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ABSTRACT

Self-reliance is one of the cornerstones of people-centered development. Despite an increasing amount of literature in development approaches shifting towards promoting self-reliance, there remains little evidence that non-governmental and grassroots organizations are conceptually well-informed on the various dimensions of this concept beyond that of the economic aspect.

Additionally, very little information is provided on how the concept of self-reliance can be translated into practice and assessed in the context of micro-level organizations.

This dissertation focuses on the conceptualization and operationalization of organizational self-reliance. By employing mainly qualitative research methods that are informed by the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, I designed “measurement” instruments that gauge the extent to which qualities of organizational self-reliance are reflected in grassroots organizations. I tested these instruments in two home-based business co-operatives that are supported by Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA). These grassroots organizations are developmental interventions implemented by GAPA with the aim promoting self-reliance.

The results of the research indicate that, although further refinement is needed, the instruments are able to gauge the extent to which self-reliance is being realized in the GAPA home-based business co-operatives. Additionally, the results show that the employment of the instruments provided the co-operative members with the opportunity to analyze their current context and reflect on the possible avenues of change that they can take. Thus, evidence was provided for the value of applying micro-level, PAR-informed research as it provides the members with greater insight, ownership and control over their development, thus reinforcing the very principles of self-reliance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Non-governmental Organizations and Self-reliance

For over four decades, the Third World¹ (Africa in particular) has played a role in partaking in a multitude of development interventions that have all upheld the broad goal of contributing to poverty reduction. While government departments have continuously been implementing policies and projects that assist in alleviating conditions of poverty in the lives of the multitudes that they serve, it is non-governmental organizations (NGOs²) that have increasingly been singled out as the vehicles through which poverty can most effectively be combated. Buturo rightfully asserts that:

NGOs are seen to be in a better position to empower civil society via people's organizations and to strengthen them to act as a countervailing force to the power of the African state, bureaucracy and the local elites. In this objective, NGOs are expected to foster and support grassroots organizations to become numerous, sizeable, resourceful, democratic and self-reliant.

(Buturo, 2006)

Self-reliance is a term that, over the past decade, has steadily gained popularity in development discourse. In several contexts, the term self-reliance is used closely with other terms such as: autonomy, independence, self-governance, and self-sufficiency.

¹ The Third World "was intended as a political statement to distinguish newly independent decolonized countries, intending to pursue a neutral, unaligned foreign policy vis-à-vis the 'first world', the capitalist economies of western Europe and North America, and the 'second world', the state of centrally planned economies of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union." (Porter and Sheppard, 1998: 4). Areas categorized as the Third World have come to be understood as those areas that are underdeveloped in comparison to the first world.

² The term non-governmental organization is used synonymously with the terms non-profit organizations (NPOs) and civil society organization (CSOs).

Although a number of NGOs and the grassroots organizations (GROs) that they support claim to promote the above qualities, they often fall short of adequately reflecting the realization of these characteristics. Drawing from Buturo's assertion above, it is clear that the task appointed to NGOs remains nothing short of overwhelming. In between attempting to increase the number of GROs while simultaneously building them to become "resourceful, democratic *and* self-reliant" (Buturo, 2006, emphasis added), coupled with addressing the expected and unexpected challenges being faced by both the NGOs and the GROs, little room (and time and attention) is left for the full exploration and understanding of the very concepts that these activities promote.

Although self-reliance serves as yet another term to be added to the jargon of development discourse that governs the birth of new visions and initiatives in the sector, there are two main areas of concern with regard to the use of this concept in the field of development:

1. The prevalence of references to self-reliance in the financial or economic aspect, thus largely ignoring the various non-economic dimensions that constitute the concept,
2. The inadequate exploration of the manner in which this concept can be translated into practice and effectively measured (i.e. operationalized).

It is therefore the elusiveness of this concept and its use within the context of development that serves as the point of departure for this research.

1.2 Development: From Economics to People

Self-reliance is largely a human-centered concept that has come to be one of the cornerstones of people-centered development. Development, however, has long been considered an economic-centered concept. Trainer (2002) rightly asserts that:

although the short history of development economics has produced many different theories, virtually all can be seen as growth. Economic growth has been assumed to either contribute to development or be a necessary and sufficient condition for it. In practice the basic development goal is to increase the volume economic turnover.

(Trainer, 2002: 54)

It is for this reason that a large part of the assessment of the Third Worlds' development is characterized against economic and quantified measurements such as per capita income, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Gross National Product (GNP). Although these indicators provide relevant assessments of the progress (or lack thereof) of nations in terms of their economic growth, they are primarily quantitative, macro-level measurements that provide an aggregated preview of the economic condition in the countries of analysis.

An example of this can be seen in Ahmed and Cleeve's (2004) description of the state of sub-Saharan Africa and its progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)³ which states:

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only major region where *per capita income, food production, and industrialized production have declined over an extended period: the only developing region where development appears to be moving in reverse*

³ The Millennium Development Goals are essentially a global partnership response to the identified challenges faced by the world's nations, particularly that of extreme poverty. There are eight main goals that are set to be achieved by the year 2015. The underlying aim, however, is to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty through various approaches.

and that conventional development efforts by donors and governments have largely failed to halt the spiral, indeed in some cases, have aggravated it. (Ahmed and Cleeve, 2004: 15 citing World Bank, 2002; ADB, 2002; IIED and WRI, 1987, emphasis added)

In assessing the development of Africa against measurements such as per capita income and the level of agricultural and industrial production, one can arguably assume that the development interventions being channeled to the continent are those that essentially aim at enhancing the economic capacity of the continent's nations. Ahmed and Cleeve clearly state, however, that these interventions have not succeeded in achieving their goals. With the increasing recognition of the limitations of conventional (economic) development efforts, many development theoreticians and practitioners, including large organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme have shifted in their view of development from a primarily economic and growth-centered approach to a more people-centered approach where focus is placed on people taking ownership of their own development. This shift has triggered the proliferation of development discourse that centers on complex, yet significant, concepts such as empowerment, participation, capacity building and self-reliance.

Unlike the macro-economic indicators of development, people-centered development concepts such as those listed above are largely reflected on the ground-level and within micro frameworks such as community based, or grassroots organizations. Additionally, the concepts are, for the most part, relatively complex to analyze as they focus on the enhancement of people's lives outside of, yet in addition to, the economic sphere. Nevertheless, the proliferation of development interventions that claim to promote such

concepts have created a concern as to whether or not these concepts are being realized in the various spheres in which they are being advanced. Tesha rightly states:

Clearly, Africa is not short of ideas. In fact, perhaps Africa has so far had too many ideas about its development prospects. The problem lies with the operationalization of such ideas.

(Tesha, 2004: 22)

Operationalization in this research is understood as “a process of turning abstract theoretical concepts into observable “measurable” entities” (David and Sutton, 2004: 141). In the governmental and NGO sector, despite an increasing recognition of the significance of self-reliance in the fight against poverty, there is arguably very little information presented on how this concept can be applied and/or manifested in the organizational context. Research thus plays a significant role in addressing these concerns if one considers that “the results of social enquiry are not just fed back to fellow academics, but are used to influence the life chances of millions upon millions of people” (Bulmer and Warwick, 1993: 3). In his discussion on the importance of advocating for relevant research in the development (particularly NGO) sector, Edwards states:

‘Relevant’ development research should be ‘relevant’ to those whose lives it embraces. It should contribute to their self-development by opening up new and better ways of doing things clarifying the lessons of the experience. It should... contribute to the ability of the poor and powerless people to increase the control they can exert over their own lives. It should make explicit *how* it intends to accomplish these goals (a key point).

(Edwards, 1994: 284)

In keeping in line with Edwards’ assertion of the need for “relevant” research, I aim to conceptualize and operationalize the concept of organizational self-reliance and develop “measurement” indicators that can be applied to gauge the extent to which organizations are realizing self-reliance. In the following sections, I situate the reader in the

development discourse of self-reliance and present a detailed account of my research objective as well as the outline of this research.

1.3 Self-reliance: From macro to micro

Despite the emergence of the concept of self-reliance in the development rhetoric, a number of publications based on this concept often focus on financial management and economic self-reliance and ignore the various other dimensions by which the concept is constituted. In the macro context, for example, The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (cited in Maloka, 2004) states its priority objectives as:

accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and growth of African economies, in order to strengthen them within the world economy, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks and increase their dynamism, internalize the process of development and enhance self-reliance.

(United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s)

In the above statement, it is clear that the UN New Agenda concurs to that which Buturo (2006) asserted earlier of promoting the development of more grassroots organizations that can enhance self-reliance. Essentially, the UN New Agenda calls for greater control of local economies so as to strengthen their presence and role in the global economy.

In their critical discussion on failed western-centered development in the Third World, Binns and Nel (1999) relate the term “self-reliance” to South Africa’s equivalent of “Local Economic Development” (LED) and state that this approach “appears to be among the few realistic development options available to the ‘poorest of the poor’, who seem to have been all but abandoned by the western-dominated global economy” (Binns and Nel, 1999: 390). Self-reliance, in this aspect, is viewed as an approach that goes

against the ideas advocated by western-centered development theories that promote the notion of moving through stages of economic development – towards the destination of “modern culture” and rather, assists in realizing development that is based on providing greater opportunities for the “poor”.

In the micro context, Trainer (2004: 67) discusses alternative appropriate development perspectives and notes that “in many Third World regions groups seem to be spontaneously coming together to try to improve their circumstances via their own efforts to develop local cooperative and self-sufficient village economies”. Although he does not explicitly mention financial self-reliance, Kolo (2006: 595) writes about the development of microenterprises in West Africa and the manner in which these are vehicles used by local people to address the developmental challenges that they face. Kolo, once again, focusing on the financial and economic aspect of such interventions, explains that financing is “one of the strategic issues regarding the development of viable microenterprises and their ability to benefit from local and global economic networks, markets and opportunities”. Kolo (ibid.) adds that “finance ...and financing are among premier needs of microenterprises, and development in Africa”.

At a more individual level, Shultz (1994: 557) writes about promoting economic self-reliance in the context of refugee women’s lives and defines the concept as “the capacity for refugees to provide for their own economic support and the support of their families”.

The above examples highlight the manner in which self-reliance is conceptualized in a largely economic or financial framework. Development interventions that aim to promote

self-reliance therefore measure their progress according to quantitative and economic-based factors. While this is useful, it falls short of a developmental approach that emphasizes people-centered thinking.

The financial capacity (or output) of development interventions striving for self-reliance, albeit very significant in the existence of the intervention, is an external, quantitative factor that is essentially a manifestation of the cohesiveness of internal qualities such as the shared vision and degree of ownership of the people participating the development intervention. Without ignoring the significance of the financial aspect of self-reliance, this research seeks to explore the various qualitative dimensions of the concept of self-reliance.

Although not explicitly writing about organizational self-reliance, a range of authors – particularly those from the Third World - have actively written about the need for Third World nations to take ownership of their futures; futures that are characterized by empowered individuals and organizations in civil society. In these writings, focus rests not solely on economic empowerment, but rather on a more holistic approach to understanding people-centered development.

Amartya Sen, (1999: 14) an economist from Asia asserts that “economic growth cannot be treated as an end itself. Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy”. He then explains that “greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and

these matters are central to the process of development” (Sen, 1999: 18). Across the Third World, Deborah Eade, Jo Rowlands (1999) and others from the OXFAM team champion for development approaches that promote individual and organizational capacity-building as well as financial self-reliance. In South Africa, Human and Zaaiman (1995) write about managing organizations towards self-reliance and essentially cover broad aspects of management methods that support these principles. An additional view is that of Trainer’s, which explains that:

the focus is on peasant collectives identifying and working cooperatively on immediate problems, using available resources, and traditional technologies to develop relatively cheap, simple and sufficient solutions which are then under local control and largely or totally independent of the national market system.

(Trainer, 2004: 67)

The desired results of these approaches are that the capacities of individuals and organizations are built so as to enhance livelihoods. In short, the desired results are that of a strengthened, self-reliant civil society. In much of the same light, Manfred Max-Neef (1991:64), states that “a commitment to Human Scale Development makes it necessary to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for a development alternative based in self-reliance”. Max-Neef (1991) continues to explain that relationships of self-reliance have great multiplying effects when they flow from the bottom upwards – that is, to the extent that local self-reliance stimulates regional self-reliance, which in turn fosters national self-reliance.

