spoke in many youth groups but I didn't see myself as a leader. When he told me that I was a great leader, that's when our friendship started
EE	In 2009, in December camp, I was a facilitator. I have to say the 2009 camp – I learnt a lot from it because there were...the first 3 days was only for facilitators. We were being taught how to facilitate and stuff. Those 3 days were the most powerful 3 days for me because I still remember some of the stuff which was said. Although I'm currently running a youth group...I still remember those things and I'm...I use them each and every youth group which I run. One of those things was that you need to have a relationship with your equalizers. I don't mean...You must be very professional...what type of relationship you have with your equalizers. Stuff such as like why you should not date equalizers...because it's bad for the movement. It could destroy the movement. The minute you become a facilitator you are like a father to the kids. And you are also like a friend. But you need to have a limit as a facilitator. You can speak with them and stuff. But you need to have a limit. You cannot share your personal life...like who you're dating and stuff. If they ask you things such as that, that's when you as a facilitator, you need to move away from the conversation and change it"
FP	<i>Can you explain to me why that is bad for the movement?</i>
EE	Well, let's say for example I'm dating an equalizer and I sleep with the equalizer and the equalizer is pregnant. Firstly, the parent of that equalizer sent their child to Equal Education thinking that he or she was...they are giving us their child because we are going to also parent their child. Now instead of parenting them – it's like we committed rape."
FP	<i>You went to the meetings and then...? Tell me about your journey in Equal Education?</i>
EE	Went to the meetings...part of the leadership committee, became a facilitator in 2009
	<i>What does it mean to be a facilitator?</i>
EE	To be a facilitator you run programmes. You are no longer an equalizer. You take a role of a so-called "adult". You are an Equal Educator. You educate about the stuff

	which you've learnt. You actually supposed to learn more so that you will be able to explain it to the equalizers. So everything in Equal Education, want to convey to the equalizer so you must know...
<i>FP</i>	<i>What's the difference between an Equalizer and an Equal Educator?</i>
EE	Equal Educators educates the equalizers and equalizers...It's not a big difference but there is a difference. The equalizer gets the information from the Equal Educator. The equalizer is also responsible of taking that information and also sharing it with other people. And also, it becomes a vice versa thing where the equalizer shares information with the equal educator because they know a lot of stuff which us, as Equal Educators, we don't know like...such as situations in their school... so it becomes a vice versa thing where they tell us what they are currently facing and stuff.
<i>FP</i>	<i>From then what did you do?</i>
EE	"In 2010 I was studying... a first year student at CPUT so I was still involved in Equal Education, facilitating each and every week. So I was a facilitating Grade 10s. I had a strong bond with them and I learnt a lot from that year; from the Equal Education staff as such but mostly from the Equalizers... talking a lot....
<i>FP</i>	<i>What did you learn?</i>
EE	How to be a leader, how to handle problems. In 2010, that's when I actually realized that I am not a social worker. I need to be able to handle things. I can't force myself to give the equalizers more advice than what I know because if I give them advice I'm actually breaking the law... I don't have any certificate or degree to give them advice. I need to refer them to someone or some, another place. I can listen to their problems but then refer them
<i>FP</i>	<i>What do you do in Equal Education now?</i>
EE	"I am currently a head of a youth group – Mitchell's Plain Youth Group. I am in charge of making sure youth groups run and facilitators know the programme which we are going run, there's a communication between equalizers and facilitators and also the programme which EE has put in place to be done throughout the year - I'm responsible for making sure they are running – they are being run in youth groups. I'm also responsible for leading some camps. For example, I led the one that was in KZN. I was the camp leader."
<i>FP</i>	<i>So what do you think are the most important thing you've learnt in EE?</i>
EE	Most important thing [I've learnt]... To open your mind. To open your mind to new things. To be able to think out of the box. To respect. When I say open your mind, I also mean to be able to cling to new ideas and stuff
<i>FP</i>	<i>And tell me about some of the campaigns you've been involved in?</i>
EE	In 2009 we had a campaign which was 'The Late-coming Campaign...