In South Africa, the Department of Social Development (DSD) is an established institution that “seeks to build a caring and integrated system of social development services that facilitates human development and improves the quality of life of all South

Africans”⁴. The DSD has as its vision – a self-reliant society⁵. The DSD therefore advocates for action to be taken that is “based upon solidarity and [that] engenders self-reliance”⁶. The above objectives are sought to be realized through creating conditions for sustainable livelihoods so as to empower communities.

The objectives of the DSD are therefore closely linked to that which the above authors are advocating. Although the DSD is a single governmental department, a large proportion of the work conducted is done through partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and various other players in society in order to achieve the vision of a self-reliant society.

Self-reliance, empowerment, capacity building (and several more “buzz” words in the development sector) have become the concepts through which people-centered development is being understood. While the inclusion of these words may look good in policy documents and mission statements, it is the operationalization of these development concepts that remains a crucial, yet often overlooked, process for significant development to take place in people’s lives. In addition to gaining the ability to apply the concept practically at ground level, operationalizing a concept also creates the space for the design and application of instruments that can be used to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the particular interventions realize their objective or purpose.

⁴ <http://www.welfare.gov.za/npo/npo.htm> [9 September 2006]

⁵ Western Cape Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation Annual Report Highlights 2004/2005: 6. Although the Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation was renamed the Department of Social Development in 2006, the vision remains the same.

⁶ <http://www.welfare.gov.za/npo/npo.htm> [9 September 2006]

The measurement instruments applied for the micro- assessment of the success or failure of particular development concepts, therefore, play a significant role for a variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders range from the direct participants of the intervention to those who for example, draft development policies that dictate the direction of development at the local, regional or national level. Particularly useful in the operationalization of organizational self-reliance, is the adaptation of measurement instruments that can be executed by the participants themselves, as opposed to relying on external experts and development consultants. This is valuable in that it reinforces the exact principles of self-reliance – people taking control over their own development.

Thus, while there is increasing literature on development approaches shifting towards self-reliance, there remains little evidence that social organizations - which would ordinarily be responsible for implementing such approaches - are conceptually well-informed about self-reliance and the principal values that underlie this approach. Additionally, very little information is provided on how the concept of self-reliance can be operationalized and assessed in the context of social organizations.

1.4 Research Objective

This research focuses on the concept of organizational self-reliance in the development context. The aim of my research is to explore how the concept of organizational self-reliance can be operationalized and tested at the grassroots level.

By drawing from a range of authors in the developmental field, I begin by constructing a working definition of organizational self-reliance. Drawing from my definition as well as a detailed review of related literature, I articulate the characteristic features of organizational self-reliance and develop indicators that may be used to “measure” the extent to which a given organization is on the path towards achieving self-reliance. I argue that characteristics of organizational self-reliance are manifested through various fundamental factors that influence the successful formation and operation of social organizations. These factors are drawn directly from Burkey’s (1996) book *People First: A Guide to Self-Reliant Participatory Development*.

In addition to conceptualizing and operationalizing organizational self-reliance, I apply various methods by which to test the indicators in the context of two grassroots organizations. The underlying approach is that of Participatory Action Research which is a common method used in people-centered development as it:

is intended to increase the people’s knowledge of themselves and their situation and, with this knowledge, gain greater control over their own lives through action emerging from the research.

(Burkey, 1996: 63)

The units of analysis for my research are two grassroots organizations that are essentially a product of an NGO that is concerned with fighting against HIV/AIDS and poverty. The organizations are home-based business co-operatives that were established with the primary goal of promoting financial self-reliance. Although financial self-reliance is a significant aspect in the existence of these organizations, I argue that there are multiple, qualitative and internal organizational factors that must be considered in the creation of

an environment in which organizational self-reliance can begin to be realized – particularly in context of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Thus, while the primary focus of this research is in the design and testing of measurement instruments that can be used to gauge the extent to which organizations reflect self-reliance, the secondary aim of this research is to explore the nature of self-reliance in social (grassroots) organizations that are concerned with addressing HIV/AIDS through a medium such as home-based business co-operatives.

In the following chapter (Chapter Two), I contextualize the research by introducing the organization with which the research was conducted. A discussion follows on HIV/AIDS in South Africa and home-based business co-operatives as development interventions employed by the organization as a response to the effects of poverty and HIV/AIDS.

In Chapter Three, focus rests on conceptualizing organizational self-reliance. I begin by providing the working definition of organizational self-reliance in the context of this research. I then present a review of the literature of self-reliance from three main authors: Max-Neef, Burkey, and Kaplan. Additional work from various authors in related fields is also included to build the conceptual framework on which the research is founded. This is followed by a presentation of the four main aspects through which the research begins to understand and operationalize the concept of organizational self-reliance. A model displaying the four categories of organizational self-reliance and the related indicators is

then presented. The chapter concludes with a short presentation and discussion of a crude scale on which organizational self-reliance can be measured.

Chapter Four details the research approach in terms of the design and the methods employed to collect data. A discussion on Participatory Action Research is presented, followed by an explanation of each method of data collection (also referred to as measurement instruments) – namely: observation, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group interviews and a visual reflection session workshop.

In Chapter Five I present the findings of the research according to the four main categories of self-reliance and I include brief comments after each of the sections. I proceed to gauge the level of self-reliance achieved in each of the co-operatives and present a concluding assessment of each co-operative.

In Chapter Six, I reflect on the research process with regard to the application of the measurement instruments as well as the major issues that arose in the findings. I integrate these findings into a discussion of broader developmental issues related to the literature covered in the previous chapters. Where possible, I provide recommendations on how these issues can begin to be addressed and propose areas that could benefit from further investigation. I conclude this chapter with advocating for further research into developing similar small-scale, micro-approaches for operationalizing and measuring people-centered development concepts.

Chapter Seven revisits the research objective and presents an overview of the research approach in relation to the broader developmental issues of conceptualizing and operationalizing micro-level, people-centered development concepts and designing measurement instruments that effectively gauge the extent to which concepts such as organizational self-reliance are being realized.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE

This research focuses on the conceptualization and operationalization of organizational self-reliance. In conceptualizing organizational self-reliance, I begin with contextualizing the research by introducing the principles of people-centered development as well as the working definition of organizational self-reliance. I then present a review of the literature of self-reliance from three main authors: Max-Neef, Burkey, and Kaplan. Additional work from various authors in related fields is also included to build the conceptual framework on which the research is founded. This is followed by a presentation of the four main aspects through which the research begins to understand and operationalize the concept of organizational self-reliance. The chapter concludes with a model displaying the four categories of organizational self-reliance and the related measurement indicators.

3.1. People-centered Development

This research works with the idea of development as a people-centered concept¹¹ which is defined as:

a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

(Korten, 1990 cited in Davids et al., 2005: 17)

¹¹ This may also be referred to as human scale development, "human development, human-oriented development, people-driven development, or people-oriented development" (Davids et al., 2005: 21).

In this view of development, focus rests firstly on people as the active agents in the process of improving their livelihood, and secondly on the building of their capacity to help themselves through collective mobilization and effective management of the resources available to them (including financial resources). Essentially, people-centered development promotes the notion of self-reliance and shifts the focus from solely being about products (finances, infrastructure etc.) to people.

In stating the five principles of people-centered development Van Zyl (1994), lists the following: needs oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on structural transformation. The scope of this research limits the capacity to explore fully each of these principles and therefore focuses only on that of self-reliance. Van Zyl (1994) describes this aspect of people-centered development as a state in which each society (or community) relies on its own strengths and resources, in terms of its members' energy and its natural and cultural environment. Van Zyl's definition fits very closely with that of Max-Neef's that advances the idea that "self-reliance involves a kind of regeneration or revitalization emanating from one's own efforts, capabilities and resources" (Max-Neef, 1991: 64). Additionally, Coetzee rightly affirms that "the only way in which self-reliant, endogenous development can be attained is to work with the assumption that the beneficiaries of development will also have to be its contributors" (Coetzee, 1996: 146).

The above definitions closely relate to the initial definition of people-centered development presented at the beginning of this chapter in that attention is directed

towards people's own energies, efforts, and resources as well as the way in which these are channelled so as to render a "kind of regeneration" or sustainable form of livelihood. Max-Neef (1991: 64) explains that "strategically, it means that what can be produced (or worked out) at local levels is what should be produced (or worked out) at local levels". He adds that this applies on the regional as well as national levels.

Understanding self-reliance therefore requires gaining insight into an organized entity – exploring the activities that the members are engaged in; the forms of energies and resources that are channeled into these activities; the decisions being made with regard to the management of activities; and the effects of these decisions on the ability of the organization to meet its objectives.

Drawing from a combination of a range of people-centered development literature (presented and discussed below), for the purposes of this research, I develop a working definition of organizational self-reliance as:

A process whereby individuals, through their own efforts, assume responsibility in forming and managing their own organizations; in which the members assert their independent right to make decisions and control resources that will contribute to increasing the capacity of the organization to achieve the common goal for which it was formed (usually that of positively transforming an aspect of the members' reality)

3.2. Self-Reliance - Conceptualized

According to the definition of self-reliance stated above, there are several aspects from which one can draw in order to analyze the degree to which organizations reflect self-reliance. In exploring and engaging with a range of literature on the concept of self-reliance, I consolidate the information and present four main aspects through which organizational self-reliance can begin to be conceptualized. The nature of organizations, however, serves as an additional point of reference for the conceptualization of organizational self-reliance. In this research, I draw directly from Burkey's (1996) factors for successful formation and operation of organizations to serve as the indicators that are applied to measure the concept of organizational self-reliance.

I begin by reiterating Max-Neef (1991: 64) who advocates that "a commitment to Human Scale Development makes it necessary to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for a development alternative based in self-reliance". Development in this case can, arguably, be equated to self-reliance. There is therefore no process of development taking place if there are no signs of a process of self-reliance being realised by the people with (and for) whom one is working. People-centered development revolves around the notion of people taking ownership of their lives and working towards addressing the several factors that contribute to minimizing their ability to meet their fundamental needs¹². It is only by generating self-reliance, asserts Max-Neef (1991: 57), "where

¹² There are nine fundamental needs that have been identified in Human Scale Development, namely: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, identity and freedom. I do not delve too deeply into Max-Neef's discussion on the mechanics behind these needs; however it is important to note that human needs are:

people assume a leading role in different domains and spaces that it is possible to promote development processes with synergic effects that satisfy fundamental human needs”.

Important to note in the conceptualization of self-reliance according to Max-Neef is that the concept is understood “in terms of a horizontal interdependence and in no ways as an isolationist tendency in the part of nations, regions, local communities or cultures” (Max-Neef, 1991: 58). This means that all active role players in these domains (1) acquire a collective nature and (2) are involved in the process of realizing self reliance as equal partners (ibid.).

Development as self-reliance therefore takes form across various domains in society – economic, financial, technological, cultural, and political; between the personal and social; as well as in micro and macro-spaces. Max-Neef explains that social and personal development are inseparable and that:

the articulation between the personal and social dimensions of development may be achieved through increasing levels of self-reliance. At a personal level, self-reliance stimulates our sense of identity, our creative capacity, our self-confidence, our need for freedom. At the social level, self-reliance strengthens the capacity for subsistence, provides protection against exogenous hazards, enhances endogenous cultural identity, and develop the capacity to generate greater spaces of collective freedoms.

(Max-Neef, 1991: 60)

Although he lists several characteristics under each dimension, this research concentrates on those presented in the social levels – where the unit of analysis is the collective. Each

interrelated and interactive. With the sole exception of the need for subsistence, that is, to remain alive, no hierarchies exist within the system. On the contrary, simultaneities, complementarities and trade offs are characteristic of the process of needs satisfaction.

(Max-Neef, 1991: 17)

of the characteristics listed relate to one of the nine fundamental needs identified by Max-Neef. Thus, in stating that self-reliance strengthens the capacity for subsistence, Max-Neef refers to a strengthened ability to sustain our lives through generating a means of accessing food, shelter, clothing and water. It is important to note that, particularly in the urban context, none of these factors are provided for free and require that money is paid before they can be obtained or consumed. Thus, self-reliance in this respect calls for the need for a form of financial regeneration.

In his reference to the provision of protection against exogenous hazards, Max-Neef refers to self-reliance serving as a mean towards the satisfaction of the need to be protected from exploitation, violence, disease and many other external threats to one's livelihood (cited in De Wet, 2001: 2). The promotion of self-reliance in the collective context allows for members to channel their energies towards internally protecting themselves against harmful threats that are essentially bourn of external conditions.

The enhancement of endogenous cultural identity essentially views the role of self-reliance as a contributor towards satisfying the need of gaining a clear sense of belonging to whatever is felt to ground the identity of a collective (cited in De Wet, 2001: 3).

Finally, in viewing self-reliance as a means of developing the capacity to generate greater spaces of collective freedoms, Max-Neef speaks of the satisfaction of the need to enjoy the personal space within which to grow to our full potential, free from restrictive barriers (cited in De Wet, 2001: 3). This characteristic of self-reliance lies parallel to Sen's (1999:

14) assertion of “development as freedom” where he argues that “development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy”.

Staying within the framework of human-development, Burkey (1996) describes self-reliance to be more a question of attitudes than money and materials. Burkey (1996) cautiously maintains that you cannot make people self-reliant, but that people *become* self-reliant (emphasis added). Self-reliance is therefore a process that needs to be realized over time and through daily experiences and encounters. I add, however, that in conceptualizing self-reliance as a process, it is important not to fall into the line of thinking that self-reliance is a destination to be reached. Drawing from Kaplan’s (1996) statement that any description of the development process would necessarily entail a picture of emergent consciousness, I argue that, self-reliance is, similarly, a continuous process of emergent reflection, action and analysis. One, in fact, never arrives at self-reliance, but continuously and actively works at negotiating and maintaining a higher degree of self-reliance than that of their current level. Kaplan expresses it best when he writes:

The development process is geared towards keeping us alive, supple, creative, and able to respond to the challenges of the future with new insights and activities, rather than with mindsets generated by, and appropriate to, the past or present.

(Kaplan, 1996: 69)

Essentially, self-reliance is concerned with individuals and collectives learning to do things for themselves and becoming empowered in the process. Implicit in the process of realizing organizational self-reliance is the concept of empowerment.

The scope of the research does not allow for an in-depth discussion on the issue of empowerment; however, a brief exploration of the concept begins with the recognition that the concept of power lies at its root. "There are disagreements about what is meant by power and hence the aims of empowerment, who is empowered, and the role of intervening agencies in the empowerment process" (Johnson and Mayoux, 1998: 148). The foundation of an understanding of empowerment, however, begins with the notion that power is relational. Johnson and Mayoux (1998) distinguish three types of power relations, namely: "power to", "power over", and "power with". The former refers to the ability to change the condition of one's existence. The second implies control over other people, whereas the final form of power signifies the ability to achieve control through joint action with others. This research is concerned with empowerment that is based on the notions of "power to" and "power with".

In focusing on self-reliance as a process through which collectives gain the "power to" influence and change the conditions in which they are living, the promotion of the concept implies that people actively participate in influencing and controlling decisions and activities that have an effect on their livelihoods (power with). Essentially, if the concept of self-reliance is closely linked to that of empowerment, and if empowerment is generally viewed as a "process that involves some degree of personal development... and that involves moving from insight into action" (Rowlands, 1999: 144), then a large part of self-reliance in practice can be viewed as:

a process whereby women become able to organize themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination.

(Keller and Mbwewe, 1991 cited in Rowlands, 1999: 146)

The insight that is involved in the process of becoming self-reliant relates to the process of awareness-raising and/or conscientization. Briefly, this concept, as formulated by Freire, means “the stimulation of self-reflected critical awareness in people of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective action” (Freire, 1972, cited in Burkey, 1996: 55). Insight is required in order to realize this “self-reflected critical awareness” as the process involves the act of “looking into one’s self and using what one hears, sees and experiences to understand what is happening to one’s own life. From this understanding, arises an inner conviction that you yourself, together with like-minded others, can do something to change your lives – to transform reality.” (Freire, 1972, cited in Burkey, 1996: 55).

Through a process of self-reflection, individuals have the opportunity to consider their circumstances and the reasons that may contribute to their current conditions. Awareness surrounding one’s social reality, economic reality, and one’s access to options in changing this reality is therefore raised. Self-reflection as a part of the process of becoming self-reliant, however, does not stop at the critical contemplation of one’s reality. Citing Freire who argues that “development occurs when one moves from dependence to a critical consciousness; the ability to analyze circumstance and to question existing reality”, Kaplan (1996) argues that this characterizes partial development and that we must seek to go beyond, to a phase of interdependence. Although Kaplan employs the term “interdependence” in his discussion, the meaning remains parallel to that of self-reliance as is understood in this research.

Kaplan (1996) essentially argues that the organizational development path is similar to that of a human being: characterized by a process of moving through phases - from dependency (childhood), to independence (adolescence), to interdependence; where interdependence is a phase of integrating and maintaining aspects of the two former phases. It is the state of existing in this conflicting phase that reflects the elusiveness of the "developmental state". Kaplan explains that:

while dependence is characterized by a relatively unconscious and uncritical acceptance of a particular status quo as given, and independence by critique, differentiation and a defining of self as uniquely different from other, interdependence necessitates the simultaneous holding of the reality of dependence with the necessity for independence.

(Kaplan, 1996: 81)

Thus, a significant degree of awareness creation is required in order to realize and maintain this state of self-reliance (interdependency). Kaplan explains that:

"It is the developmental challenge of the integrated phase, when our developed sense of independence (our impersonal separation through structure and procedure) must be coupled with our dependence on people and our need to work together in a team"

(Kaplan, 1996: 24).

Self-reliance does not, therefore, advocate the notion of isolating oneself from others. Rather, self-reliance requires that people work together in collective groups of interest that are driven towards achieving (a) particular goal(s). The very act of creating an interest group and the various significant factors surrounding the formation and maintenance of organizations, however, are often overlooked. It is this range of influential, yet critical, organizational factors that serve as the basis from which one can

begin to recognize and appreciate the qualities that encapsulate the process of realizing organizational self-reliance.

3.3. Organizations - Contextualized

Organizations exist across several domains in society. This research refers to organizations that exist in macro and micro spaces, where the former are organized entities that are established in the regional or national spheres and actively participate in the formal economy (including the global economy). The latter, however, refers to “the wide spectrum of micro-enterprises and the small economic organizations which operate in the empty spaces left by the capitalist market” (Max-Neef, 1991: 71).

In his discussion of the various domains in which self-reliance manifests itself, Max-Neef warns against two challenges that need to be addressed in conceptualizing self-reliance within macro and micro spaces. The first challenge is that of minimizing the risk of reproducing vertical relationships in the name of regional and local self-reliance (Max Neef, 1991). In other words, minimizing or avoiding the creation of hierarchical relationships between the role players in the two realms. The second challenge is that “self-reliant processes originating from micro-spaces should be less bureaucratic, more democratic and more efficient in combating personal growth with social development” (Max-Neef, 1991: 60).

Max-Neef continues to explain that a number of micro-organizations lack stability and this is:

demonstrated by their high birth rate and death rates. Such organizations face serious difficulties in surviving due to such factors as the size of the market, the location, structure costs, opportunities for entering into a competitive market, the potential for diversifying sources of inputs and raw materials, the capacity to avoid dependence on few buyers, access to credit and the like.

(Max-Neef, 1991: 73)

Although all of the above stated factors are significant to explaining the difficulties faced by micro-organizations, they are essentially external factors that require a complex analysis of the context in which the organization is operating.

The context of this research is framed in the conceptualization of organizational self-reliance from an internal perspective. Although the above factors play a significant role in explaining the extent to which an organization is able to achieve its objectives, the focus of this research remains on the internal factors that are required for this realization.

Burkey (1996) views this situation from a more internal perspective and explains that these groups (micro-organizations) are observed to have either disintegrated, become passive recipients of external assistance, or deteriorate into mere social meeting points. "The reason for these failures usually lie in the failure of the organizers, as well as the members, to analyze the factors that precondition group success" (Burkey, 1996: 136). It is these factors that fundamentally contribute towards realizing organizational self-reliance.

Burkey (1996) highlights two of the most important factors relating to the formation and successful operation of small producer groups as being the question of leadership and

decision-making. Briefly, according to Burkey (1996) the other factors of successful group formation and operation include;

1. Motivation – individuals must be motivated to work together for their own common good, not imposed from the outside.
2. Voluntary membership – members must not be forced nor threatened to join a group.
3. Common interest – often based on the motivation of the individual members for coming together to form a group.
4. Composition – the group's ability to function as a unit. "Groups will be most effective when they have a large degree of homogeneity especially in terms of socio-economic status..." (Burkey, 1996: 139)
5. Size – must be small enough so that each member can directly participate in the discussions and the decision-making.
6. Autonomy – total sovereignty in making decisions based on the other factors that determine organizational success. Burkey (1996) notes that this is the most difficult principle to put into practice.
7. Objectives and bye-laws – members take time to decide upon objectives, bye-law, rules and regulations by which the group will operate.
8. Meetings – the regularity and/or consistency of the group meeting is the key event in the participatory approach and in the life of the group.

A simultaneous review of the above factors and of the broader definition of self-reliance as is employed in this research - that is, individuals collectively forming and managing

their own organizations and asserting their independent right to make decisions and control resources in order to achieve common a goal – gives a clear indication that a number of these organizational formation and operation factors overlap with those of the working definition of self-reliance, particularly those of autonomy, common interest, and motivation. Each of the above factors, including that of decision-making, serves as the indicators that are used to operationalize organizational self-reliance in this research. This will be further elaborated below.

3.4. Categories of Organizational Self-Reliance

Based on the working definition of organization self reliance and the review of related literature, I develop four categories by which the concept can begin to be explored and operationalized through the development of measurement indicators. The categories include:

1. Organization and Mobilization
2. Responsibility and Ownership
3. Participation and Decision-making
4. Conscientization and Creativity

It is important to note that each of these categories are not exclusive, but rather interlink with one another and *together* encompass the qualities that are required for an organization to begin realizing self-reliance. Although the categories are listed in an order of one to four, the order is not static. Certain elements from each of the categories underlie various phases in the entire process of becoming self-reliant. For example,

organizing and mobilizing members into a collective inherently consists of an aspect of participation by the said members. This means that an aspect of participation underlies the category of organization and mobilization. Another example is how the act of members participating in decision-making processes feeds into, and strengthens, the members' sense of ownership over the organization. This means that qualities of responsibility and ownership do not necessarily precede participation and decision-making but rather, constantly interact with one another in building the capacity of the organization in realizing self reliance. Each of the above listed categories are described in greater detail below.

3.4.1. Organization and Mobilization

This category is characterized by factors such as:

- the ability of members to organize themselves
- members learning how to form and manage their own organizations
- members taking deliberate action towards achieving a common goal.

Organization in this context employs two levels of meaning – one that refers to the organization of people and the other to the organization of structures and systems. In the first instance, organization is defined as the deliberate gathering of individuals for a common purpose and/or interest. Key questions to consider in this aspect are that of what influenced the member's decision to join the organization? What is the purpose (or goal) of the organization? The second meaning refers to the systematic and orderly manner in which the members of the organization manage the resources that are available to them.

An important question to consider is that of the key decisions made with regard to the management of the resources available to the organization. Related to this question is the consideration of the activities that would need to take place in order to achieve the goal.

In writing mainly about international NGOs and explaining the structural model through which effective NGOs should be built, Bennett and Gibbs (1996) explain that there are internal structures and systems (such as financial management and personnel systems) that are needed in order for an organization to work. This assertion applies equally to micro organizations seeking to realize self-reliance. The individuals who make up the membership of the organization are required first to have a clear and established purpose for coming together, and secondly to develop systematic approaches through which they can manage their financial, material and human resources.

An important aspect of the category of organization and mobilization is the question of leadership. Eade and Williams (1997: 346) note that “effective leadership is a vital ingredient of successful social organization... [and that] much depends on defining the functions of the organizations leaders so that the criteria for selecting them are seen as legitimate”. This criterion of selection would therefore fall under the phase of the establishment of the collective. Burkey (1996: 143), however, states that “each small group must decide how it is going to organize itself, whether to have specific leaders and officers as in the traditional model, or whether to rotate leadership among the membership”.

Mobilization essentially refers to the act of gathering individuals together *with the intent of taking action* towards addressing a particular situation. Whereas the organization highlights the initial act of individuals coming together, the mobilization emphasizes that there is action to be taken once the collective is established. Identifying with the purpose of gathering together as well as the proposed activities of the collective essentially creates an identity of the organization as a social entity.