<i>FP</i>	<i>Who decided you were going to do that campaign and not something else?</i>
EE	Funnily enough this was decided by the learners. Equal Education – what they would do is they would come up with these ideas. We were told, I remember, we were told to bring the problems which we are facing in our schools...problems which are major problems, which are major issues. Then I remember this one time in the leadership committee, we wrote down the problems and then next time we met EE compiled the information about late-coming and telling us that is a serious issue in South Africa
<i>FP</i>	<i>What did the late-coming campaign entail?</i>
EE	It was the learners taking responsibility this time. All the equalizers – we were

	<p>expected to arrive at school very early and to motivate our friends to arrive early. Also we had banners, we were singing. Also distributing pamphlets which were explaining why it's wrong to be late. It was actually very cool. I enjoyed it. And it was very impressive in my school. I remember this one time... we ran it for four or three weeks but the first week it was running in my school, my principal was very supportive of it. And me, and the other people who were in the leadership committee of EE that year we were actually made to lead the campaign in our school. We were responsible for communicating to our principal and our teachers – making surer they understood the campaign. And it was the same thing with other campaigns which EE ran in 2009. Were responsible for making sure that everyone knows about them.</p>
<i>FP</i>	<i>What motivated you? Why did you do this? Why not watch TV or try to get girls to like you?</i>
<i>EE</i>	<p>I've always thought like education which was something that was very deep than I was exposed to. You can actually achieve a lot through education. You can become anything you want to be, just that you will never – the situation in my school didn't allow that for me and also the type of education in my school didn't allow that for me to be able to do those things. Those who wanted to be scientists or wanted to do anything in that involved science – they couldn't do it because they didn't have the resources. Those who wanted to be...</p>
<i>FP</i>	<i>A dancer?</i>
<i>EE</i>	<p>Ya, we didn't have extramural activities. Many extramural activities beside the organisations: Soccer and Rugby. But each and every year we'd sign something that was asking which sport would you like to play and those things would never happen. We didn't have enough resources. The school was managed very well but the problem was not having enough resources or enough teachers I remember in 2008, we didn't have an Accounting teacher for three months. We wrote the exam while we didn't even having an accounting teacher. Those were the problems we faced that made us not to even imagine going to university and making it in life. But I was always. I always thought that education - there was a lot that you could get out. And Equal Education motivated me more to think about that</p>
<i>FP</i>	<i>Why do you think other equalizers join Equal Education?</i>
<i>EE</i>	<p>Some [Equalizers] join Equal education to make friendships but in the long run they understand the problems that they are facing. It's an enlightenment when you join Equal Education. You start realizing, shit this thing which I am getting – it's not right. You stop saying “Okay, I'm getting this education. Maybe I deserve it for living in the townships” That's the mentality which many learners in the townships have. So you don't think it's right for you to complain about anything. So when you join EE, it's like an enlightenment. The funny part – even while you are being enlightened by this entire thing – they teach you that in order for you to be able to express yourself, you should not do this thing in a violent way. You should do this in a proper way which is very ethical. It was new for many of us. Because we knew organisations such as COSAS which used violence and they would march in the streets and like start throwing rocks and stuff. So Equal Education was not promoting violence. At first it was confusing – why not use violence? But then we started to understand it. That's why even new learners that are part of Equal Education because they say that this organization wants change but is not promoting for learners to use violence and stuff.</p>
<i>FP</i>	<i>So you buy into Equal Education's mission and you want to make a contribution.</i>

	<i>What do you think are the big problems in education in South Africa?</i>
EE	I think the biggest problems – I’ll mention only two but there are many problems in education in South Africa. The first one I’d say- teachers which are not motivated. Not even ordinary not being motivated but who are not doing their jobs properly maybe because they are not skilled for the job or they too lazy to do the job... When I read about other countries, they are learners who are like reading in poor conditions but the teachers who are able to make sure that each and every learner understands their education, what they are teaching -their lessons. They go into their homes and motivate their parents to teach the learners and stuff. It’s so powerful and I believe our teachers are not doing that. They are missing the point. I was reading that our teachers are one of the most paid teachers in the world. They are seen as the most paid teachers than other countries such as...I’m not sure if it was India or Brazil. Those are countries with great education systems. But our teachers, while they are well paid, they still complain every year about pays but there aren’t many outcomes... I do not fully blame them; I partly blame them. I also blame the government then because the government is not doing enough to make sure that our teachers are equipped with the right textbooks; with the right resources in making sure that they are able to teach their lessons properly. And then infrastructure is a major issue. Even if you can compare other countries and say that learners are being taught in like poor conditions but they are able to achieve good results. In the Eastern Cape – when I think about the eastern cape and I think about my cousins who are in the Eastern Cape They do not go to classes or do not have lessons when it’s raining because they don’t have a roof. It’s like they are outside. When the rain is pouring, the entire classroom will be wet and so they do not go to classrooms. When I went to the Eastern Cape this year in June and I was hearing the stories of those learners who walk many distances to come to school but when they arrive at the school, they have to sit at this horrible, horrible infrastructure. They were telling me in Winter when they will be sitting and it’s very cold and there is no electricity. It’s demoralizing for learners. That’s why you see people from these places don’t even think about going to university. They think about coming to Cape Town and working.
FP	<i>What do you think are the biggest challenges for Equal Education?</i>
EE	The government.
FP	Okay, What do you mean?
EE	Although the government is trying, they really do not understand what, I find sometimes – they really do not understand what this movement is trying to do. They see the movement as if it’s an organization which is trying to be an obstacle in them making their deliveries to the people of South Africa but Equal Education is not that. We asked for libraries and the government didn’t give us with libraries and we said we would wait and while we were waiting we started building libraries. That means we do want to improve the country. Equal Education is not here to destroy the country but trying to improve it.
FP	<i>And what about within the organization?</i>
EE	Within the organization I’d say the organization is growing so fast that we don’t have a chance to just sit down...and be able to strategize on how we can be able to handle different aspects of education that we work in. And also, as the organization is growing, we start having members from Limpopo, Gauteng and we really can’t start be able to creating more branches in those places.
FP	<i>Why not?</i>
EE	We need people who are skilled for those jobs. People who are real leaders. Who

	are activists; who are able to be strong and be bold.
<i>FP</i>	<i>What's the next campaign?</i>
EE	The court case where EE suing the Department of Education because of certain schools in the Eastern Cape that are in bad conditions. The DBE promised to do something about it and is not doing anything.
<i>FP</i>	<i>What do you think about the court case?</i>
EE	Yoliswa and Dmitri went to the Eastern Cape a few weeks back and so on Friday they were presenting on it. It's very painful and sad to see those conditions and I think the court case is going to be very helpful. And I was looking at the meetings I had with those parents and seems as if the parents are committed in making sure that... their kids get a proper education because they are saying they didn't get a proper education and so they would like their kids to get it. It's encouraging that parents are able to get involved. It's something I am seeing within all that we are doing in Equal Education. Parents are starting to get involved and it's like a step forward for the movement.
<i>FP</i>	<i>One last question. Tell me if I'm wrong, you think your role is to educate and help the equalizer? Who do you learn from?</i>
EE	My role is also to learn. You are right that it is also to educate. This is how I see Equal Education. You have PCR, Coordinator's office, Youth and then you have Admin. PCR gets the information from parliament and from every place. They take the information and they try to fix it so that every staff member in EE understands it. And it's the same with the coordinators office, They have information that they get and they try to simplify it so that everyone, every staff member at Equal Education gets it because not everyone has a university degree at EE. Then they simplify it. Then we take it. And we read it and when understand it; we also try to simplify it so that our equalizers are able to understand it. And that's the process of learning at Equal Education...
<i>FP</i>	<i>And then they share it with their community and parents?</i>
EE	We encourage them to share that information with their parents. We also encourage them to read newspapers and to get information themselves so that they be able to share it. It's the same with us as facilitators. We are responsible for making sure we read newspapers and get informed about education system in the entire the world; what is happening in Chile; what is happening in Nigeria. It is our own responsibility. Equal Education is not going to serve it to us on a silver platter.