More often than not, the individuals involved in any occurrence of mobilisation will, to some degree, have been affected by the particular situation that they wish to address. Principal to any group membership is the underlying knowledge that the individuals involved perceive some direct or indirect benefit to himself/herself or his/her family (Burkey, 1996). Regardless of intent, however, it is important to recognize that:

the very act of agreeing on the formation of a group is a big leap forward. Formation of a group signifies a change from a state of resignation to a state of awakening. A process of self-awakening has already begun.

(Hossain, 1991 cited in Burkey, 1996: 135)

Mobilization also refers to the channelling and management of the resources available to the organization that allow it to execute and or implement its activities. Pretty et al. (1994 cited in Davids et al., 2005) define self-mobilization as a bottom up approach in which people take initiatives to change systems independent of external institutions.

This bottom up approach allows people to develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but they themselves retain control over how resources are used.

(Pretty et al., 1994 cited in Davids et al., 2005: 115)

Organization and mobilization therefore imply two main steps are taken: the first is the establishment of a collective who have identified a common purpose for their

organization. The second, drawing directly from identifying this purpose, is the strategic planning and practical implementation of the appropriate internal structures and activities for the realization of this purpose.

Simply mobilizing people into organizations, however, does not suffice in realizing self-reliance. For it has, sadly, become the norm to hear of, know of, or be a part of an organization that has not succeeded in achieving the objectives for which it had initially formed. It is essential that the members are active participants in the organization and that they not only demonstrate responsibility, but also develop a sense of ownership over their organization.

3.4.2. Responsibility and Ownership

In the beginning of the definition of organizational self-reliance, I state that it is *a process whereby individuals, through their own efforts assume responsibility in forming and managing their own organizations*. The previous category (organization and mobilization) covered the aspects of formation and taking action. The assumption of responsibility over these qualities, however, together with a developed sense of ownership, serve as the next phase in which organizational self-reliance can begin to be realized. This category is characterized by factors such as:

- the members belief that their own efforts are driving the development process
- the members doing things for themselves
- the members reliance on the groups own power, judgement and ability.

Responsibility in this context refers to the moral obligation that the members have towards participating in the organization - including being involved in the management of particular aspects of the organization (such as the production and financial management). Member responsibility is, essentially, a deliberate act of assuming a role in the life (formation and operation) of the organization. Assuming responsibility over the organization demonstrates the manner in which the members' efforts are driving the organizational (or development) process without excessive dictation from external agents. That is, the members, through their own choice, take it upon themselves to take charge of the management and operation of their organization. Greater responsibility therefore also displays the manner in which the group increasingly rely on their "own power, judgement and ability" (Vergunst, 2002: 152) to manage the organization.

Although referring to NGO's, Bennett and Gibbs' (1996: 16) assertion applies to the context of micro-organizations, stating that "an effective NGO [micro-organization] needs a staff [members] with a sense of ownership and commitment to development, otherwise it will be ineffective no matter how impressive its goals and systems". Thus, a key question to consider is whether the members engage in the full production and sale cycle of the business activities. In writing mainly about the corporate sector, O'Driscoll et al. explain a developed a theory of psychological ownership that suggests that:

control over and intimate knowing of the target [organization], along with investment of the self into the target [organization], are three major 'routes' through which feelings of ownership for a particular object emerge.

(O'Driscoll et al., 2006: 389 citing Pierce, Kosova and Dirks, 2001)

Feelings of ownership, therefore, are a result of responsibility (control) over the organization; an appreciation and understanding of the various aspects of the

organization; and finally, an investment of one's time, efforts and abilities into the organization. The more freedom appointed to members with regard to participating in all the domains of the organization, the greater the opportunity for the members to learn more about the organization, and therefore, potentially invest more of their efforts and invest them wherever necessary. O'Driscoll et al. add that

with increased feeling of psychological ownership for the organization, the employee [member] will want to maintain his or her relationship with the organization and will engage in constructive behaviors to help sustain and improve the target of ownership.

(O'Driscoll et al., 2006: 392)

An additional factor to consider in the discussion of responsibility and ownership is the manner in which a member enters the organization as this could affect the way that he/she relates to the entity. Despite allocating a significant amount of one's time and efforts to an organization, which in turn fosters a greater understanding of the organization (or vice versa), members may be less likely to have a sense of ownership if they were threatened or forced into joining the co-operative. Responsibility and ownership is, therefore, a matter of choice. It is a decision that is taken by the members of the organization.

3.4.3. Participation in/and Decision-making

This category is characterized by factors such as:

- the promotion of participation in decision-making
- the assertion of one's right to make choices
- the member's control over decision-making.

In this category, I grouped the two concepts of participation and decision-making together because, although participation is inherent throughout the phases of realizing organizational self-reliance, decision making is similarly embedded in each of the categories that comprise the entire process. In the definition of organizational self-reliance, I highlight the aspect of how *members assert their independent right to make decisions and control resources*.

Max-Neef (1991: 58) understands an aspect of self-reliance as “a process capable of promoting participation in decision-making”. In discussing the much debated concept of participation, I begin with an assertion presented by Kotze (1997: 37 citing Jagannadham, 1979) who notes that there is a distinction between participation and involvement whereby “participation implies ‘to share in’, while involvement implies that there is a feeling of belonging and that people become involved on the basis of this feeling”. Kotze adds that

in development, such a feeling of belonging follows when people can identify with development efforts. They therefore feel that they ‘belong’ to the various projects or programmes, and vice versa. To be involved with and belong to development programmes means that participation is not enforced.

(Kotze, 1997: 38)

Thus, broadly speaking, the ‘ends’ of the process of participation is a contribution to the empowerment of those involved in the process. Coetzee (1996: 146) asserts that “participation and self-reliance in the development context imply and emphasize the necessity to involve those who are the supposed beneficiaries of development”. Davids et al. (2005: 117) note that “[public] participation as empowerment implies decentralisation of decision making”.

In her writing on the field of women's empowerment in development practice, Rowlands (1999: 147) explains that "empowerment has much in common with other concepts used by development practitioners and planners such as 'participation', 'capacity-building', 'sustainability', or 'institutional development'".

Eade and Williams (1995: 14) state that "empowerment is demonstrated by the quality of people's participation in the decisions and processes affecting their lives". The authors go on to explain that the definition of "participation in development" remains contested; however, the "World Bank's Popular Participation Learning Group defines participation as a *process* whereby those with legitimate interests in a project influence decisions which affect them" (Eade and Williams, 1995: 14). The above qualities of participation essentially cover participation in the context of an agency and the people with whom the agency wishes to work. In the case of an established micro-organization whose relationship with the external agent is minimal, participation is viewed with regard to the interactions between the members within the organization.

Blanchett (2001) warns that participation in any context may refer to passive or active participation. Blanchett (2001: 639) explains that "participatory may simply mean taking part in an initiative without really being its instigator or leader. In this case, those participating have no power, but simply a role to play, a task to complete". In this context, the research works with the definition provided by the International Labour

Organization (ILO) which approaches the public participation from their assessment of what grassroots organizations have generated the definition to be:

the collective effort by the people concerned in an organized framework to pool their efforts and whatever other resources they decide to pool together, to attain objectives they set for themselves. In this regard participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control.

(cited in Davids et al., 2005: 114)

Vergunst (2002: 151) characterizes “self-reliance as control over decision-making”. Thus, a crucial aspect of participation is the control and influence that members have over the decision-making process. Eade and Williams (1997: 346) point out that “an organization cannot properly represent people unless they have confidence in it, and have access to its decision making structures”. Key questions to consider, therefore, are that of how members make decisions surrounding the running of the organization. Who has the final say? Burkey (1996) highlights two main methods by which decision-making is carried out in organizations: through majority vote after open debate, and through consensus. Briefly, decision-making by majority vote after open debate is the route that most organizations take. In this process, it is the decision of the majority that is taken. “Those who are on the losing side are expected to follow loyally the majority – the loyal opposition. This means, however, that one segment of members will always be in disagreement with the decision” (Burkey, 1996: 143).

In the method of decision-making by consensus, discussions are carried out until a decision is found that is acceptable to all members (Burkey, 1996). This method:

will normally better preserve harmony and unity within the group. This type of decision-making also better promotes participation by everyone as it is expected

that each member voice his [or her] opinion. Decisions cannot be reached until everyone agrees that they can accept the solution proposed.

(Burkey, 1996: 143)

Burkey (1996) adds that this method takes “considerably longer than majority voting, but the greater strength and unity achieved make consensus more viable in the long run [and that] the process of reaching a consensus is an important part of the conscientisation process”.

Both methods, therefore, have their benefits as well as their shortfalls. In the context of organizational self-reliance, focus rests on exploring what the various decisions that need to be made in the organization are, and then establishing whether there are any procedures carried out in the manner in which decisions are made. More specifically, do the procedures include more, or fewer, instances of participation?

3.4.4. Conscientization and Creativity

The final category of organizational self-reliance serves as one of the most difficult to define accurately. The key characteristic of this category, however, is that of the members displaying an awareness of context. Conscientization and Creativity are both highly elusive concepts that are also extremely relative in their understanding. Kaplan notes:

if it is true that development refers primarily to evolving consciousness, then any description of the development process necessarily entails a picture of emergent consciousness...But consciousness does not lend itself to easy description.

(Kaplan, 1996: 68)

Conscientization occurs at both the individual and collective level. For the purposes of this research, conscientization refers to the process of “emergent consciousness” (Kaplan, 1996), through “the stimulation of self-reflected critical awareness in people of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective action” (Freire, 1972 cited in Burkey, 1996: 55). Kaplan (1996: 27) writes that “consciousness implies objectivity; it implies the faculty of self-reflection”.

Important to note is the difference between the concept of consciousness and that of conscientization. Whereas consciousness is a state, conscientization refers to a process of arriving at a particular state. The element of self-reflection, however, remains a common factor between the two terms. Self-reflection and questioning, states Kaplan, “leads to a new kind of power: the power of consciousness and of the capacity to make decisions with maximum awareness” (Kaplan, 1996: 58).

In his discussion of organizational consciousness, Kaplan (1996: 26) notes that it “entails being awake in, and to, the moment; having the awareness and resources within oneself to meet new situations coming towards one with creativity and acuity”. In engaging in a process of reflecting on one’s situation, a creation of awareness of the context in which one exists occurs. It is through this awareness that individuals and/or collectives can begin to pool their resources together in order to begin addressing particular matters of concern to them. Conscientization can thus be viewed as a process that involves insight and is followed by action towards addressing this insight.

Evidence of this action is manifested through creativity. Creativity is one of Max-Neef's nine fundamental needs and it essentially refers to the need to exercise the generation of one's ideas and imagination and channel these into tangible products.

The product of conscientization is a better understanding of one's context as well as the ability to creatively apply approaches towards addressing situations in one's reality.

Key questions related to this category are:

1. In what ways have the members benefited from participating in the organization?
2. What are the main challenges being faced by your organization?
3. What approach can be taken in order to address these challenges?

4. Indicators of Categories of Organizational Self-Reliance

The aim of this research is to conceptualize and operationalize organizational self-reliance so as to test how best the concept can be "measured" in the context of home-based business co-operatives that are designed with the purpose of becoming more self-reliant. Once again, organizational self-reliance in this research is viewed as a developmental process that involves the collective efforts of individuals and the active application of each member's control over decision-making and other resources that contribute to increasing their capacities to achieve a common goal.

As mentioned above, this research views organizational self-reliance through the manifestation of the characteristics of the following categories:

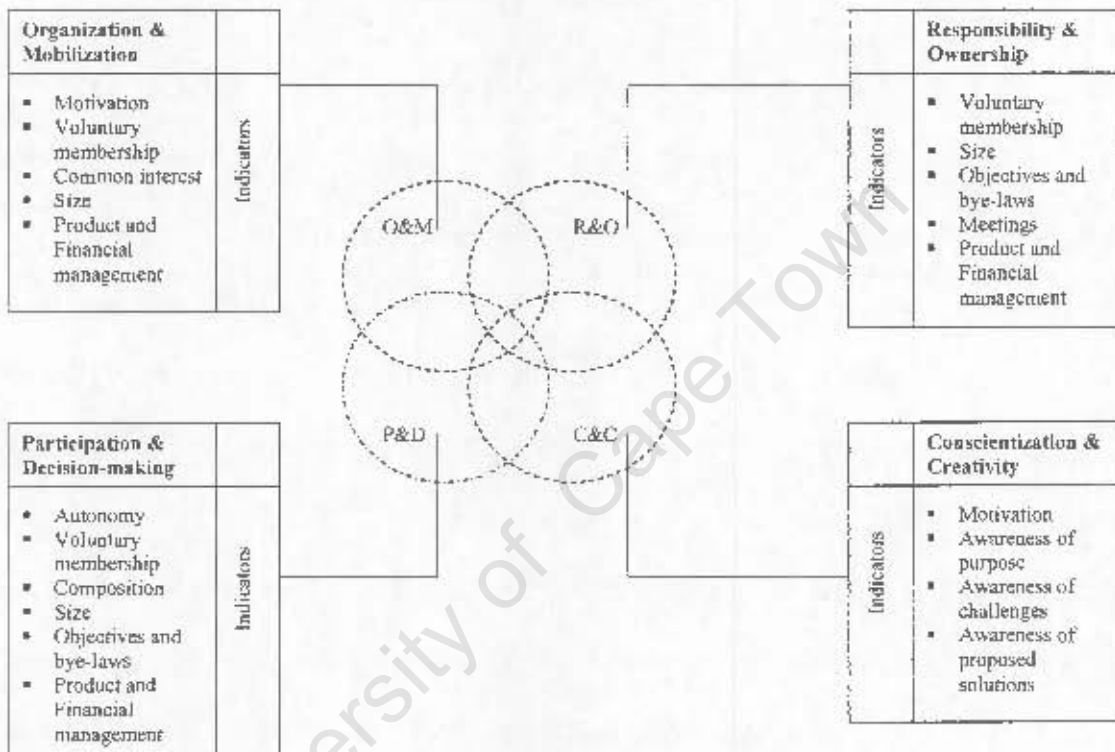
1. Organization and Mobilization
2. Responsibility and Ownership
3. Participation and Decision-making
4. Conscientization and Creativity

Diagram 1 (developed by the researcher) displays a model through which the conceptualization of organizational self-reliance is depicted. Each of the categories is represented by circles with dotted borders. The circles interlink with each other, thus symbolizing the manner in which the categories are not exclusive, but are rather relational. Representing each category in a circle indicates that there are no definite qualities for the category; however, the closest possible (appropriate) characteristics are embodied in the understanding of the category. The dotted lines represent the permeability of the categories, as certain characteristics within particular categories underlie the processes taking place across the other categories. The middle section – where all the circles intersect – represents the point of maintaining “organizational self-reliance”.

Thus, in addition to the categories interlinking with one another, the related measurement indicators that gauge the extent to which an organization reflects the particular category are presented in the boxes that are connected to each category. As stated earlier (in Section 3.3), Burkey identifies ten factors required for the successful formation and operation of an organization. I employ each of these factors as an indicator that can be used to measure organizational self-reliance. Important to note is that, with the exception

of the indicators that are drawn from Burkey, the model is entirely developed by the researcher.

Diagram 1:
CATEGORIES OF ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-RELIANCE AND RELATED MEASUREMENT INDICATORS*



* Indicators are drawn directly from Burkey's (1996) factors of successful formation and operation of an organization. Represent interconnections that exist between the categories and the permeable boundaries that exist between them. The central point of the model reflects the realization of organizational self-reliance.

As can be seen in Diagram 1 each indicator is manifested in one or more of the categories. Although a more detailed discussion of the methodology and measurement instruments employed is presented in Chapter Four, Table 3.1 focuses on presenting the indicators used to measure the characteristics of organizational self-reliance. Also included in the table are descriptions of the indicator, the key questions that relate to the indicator, as well as the characteristic (and therefore, category) that the question

represents. This table essentially aims to present clearly the manner in which the individual indicators assess particular categories.

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Table 3.1: Indicators and the characteristics that they measure

Indicator	Questions related to indicator	Characteristic(s) of self-reliance in relation to question	Category of self-reliance
1. Motivation Individuals must be motivated to work together for their own common good, not imposed from the outside	1.1 What are the main factors that influenced your decision to join the co-operative?	Awareness of context	Conscientization and Creativity
	1.2 How did you begin to form as a group? What steps did you take in order to become a co-operative?	Ability to organize themselves	Organization and Mobilization
	1.3 How does coming together work to your advantage?	(a) Strengthened self-confidence (b) Development of conscious leadership by all	Conscientization and Creativity
2. Voluntary membership Members must not be forced nor threatened to join a group	2.1 Have all the members of your co-operative joined voluntarily?	Asserting right to make choices	Participation and Decision-making
	2.2 How do you get more members to join?	(a) Ability to organize themselves (b) Asserting ones right to make choices	Organization and Mobilization
	2.3 What do you do when a member wants to leave the co-operative?		Participation and Decision-making
3. Common interest Often based on the motivation of the individual members for coming together to form a group	3.1 What is the purpose of the co-operative?	(a) Belief that own efforts are driving the (development) process	Responsibility and Ownership

Table 3.1 cont'd: Indicators and the characteristics that they measure

Indicator	Questions related to indicator	Characteristic(s) of self-reliance in relation to question	Category of self-reliance
<p>4. Composition The groups ability to function as a unit. "Groups will be most effective when they have a large degree of homogeneity especially in terms of socio-economic status..." (Burkey, 1996: 139). Individual ambitions must not be pursued at the expense of collective gain (ibid. p. 138)</p>	<p>4.1 Do any members produce their own products – separate from the co-operatives?</p>	<p>Assumption of responsibility</p>	<p>Responsibility and Ownership</p>
	<p>4.2 How does the co-operative address the situation of members producing their own goods and selling them individually?</p>	<p>Control over decision-making</p>	<p>Participation and Decision-making</p>
<p>5. Size Must be small enough so that each member can directly participate in the discussions and the decision-making.</p>	<p>5.1 Who decided that the co-operative should have 10 people?</p>	<p>(a) Learn how to form and manage own organization</p>	<p>Organization and Mobilization</p>
	<p>5.2 Are 10 people enough for your co-operative?</p>	<p>(b) Control over decision making</p>	<p>Participation and Decision-making</p>
	<p>5.3 In order to be successful, should the co-operative have more or less than 10 people? Why?</p>	<p>(c) Reliance on groups own power, judgements and ability (d) Promoting participation in decision making</p>	<p>Responsibility and Ownership</p>
<p>6. Autonomy Total sovereignty in making decisions based on the other factors that determine organizational success. Burkey (1996) notes that it is the most difficult principal to put into practice.</p>	<p>6.1 What are the daily decisions that you have to make as a co-operative?</p>	<p>(a) Control over decision making</p>	<p>Participation and Decision-making</p>
	<p>6.2 How do you make decisions surrounding the running of the co-operative?</p>	<p>(b) Assumption of responsibility (c) Ability of organize themselves</p>	<p>Organization and Mobilization</p>
	<p>6.3 What are the procedures that you take?</p>	<p>(d) Promoting participation in decision making</p>	<p>Responsibility and Ownership</p>
	<p>6.4 Who has the final say in the decision making?</p>		

Table 3.1 cont'd: Indicators and the characteristics that they measure

Indicator	Questions related to indicator	Characteristic(s) of self-reliance in relation to question	Category of self-reliance
7. Objectives and bye-laws Members take time to decide upon objectives, bye-laws, rules and regulations by which the group will operate.	7.1 Does your co-operative have any set rules in place as to how the co-operative will function?	(a) Control over decision making (a) Reliance on a group's own power, judgement and ability	Participation and Decision-making
	7.2 Are all of the rules followed?		Responsibility and Ownership
	7.3 Have any rules changed over the years?		
8. Meetings The regularity and/or consistency of the group meeting are the key event in the participatory approach and in the life of the group.	8.1 Is it important for the co-operative to have regular meetings? If so/not, why?	(a) Assumption of responsibility	Responsibility and Ownership

“partial self-reliance” and ends on “approaching self-reliance”. A description of each of the points is provided in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Description of measurement points of organizational self-reliance

Point on scale	Description
Absence of self-reliance	Where none of the characteristics of the categories are evidenced in the organization.
Partial self-reliance	Where at least half of the characteristics of the categories are evidenced in the organization.
Approaching self-reliance	Where there is evidence of more than two thirds of the characteristics of the categories of self reliance in the organization
Maintaining self-reliance	Where all the characteristics of the categories are present and are actively being maintained

5. Conclusion

This chapter began with situating the reader into the context of the research by presenting the principles of people-centered development as well as the working definition of organizational self-reliance. A review of the literature of self-reliance followed by a brief discussion of the key factors required for successful formation and operation of organizations was then presented. In light of the discussion in the literature review, four main categories through which organizational self-reliance could begin to be analyzed were presented and discussed. The final section of the chapter reviewed the particular indicators that can be used to measure characteristics of each category, and presented a crude scale by which organizational self-reliance can be measured. The research

Table 3.2 displays a brief summary of the categories and their related characteristics as well as the indicators used to assess these. Important to notes is that the manner in which the table is displayed depicts the structure in which the findings of the research will be presented.

Category	Characteristic of category	Indicators
Organization and Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to organize themselves - Learn how to form and manage own organization - Taking deliberate action towards achieving a common goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation - Voluntary membership - Common Interest - Autonomy
Responsibility and Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belief that own efforts are driving the development process - Doing things for oneself - Reliance on group's own power, judgement and ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary membership - Size - Objectives and bye-laws - Meetings - Product and Financial management
Participation and Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting participation in decision making - Asserting one's right to make choices - Control over decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy - Voluntary membership - Composition - Size - Objectives and bye-laws - Product and Financial management
Conscientization and Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation - Awareness of purpose - Awareness of challenges - Awareness of proposed solutions

In brief, organizational self-reliance is measured through the presence of the characteristics of the categories. I measure the presence of the categories of self-reliance through a crude scale which begins at the point of "absence of self-reliance"; moves on to

approach employed, as well as the various instruments used to measure organizational self-reliance in the context of two home-based business co-operatives, is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Much of the objective of this research is based on the instruments used to measure organizational self-reliance. This chapter begins with a description of Participatory Action Research - the underlying approach that informed this research. I then present the methods that were employed in testing the operationalization of organizational self-reliance. This is followed by a section on the method of analysis employed. A great amount of detail is included in these two sections because the methods, as well as the form of analysis employed essentially serve as the instruments by which organizational self-reliance is measured. The chapter therefore concludes with a section on the reflection of the research process – with particular focus on the limitations and noteworthy advantages of the methods employed.

4.1 Research Approach

I employed four different methods in order to conduct my research, namely: observation, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group interviews and a ‘visual reflection session’ workshop. Throughout the process, however, I was aware of my role as an outsider and, ultimately, as a learner. I did not wish simply to ‘test’ the qualities of organizational self-reliance in the context of these co-operatives, but rather, sought to explore the nature of their co-operatives and facilitate a process of the members taking time to reflect and learn about their co-operatives – a crucial, yet often overlooked, process in the life of an organization.

In his discussion on the essential task of development practitioners, Kaplan writes that they:

collaborate with people in the claiming of their rights, and facilitate the recognition of responsibilities. They facilitate their development towards a more human, purposeful, and conscious future, and work through organizations and communities towards the actualization of a conscious society.

(Kaplan, 1996: 85)

It is from the above assertion that a Participatory Action Research approach seemed the most suitable choice for research. In keeping in line with the principles of people-centered development as well as those discussed in the conceptualization of organizational self-reliance, the methods by which I sought to collect information surrounding the research question had to be ones that not only provided me with “answers”, but that provided the participants of the research with a form of self-reflection, re-awakening, and empowerment. The research was therefore conducted in a manner that created space for the participants to be just that – participants. The underlying approach employed throughout the research was therefore that of Participatory Action Research.

4.1.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The foundations from which the PAR approach has arisen are based mainly in the recognition that the only people who have the greatest capacity to change any of the conditions of the poor are the poor themselves. The less dictation that external agents impose upon the poor - and the more active the participation through which the poor

voluntarily take ownership during the developmental process - the greater the scope for the poor to expand on their capacity to help themselves. PAR serves as a process of conscientization as it is an approach that seeks to “actively involve people in generating knowledge about their own condition and how it can be changed, to stimulate social and economic change based on the awakening of the common people, and to empower the oppressed” (Chambers, 1997: 108).

Burkey (1996) states that the main objectives of PAR are (1) to increase the development worker’s understanding of the local situation, and (2) to increase the insight of the local people, especially the poor, into what factors and relationships are the root causes of, and contributing factors to, their poverty. De Wet and Viljoen (1999) explain that in partnership with an outside researcher, a group or community develops their capacity to express and analyze matters of concern together. Chambers (1997) adds that the PAR¹³ approach not only enhances local people’s awareness and confidence, but also empowers their action.

¹³ Chambers writes extensively on Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approaches and essentially highlights their similarities and implicit differences. He states, however, that these approaches fall under the umbrella of “approaches and methods which have in various ways, combined action, reflection, participation and research” (Chambers, 1997: 106).

The participatory action research process involves the continuous engagement of analysis, action and reflection:

...where the people are both the subject and the object of the research; where the investigator not only shares this reality, but in fact participates in it as an agent of change. Participatory action research is thus an active research with a clearly defined purpose of creating knowledge to be shared by both the people and the investigator, knowledge that leads to action, and through reflection, to new knowledge and new action.

(Burkey, 1996: 61)

As the principal researcher, I realized that I could not facilitate a process of self-reflection for the co-operatives and not engage in this myself. I was aware that I entered the field as a researcher: exploring the qualities of the co-operatives; as a facilitator: prompting the generation of perceptions and discussion on the nature of the co-operatives in relation to the qualities of organizational self-reliance; and finally, as a student: learning and gaining new insights throughout the research.

In addition to the active reflection and generation of consciousnesses, what makes the PAR process most accessible is that it is based on dialogue, "an interchange and discussion of ideas based on a process of open and frank questioning and analysis in both directions between the investigators and the people, both individually and in small groups" (Burkey, 1996: 62). The dialogical approach to PAR allows for the perceptions of the poor to form the basic point of reference for any analysis to be employed into action as well as being integrated into the research (Burkey, 1996).

The PAR approach therefore reflects characteristics of self-reliance such as the notion of sustainability and regeneration. It does not simply seek to facilitate in increasing

knowledge and practice, but also looks to initiate a permanent process of action and reflection which leads communities to undertake further analyzes and struggles on new issues (Burkey, 1996). Due to the limited scope of the research, I applied a PAR approach that sought to *introduce* the members of the co-operatives to this approach. I sought to demonstrate how PAR can be facilitated to assist with the generation and organization of ideas for actions needed to move towards achieving particular goals to realize organizational self-reliance. In essence, I sought to show that:

participatory action research is intended to increase the people's knowledge of themselves and their situation and, with this knowledge, gain greater control over their own lives through action emerging from the research.

(Burkey, 1996: 63)

In his discussion on similar approaches to PAR, Chambers (1997, citing Cornwall et al. 1993) asserts that methods employed in such research have typically been classified as visualized analyzes; methods for interviewing and sampling; and methods for group and team dynamics. The particular methods employed in this research are discussed further below.

4.2 Sample Selection

At the time of research, GAPA had nine functioning co-operatives. In order to present more clearly how the operationalization of organizational self-reliance could be tested, I chose to conduct a comparative study of two co-operatives. The research was based on comparing the degree to which organizational self-reliance is reflected in the two co-operatives based on testing the developed indicators in each co-operative. It is important

to note that co-operatives are not homogenous in nature and that comparing two entities that are not exactly the same is a task that needs to take contextual factors into consideration. This means understanding that “apparently uniform institutions like [a co-operative] take on a variety of meanings in different contexts...[and] that participants in social life actively produce a context for what they do and that social researchers should not simply import their own assumption about what context is relevant in any situation” (Silverman, 1993: 8).

The criterion for selection was that the two co-operatives shared – as closely as possible - organizational factors such the duration of existence, as well as the product of the co-operative. Additionally, I took the financial output of the co-operative into account. I sought to work with co-operatives that were generating an income for their members. The co-operatives are essentially a business designed by GAPA with the purpose of providing financial security for the members. Financial security is, however, an external measurement of the nature of the organization. The research acknowledges the significance of financial output and management, but focus rests in the exploration of the internal organizational factors that, together with financial management, contribute to the realization of organizational self-reliance.

As I had little knowledge of the above qualities across the nine co-operatives, I asked the GAPA project manager to select the co-operatives that fell under the stated criteria. Sample selection was, therefore, purposive and based on the background knowledge and

opinion of the GAPA project manager. My research sample was thus appointed to me.

Table 4.1 below presents the basic characteristics of the two co-operatives.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of Co-operatives under study

DETAILS	CO-OPERATIVE A	CO-OPERATIVE B
Co-Op Name	Siyazama	Nanceba Club
Location	W-Section	D-Section
Duration of existence	Since March 2005	Since February 2005
No. of Active members	2005 = 10 members	2005 = 10 members
	2006 = 11 members	2006 = 8 members

Whereas Nanceba Club's (also referred to as Nanceba) members all live in D-section, Siyazama's members come from other areas in Khayelitsha but operate in the home of one of their members in W-Section. During the research process, Nanceba would - at most - consist of five members at a time. Siyazama, on the other hand, often had all the members present.

4.3 Language and Facilitation

The language of communication between the grandmothers, as well as across the greater parts of Khayelitsha, is isiXhosa. As a non-South African national who has no command of isiXhosa, I was obliged to employ an isiXhosa and English-speaking translator who is also experienced in conducting qualitative research. Every stage of the research process was developed by me. All the questions and activities that were planned were then thoroughly explained to my research facilitator and any unclear areas were addressed and

clarified. The purpose of explaining each question in detail was to avoid the familiar issue of losing the meaning and purpose of the questions and activities in translation.

4.4 Research Methods

The methods employed were:

- observation throughout the research period,
- a semi-structured questionnaire for each co-operative,
- a tape-recorded focus group interview that lasted for an hour and half with each co-operative, and finally,
- a visual reflection session workshop, lasting forty-five minutes to an hour with each co-operative.

Each of the methods employed served as a form of validating information received. The methods allowed my research to be based on triangulation. Chambers (1997) lists triangulation as one of the principles of PAR;

whereby one learns from several, quite often three, methods, disciplines, individuals, or groups, locations, types of information, items and/or points in a distribution, to cross check, compare, gain insights and successively approximate.
(Chambers, 1997: 157)

Important to note is that each method of data collection applied in the research is, in fact, a measurement instrument for particular indicators of organizational self-reliance. What follows is a detailed description of each methodology so as to present clearly how each measurement approach makes a significant contribution to operationalizing the concept of organizational self-reliance.

4.4.1 Observation

As a research method, observation serves as one which requires the least materials, but a high degree of focus and visual “note-taking”. During each of my (three) visits with the co-operatives, observation served as the underlying method of data collection.

Silverman (1993: 30) notes that “social science observation is fundamentally about understanding routine”. I watched and made mental notes (that were later transformed into written field notes) of the way in which the women would speak with each other, the manner in which they worked. Who was doing what? Why? What were the roles played by the other members? Did the elected committee of the chairperson, treasurer and secretary exercise the authority of their positions when the members came together? Who was answering most of the questions? Was the group interactive or more reserved in their responses and discussions with each other? Observation was essentially employed in order to familiarize myself with the environment in which I was working so as to gain a better understanding of the context.

During the focus group interviews as well as the visual reflection session workshops, I paid particular attention to observing the manner in which the members related and responded to the questions asked as well as the way in which they engaged in the discussion and the activities that were taking place. It is these qualities, essentially, that would reflect the various aspects of the elements of self-reliance – such as participation and decision-making and the degree of responsibility and ownership.

4.4.2 Semi-Structured Questionnaire

The semi-structured questionnaire was designed to collect data surrounding the operations of the co-operatives in terms of the product and financial management. The open-ended questions posed in the questionnaire focused on eliciting general information such as the type of product that the co-operatives sold, as well as more specific information such as the reasons for the choice of product to sell. With regard to financial management, questions explored how the women made decisions around financial expenditure as well as what they decided to do with the revenue received from the sale of their goods.

Particular focus was directed towards the issue of the monthly amount of four hundred rands received from GAPA. How did the co-operatives manage this money? Did they invest any of it? Could they continue operating without it? Quantitative questions on how much each member took home at the end of the year as well as how much was saved in the bank were posed so as to gauge the development process of the co-operatives in terms of financial gains.

The questions in the semi-structured questionnaire also looked at the leadership structure in the organization in terms of whether there was a committee in place and whether this committee was active (i.e. all the members played the role for which they were elected).

The semi-structured questionnaire was administered in english using an interview technique with ten members from Siyazama and six members from Nanceba. The

questions in the semi-structured questionnaire provided me with information on the types of decisions that the members of the co-operative make on a daily basis as well as the degree of autonomy that the members have in making these decisions. The responses also reflected the members' knowledge and awareness of the organization's structures as well as the challenges being faced by their co-operatives. Appendix A presents the outline of the semi-structured questionnaire.

4.4.3 Focus Group Interviews

Focus Group Interviews were the main method by which the indicators were measured. The benefit of conducting a focus group interview is that it encourages the participation of all members and relies on the dialogue created through responses to the questions. The focus group interviews were audio-taped, translated and fully transcribed.

Interview questions

The drafted questions were based on the indicators for the successful formation and operation of an organization, as related to the categories of organizational self-reliance established through the review of literature (presented in Chapter Three). The factors of successful formation and operation of organizations were drawn directly from Burkey's (1996) *People First: A guide to self-reliant Participatory Development* and are also presented in Chapter Three.

Specific questions that related to the indicators and the categories of self-reliance were posed in the interview schedule. Although there were a few closed-ended questions, the

interview questions were mainly open-ended. The questions focused mainly on issues surrounding the members' motivation behind joining the co-operatives, the process of the formation of the co-operatives, the range of decisions that are made in the running of the organization, as well as the manner in which these decisions are made. The various questions were ground-level and basic - yet crucial questions that, put together, paint a picture of the internal state of the organization, as well as the qualities that promote (or hinder) the realization of self-reliance. A grid reflecting the indicators, the particular questions related to this indicator and how each question is related to one or more of the categories of self-reliance can be viewed in Table 3.2 (refer to Chapter Three).

The nature of the focus group interview was that of a semi-structured interview with 8 members from Siyazama and five members from Nanceba. Although the questions on the schedule were designed to provide information on the extent to which the categories of self-reliance were being manifested through particular indicators, it was imperative that space for related issues was created. Once again, this is where my role as a learner would come into play. Although the prior review of literature on self-reliance provided me with an in-depth platform from which to conceptualize self-reliance, there may have been some questions that did not necessarily apply in the context of home-based businesses – simply because of the nature of the organization. These realizations and a review of the measurement instruments is covered in Chapter Six.

4.4.4 Visual Reflection Session

The Visual Reflection Session¹⁴ was essentially a workshop that was designed to serve as the “heart” of the Participatory Action Research approach as this was the space in which the members of each co-operative reflected together on three main aspects of their organization – namely: the purpose of existence, the challenges faced by the co-operative, and the proposed way forward for the co-operative.

The reflection workshop was conducted after the focus group interviews with the intention of staying within the ‘space’ and mind frame of discussion around the formation and management of the co-operatives. The aim of this workshop was, therefore, to engage the women in short activities of visualising that which they discussed during the focus group interview. The members’ participation in the focus group, although relevant to the investigation of the research, would not suffice to serve as a form of knowledge sharing and empowerment for the women.

In addition to providing the women with an opportunity to reflect on their organization and engage in open discussions around each of the elements presented, the topics of discussion in the activity also served as a form of validating data collected from the focus group interview (which attempted to measure categories of organizational self-reliance through various indicators). Focus was directed towards the following issue:

1. The purpose of the co-operatives based on the common interest that brings the women together;

¹⁴ Also referred to as “reflection session” and “reflection workshop”.

2. The **challenges** being faced by the co-operative in terms of factors that hinder the organization from meeting its objectives;
3. The **possible solutions** to address these challenges.

Each of the above elements of exploration inform particular categories of organizational self-reliance. The overall activity of identifying factors that fall under each of the elements and categorizing these reflects participation and decision making in the co-operatives. The activity also re-awakens an awareness of the context in which the co-operatives operate as each element brought forward requires that the individual member thinks independently and presents her opinion/belief to the group (albeit anonymously) – this reflecting the degree of conscientization and creativity in the organization.

Responses presented under the ‘purpose of the co-operatives’ reflect qualities of ‘organization and mobilization’ as this element is based on the common interest and motivation of the members that led to the formation of the co-operative. The ‘challenges’ element covers the category of responsibility and ownership, because it is only through an intimate knowledge of the co-operative that the members can point out what these challenges are. The ‘possible solutions’ element addresses the category of ‘conscientisation and creativity’ as this is where the members of the organization apply themselves towards thinking about ways in which they can begin to overcome the challenges that they face – it requires stimulating the imagination and building an agreement between the members on the possible routes that can be taken to progress towards realizing their purpose.

The value of the visual reflection session lies in the manner in which information is shared between the members of the group through visual means. Chambers (1997) explains the way in which questionnaires differ from visual sharing with regard to the relationship between the participants and the method. The former transfers the information from the words of the person interviewed onto the paper of the questionnaire schedule, leaving the learning process as once-off and the information becomes personal and private. In contrast,

with visual sharing of a map, model, diagram...used for counting, estimating...and comparing, it is open to all who are present to participate. Different people add details, and crosscheck, and correct each other. The learning is progressive. The information is visible, semi-permanent, and public to the group, and can be directed, verified, added to, and owned by the participants.

(Chambers, 1997: 135)

The following section illustrates the manner in which the visual reflection session workshop was conducted.

Working with three large sheets of paper, small separate sheets of paper, and a clear floor on which to serve as our working environment, I began by asking the members, individually and anonymously, to write down one word or phrase that they believed to be related to the question in discussion. The first question was directed at addressing that which they regard to be the main purpose of the co-operative. Without discussing anything with the other members, each member wrote down the response that they believed to be most suitable.

The response sheets of each of the women were collected, reshuffled and then read out loud before being posted on the large sheet of paper on the floor in front of them so as to enable them to see clearly the various responses that were generated by the group. After reviewing each of the responses, a discussion to place the responses into related categories took place. It is through the observations of these discussions and their decision-making processes that I could measure self-reliance with regard to the participation of the members in taking control over making decisions.

In asking relevant questions in a dialogical manner, I sought to encourage group discussions to take place in which each member is provided with the opportunity to express herself. Through this process, I hoped to facilitate the visualization and “re-awakening” of the purpose for which the women joined the co-operative. I hoped to contribute towards creating a space in which the various perspectives around the purpose of the co-operative could once again be raised and discussed. It is only through reflecting on oneself and where one has come from that action towards the future can be taken.

I also sought to measure the extent to which the group was cohesive with regard to the perception of the purpose of their co-operative. In categorizing the responses, one can easily measure how many members believe *x* to be the purpose as opposed to *y*. The less categories there were, the greater a reflection of group cohesiveness and, therefore, a greater degree of shared responsibility and ownership as well as conscientization in the co-operative.

The same procedure was repeated for the theme of challenges being faced by the co-operative as well as the possible solutions (awareness of context – conscientization and creativity).

In creating a space in which the women are able to discuss and reflect on their reality and the obstacles standing between their purpose and the realization of their objectives, I hope to have contributed to re-awakening the consciousness of these co-operatives. It is only the women who have the capacity to own their developmental process – and strive towards becoming more self-reliant. The challenge, as Kaplan (1996) rightfully maintains, remains in staying awake. It is for this reason that I intend to return to the co-operatives in order to present the findings of this research and allow the women another space in which to reflect on these findings and the possible direction to take – if any – in the future.

4.5 Analysis

Because the bulk of the data collected was qualitative, I drew from Miles and Hubermans' (cited in Fielding and Lee, 1998) approach to qualitative analysis which is comprised of a three-phased analysis process that includes: 'data reduction', 'data display', and 'conclusion drawing/verification'.

Although all of the data collected was analyzed to a certain degree; it is mainly the translated transcriptions from the focus group interviews that underwent the process

described below. Essentially, analysis consisted of two levels of coding and a final stage of drawing conclusions from the analyzed data.

4.5.1 Data reduction

Data reduction is defined as the “initial process by which material is selected and condensed on the basis of an emerging conceptual framework” (Fielding and Lee, 1998: 40 citing Miles and Huberman, 1994). In the case of my research, the first read-through of the transcripts allowed for the familiarization of the data. The second read-through involved approaching the transcription with greater focus on identifying emergent themes from the data and classifying data into a working set of codes (De Wet and Erasmus, 2005). This “process of selecting a bit of data and assigning it to a category entails data fragmentation and contributes to data reduction” (De Wet and Erasmus, 2005: 9). This phase is also referred to as first level coding.

4.5.2 Data Display

This phase is defined as “the organized and compressed assembly of information [where] data, already reduced, are arranged in ways which make it easier for the analyst to identify, focus on, and select potential interpretations of the data” (Fielding and Lee, 1998: 40 citing Miles and Huberman, 1994). This process, also referred to as second level coding, involves, firstly, arranging broad first level codes into thematic clusters (De Wet and Erasmus, 2005), and then marking regularities in the data and capturing these regularities as ‘pattern codes’ (Fielding and Lee, 1998). These pattern codes assist in

identifying relationships that exist between the data. The thematic clusters in this instance were the indicators of the four main categories of organizational self-reliance.

For example, during first level coding I noticed several references to the need for members to “talk to and advise each other” with regard to being affected by HIV/AIDS. I categorized this data under the broad theme of “support” and created finer codes under this theme such as “psychological support”, “spiritual support”, “physical (monetary) support”. During second level coding, I clustered my first level codes under my pre-determined indicators for the categories of organizational self-reliance. For example, the broader theme of “support” would then be placed under the cluster of “motivation” which evidences qualities of the category of “organization and mobilization”. It is from these deductions and the exploration of relationships between the data, that I was able to produce my findings and provide a discussion on these findings. The findings were thus based on integrating this information with data from the semi-structured interviews, visual reflection workshop, as well as my field notes. These are covered in the following chapter.

4.5.3 Conclusion drawing/verification

The final phase of analysis is that which involves “the process of drawing broad, but substantiated interpretations of displayed data” (Fielding and Lee, 1998: 42 citing Miles and Huberman, 1998). Verification of the data was established through confirming the findings of particular categories against the established definition of the said category. For example, any findings that fell under the category of “organization and mobilization”

would have to provide evidence of the presence of the characteristics of this category. Additionally, verification was established through confirming whether findings under one cluster were supported by other findings (within the coded data as well as across the findings of other methods such as the semi-structured interviews and the visual reflection session workshop). The conclusions of the study are presented in Chapter Six and Seven.

4.5.4 Additional Comments

Initially, I had planned on analyzing the co-operatives' financial statements with regard to recording the income and expenditure in the co-operatives for the year 2005 and 2006. A close inspection of the co-operatives financial records revealed, however, that there was inconsistency in the records and that information was generally not clear. I then chose to work with the estimated amounts of money that each member took home at the end of 2005 and 2006 as well as the amount of money that was left as savings in the bank at year end.

The method of constant comparison was applied to the data sets that emerged from the coding. This allowed me to gain insight into the perceptions of each co-operative's members in relation to particular questions and therefore, begin to distinguish what differences and similarities exist that serve to carry or hinder the co-operatives towards realizing self-reliance.

Finally, summary tables of each of the co-operatives were presented in order to assign a value (i.e. low, medium or high) for the extent to which the co-operative displays the

characteristics of a particular category. From the summation of these values, I was able to determine the point under which the co-operative fell along the organizational scale presented at the end of Chapter Three, and conclude with the status of the organization's level of self-reliance.

5. Reflections: Limitations and Advantages of methods employed

Briefly, the four main methods of research used were:

1. Observation
2. Semi-structured questionnaire
3. Focus group interview
4. Visual reflection session

It is important to note that each method measured the presence of more than one category at a time. For example, the semi-structured questionnaire posed both open and close-ended questions directly related to financial and production management within the co-operatives. This links to characteristics under the categories of responsibility and ownership as well as organization and mobilization.

The order in which each method is applied is also significant in that each method both verifies and informs the data content of the next. For example, the focus group interview consisted of questions directly related to the nature of the co-operative with regard to its formation and operation. In the visual reflection session that follows directly after the focus group interview, three key questions surrounding the nature of the co-operative

were posed. Because the former method led the participants into thinking about the nature of their co-operative, the latter exercise benefited from working with participants who were already thinking within a particular frame of thought.

What follows is a presentation of general considerations with regard to the research process and then some of the limitations and advantages of the methods employed as measurement instruments for organizational self-reliance.

5.1 General considerations

5.1.1 Visits

The research took place over three half-day visits with each of the co-operatives. In the first visit the GAPA project manager escorted me to each co-operative in order to introduce me and explain the broad topic of my research. The semi-structured questionnaire was conducted during the second visit and the third visit included the focus group interview and the visual reflection session.

5.1.2 Location

Each research method was conducted at the co-operative's central location during the organizations meeting days. The co-operatives meet once a week and spend an average of six hours together. During this time, the members interact with one another and engage in the production of particular goods.

Each of the measurement instruments require the researchers' presence during the co-operatives working hours for two reasons:

1. This is the only time all the co-operative members meet which allows one to work with as many members as possible and, therefore, provides each member with the tools with which to begin an organizational assessment. Conducting the research when all the members are present allows the members to participate and acquire aspects of the PAR process that could serve to benefit them in the future.
2. Being present during the co-operative working hours provides the researcher with first hand observations of the way in which the members of co-operatives interact with one another.

5.1.3 Ethical considerations

Because the research was conducted during the co-operatives' working hours, I had to negotiate a typical tension of conducting research. On the one hand, I was engaging in research that would provide the members with a space in which to reflect on their organization and to decide upon deliberate action to take in order to address particular issue. On the other hand, I had to ensure that my presence was not considered an invasion of their space and that I did not impede on the time that they used for producing their goods.

While the former matter is inherent in the PAR approach, I had difficulty in avoiding the latter matter. During the application of each of the methods, the members provided me with their undivided attention – no production took place during our sessions together. It

would have, therefore, been ideal to meet the members in their space but at a time other than that of their working hours so as to avoid interrupting their production time.

Closely linked to this consideration is that of the number of visits that the members would be available to meet with me. Because the co-operatives operate in a fairly informal manner, there were three occasions in which my appointments to conduct research were cancelled. Reasons for the cancellations ranged from the members attending a funeral to too few members being present for any significant research to be conducted. In addition, because I could not continue interrupting their production time, I was unable to conduct pilot interviews. The data collected for this research is, therefore, based on initial encounters with the co-operatives and therefore leaves room for a discussion on the limitations and advantages of the instruments of measurement.

Overall, however, it is important to note that when conducting PAR-informed research with grassroots organizations such as home-based business co-operatives, the researcher has to have a degree of flexibility in terms of arranging when and where to meet the participants.

5.2 Observation

This method was limited to observing the way in which the members of each co-operative interacted with one another. As an outsider in this context, it was very easy for the members to change their behavior in certain ways. Although several observations of “silences” and “interaction” were made, these may not necessarily be a true reflection of

the daily interactions between the members. This was particularly true during the semi-structured questionnaire visit as this was the visit where the first developed measurement instrument was being applied and I did not have a translator to assist me.

5.3 Semi-structured questionnaire

The questions posed in the questionnaire centered on the general operational characteristics of the co-operative. I found that these questions were answered easily and that the semi-structured nature of the questionnaire allowed the members to provide information on issues related to the particular topic under discussion at that moment. This was, therefore, also an instrument used to measure the various characteristics of the challenges that the organizations faced with regard to the financial as well as the product management.

Advantages of this measurement instrument included the flexible nature of the questionnaire. Both groups directly answered the questions posed; however room was allocated for the members to speak about related issues that may not have necessarily been part of the questionnaire but carried significance in better understanding the co-operative in the wider business context.

The measurement instrument also provided an opportunity for the group members to “warm up” to the researcher in that the questions were posed more in a conversational rather than a direct manner. This proved to be beneficial for the research activities that followed from this because the members seemed to be more responsive to the researcher.

One of the main limitations of this method was that the questionnaire was conducted in English which proved to be limiting for the members both in understanding some questions and effectively expressing their views. This led me to hire a translator and facilitator to conduct the focus group interviews and the visual reflection session workshop.

5.4 Focus Group Interviews

The majority of the interview questions were open-ended and thus created a space in which the members could freely add their perceptions or opinions on (directly or indirectly) related matters. A major limitation to this method was that it was essentially a pilot interview and the results of this interview revealed questions in which the wording could have been rearranged and questions which were not relevant for the overall objective.

The main difficulty faced with this method was that I, the principal researcher, was not facilitating the focus group interview because I did not speak isiXhosa. Despite a thorough explanation to the facilitator of the indicators and the characteristics being sought, there remained aspects of the interview in which more probing could have taken place. For example in Nanceba Club, the question on the daily decisions that the group had to make (question 6) did not receive as thorough a response as Siyazama.

5.5 Visual Reflection Session

An advantage of this method was that it allowed the members to gain insight into the current situation of their organization and therefore, engage in self-reflection which would (ideally) lead to critical action. General responses from the members at the end of this activity revealed that the members valued the exercise.

A great limitation is that the scope of this research does not allow me fully to cover the reflection, action and analysis cycle that constitutes a full PAR approach. Additionally, consideration should be given for members who are illiterate. The Facilitator wrote down the thoughts of one particular individual who does not know how to read or write. Although this was limiting for that individual, this highlighted the importance of group discussions as it allows all participants to engage in the process of exchanging and arranging their ideas.

6. Conclusion

Organizational self-reliance is a qualitative concept that requires, in the most part, qualitative measurement instruments to be applied in order to gauge its presence in the context of organizations. In this chapter I have presented Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the approach that informed the research methods employed. I then described the four methods by which organizational self-reliance can be measured as well as the method of analysis. I concluded with a brief reflection on the research process and the limitations as well as advantages of the measurement instruments.

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CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

This section is presented according to the categories of organizational self-reliance and the relevant information of each co-operative in relation to the categories. A short section of summary and comments on the results follows at the end of the categorical descriptions. An overall summary of the findings per co-operative are then presented and followed by a concluding assessment of the level of organizational self-reliance according to the scale developed in Chapter Three.

The characteristics of each co-operative are presented in a comparative manner so as to highlight the presence or absence of particular characteristics. The approach also provides perspective on the similarities and differences that exist between the two co-operatives with regard to the extent to which they reflect the characteristics of each of the categories.

It is important to note that all statements that are provided as evidence for the research findings assume the unanimous agreement of all the members of the co-operative unless indicated otherwise. In most instances, a member would provide a particular statement which would be followed by the members nodding in agreement or explicitly stating that they agree in a number of ways; for example "yes", or "to add on to that". Additionally, the reader should consider that the quotes provided as evidence are direct translations from isiXhosa and have been presented in the most grammatically correct way possible without losing the meaning of the statement.

The information presented in this chapter is deliberately detailed for two main reasons:

- (1) due to the need for the participant's voices to be clearly presented and therefore heard,
- (2) in order to build clearly the case for the results of the research.

For this reason, the reader may wish either to proceed to the "summary and comments" section at the end of each category's results, or to the overall "summary" of the results which can be found in Section Five of this chapter.

1. Organization and Mobilization

As is presented in Section 3.4.1 of Chapter Three, the main qualities of this category are those of individuals coming together to form a collective in order to address a particular issue; and that the group intends on taking responsible action towards addressing this issue. Two main factors for consideration are the organization of people, as well as the organization of structures that guide the activities for the realization of the common purpose for which the organization formed. The general characteristics of this category are as follows:

- ability of the members to organize themselves
- members learn how to form and manage their own organization
- taking deliberate action towards achieving a common goal.

Each of the above characteristics was measured through particular indicators, namely: motivation, common interest, voluntary membership, size, and autonomy. Additionally, responses from the semi-structured questionnaire (centered on product and financial management) are incorporated into the analysis and discussion.

1.1 Ability of the members to organize themselves

Though an organization is made up of people coming together for a particular purpose, people cannot organize themselves without a stimulus. I began exploring this category by eliciting the various reasons that influenced the members to join the co-operative. This is followed by developing a common interest or purpose for which the organization exists.

1.1.1 Motivation

Members in both co-operatives provided similar reasons for joining the organization. Although Nanceba members provided one particular reason in their responses, Siyazama members provided multiple reasons. From both the co-operatives, however, three broad themes of motivation were elicited:

1. Money
2. Support
3. Knowledge

Money:

Although none of the members of Nanceba mentioned money-related reasons, 50% of the members in Siyazama indicated that financial reasons served as the main influence for joining the co-operative. Two members raised the issue of employment scarcity in their area and, more specifically, in their households. Although none of the members have any form of formal employment, all of the members are on one or more types of government

grant (field notes, October 2006). The issue of lack of money, however, was revealed through responses provided by Ma M and Ma J:

"I joined this co-operative because of employment scarcity." (Ma M, Siyazama FGI¹⁵, October 2006)

"I will also get some money to help out my household." (Ma J, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Support:

This theme was most prevalent in both of the co-operative's members' indications for joining the organization (75% and 80% of the respondents in Siyazama and Nanceba respectively). Members stated that they were motivated to join the cooperative because they wanted to meet with other women who shared the same problems, and who would be able to console and advise each other on particular issues, therefore helping each other. All the members agreed that they were "stressed" and "in [emotional] pain" before joining GAPA and then progressing to join the co-operatives (field notes, October 2006).

Whereas six of the eight members in Siyazama spoke about a relative who was ill and had AIDS or another disease, all but one of the members in Nanceba mentioned the same point. The experience of nursing their relatives and not knowing enough about HIV/AIDS, or how to treat the infected person, as well as dealing with the trauma of losing the individual to death served as factors that caused stress in the lives of the grandmothers. The members therefore indicated that they were influenced to join the co-operative because they knew that they would be working in a group with other women who are undergoing, or have undergone, similar experiences.

¹⁵ FGI is an abbreviation for Focus Group Interview

The identified forms of support being sought by the members were those of psychological as well as spiritual support. Psychological support was evidenced through statements such as those provided by Ma P and Ma C:

"When you meet with women, you are able to share your problems." (Ma P, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

"The reason that I joined with the other women was to reduce pain. I saw that if I join other mothers, you share your pain...one putting out theirs and others as well, you see that you are not alone." (Ma C, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

Spiritual support is emphasized and revealed through the following responses provided by Ma G and Ma P from Siyazama.

"The most important thing was being consoled and even getting my stress relieved and I was able to walk among people...because we even talk about God, strengthening each other on the road." (Ma G, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

"When we converse in the group, people telling us about their situations, I found that my spirit gets rest." (Ma P, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Knowledge:

The quest to know more about particular circumstances was also highlighted in the responses provided by seven out of eight of the members of Siyazama, but not mentioned in Nanceba. The type of knowledge being sought was that of information about HIV/AIDS as well as how to deal with caring for an infected person.

The second type of knowledge being sought centered on business-related information and the acquisition of skills related to producing items for sale. One of the members in Siyazama (Ma M) stated that her interest in joining the group was based on the fact that they would be sewing items and this was an activity that she enjoyed as well as a skill that she already possessed. Another member (Ma Nk) said that she joined because she wanted to learn how to sew.

1.1.2 Common Interest

The motivations provided by the members link very closely to their perception and understanding of the common interest by which the organization was formed – i.e. the purpose of the co-operative.

Once again, three broad themes emerged from the responses of both groups:

1. Support
2. Business and Production
3. Knowledge

Support:

As mentioned earlier, the search for support is a common motivation held by the members of both co-operatives. It is no surprise, therefore, that the broad theme of support is perceived as one of the main purposes for forming the co-operative. The members in both groups agreed that one of the purposes of their co-operative was for them to come together as women and share in their pain and console each other. This is

demonstrated from the following statements provided by one of the members in each of the co-operatives:

"The purpose of this organization is so that we get a chance to get out of our houses, having meetings together... We get a chance to relax when we meet as women... we advise each other such as how to handle situations. Also, we find that we get our spirits rested." (Ma G, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

"The purpose of the co-operative is for us to come together as women...and share our ideas." (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

Business and Production:

This theme covers business and production-related concerns such as buying and selling materials. The purpose of business and production emerged from responses provided by the members of Siyazama only. Ma Mb perhaps states it best when she says:

"This organization stands for hand craft. We are here to do hand craft. In this hand craft, we do it so that we can sell it[and] market it when we finish it. That is where we will get something so that we can live, so that we can eat in our households." (Ma Mb, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Knowledge:

For Siyazama, the theme of "knowledge" closely links to the theme of "business and production" as the members of this co-operative explain that the organization's purpose is that of providing knowledge about how to manage and run a business.

"We did not know how to save money [nor] how to market our products. Now we have learned all these things, because we did the business plan, teaching us how to handle the GAPA money. We got the GAPA money earlier [and] did not know how to handle it...in time we realized that this organization is supposed to develop us." (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Nanceba members refer to the co-operative existing in order to provide greater knowledge about HIV/AIDS. This theme links closely to that of “support” in that the members sought to gain a better understanding of the nature of HIV/AIDS and how to address the various effects of the disease in the lives of those who are affected (field notes, November 2006).

The above were verified during the visual reflection session, where each of the members of the co-operatives provided what they believed the main purpose of the co-operative to be. After sharing each purpose with the group, the members, through open discussion with one another, placed the purposes of their organization into categories. Table 5.1 below displays the categories developed by each co-operative and the number of members who provided purposes under each category (in the brackets). Table 5.1 therefore corroborates the evidence provided above.

Table 5.1: Purposes provided by members of each co-operative

	Siyazama (8)	Nanceba (5)
Purpose	To help each other (2)	Sharing Pain (3)
	To develop each other (4)	Knowledge/Understanding (2)
	To make business (2)	

1.2 Formation and management of organization

With regard to the manner in which the members began coming together as a collective, three main themes arose, namely:

1. External advice
2. Internal decisions and actions
3. Voluntary membership

1.2.1 External advice

A key aspect of organization and mobilization is the ability of the members to organize themselves with minimum intervention and dictation from GAPA. This means that members need to take action on their own as much as possible and assert their right to make the choice to form and be part of the organization.

Both co-operatives indicate that they formed from being advised by their support group leader while they were still support group members. In Siyazama, five of the current co-operative members were advised to form a group by their support leader, Mrs. F. Because a co-operative is designed to have ten people, the members were told by Mrs. F to find five more people from other support groups. Mrs. F is a representative of GAPA and therefore an external agent. Similarly, in Nanceba, it was Mrs. M, their support group leader, who *"got us together.... [and] told us that we will be formed into a group of ten, and move out of Mrs. M's group"* (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006). The above narrations indicate the manner in which the initial stages of forming the group were largely a result of external advice, and, in the case of Nanceba, provided little room for choosing to stay in the support group.

The maximum number of members that a co-operative can have is also a factor that was decided upon through external decisions. Ma N from Siyazama states that:

"We do not have choice, we were told that we should be ten at GAPA. But if the number increases, there is no problem, but the limit is ten." (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006).

Although the above quote may seem like a contradiction at first, it may also indicate that despite the members knowing the 'ten-member' rule stipulated by GAPA, the group has internally made the decision that more members joining their group is not a problem for them, thus taking it upon themselves to organize the group in the way they see best.

1.2.2 Internal decisions and actions

Although the advice on how to begin forming the co-operative was provided by a GAPA representative, the actions taken in organizing as a group and managing the organization were essentially a result of internal decisions made by the members. Ma P demonstrates this when she states:

"we then found five women and became ten. She [Mrs. F] took our number and registered us with Mandisa [GAPA project manager]. Mandisa said she will take us out to be independent... So we would be independent and form our own group and work for ourselves" (Ma P, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

The following factors are evidence of the decision to be an independent group:

- Committee members
- Size
- Product and Financial management

Committee members:

In discussing the leadership structure of the co-operatives, relatively little information was provided from either co-operative. Although both co-operatives claimed to have an active committee with a chairperson, treasurer and secretary, it was clear that there did not appear to be any solid definitions of the roles played by each of these members. This was particularly true in Nanceba (field notes, October 2006). When the committee members of Nanceba were asked to identify the committee members, the members struggled to recall who held which position. This reflected that, contrary to their response of having an active committee, theirs was in fact not active at all (field notes, October 2006).

The members of Siyazama explained that the chairperson's role was to facilitate discussions around the organizational issues such as sales, where to buy raw materials and any other concerns that the members may have (field notes, October 2006). The treasurer's task was to collect the money every month from GAPA and deposit the agreed amount of cash into the bank. The treasurer also kept records of the cash flow every month (although the records were neither very clear nor accurate) (field notes, November 2006). The secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of each of the meetings. This is important because the members only meet once a week and the minutes provide them with a record of the issues discussed during the previous week's meetings. A review of these minutes also provides the members with a calculation of how many of the issues discussed have been achieved (or not).

When asked whether the organization identified a particular leader, both co-operatives responded that all the members shared leadership positions. Both co-operatives explained that all the members, *together*, made decisions over all aspects of the organization (field notes, October 2006).

Size:

With regard to the number of members that a co-operative can have, Ma N displays a quality of the groups' understanding of their purpose as well as an assertion of internal decision-making stating:

"The group depends on the people that have formed it. You can support a group as five because you are [all] working, as long as you develop. Never mind ten or fifteen, even if you are five you can continue as long as you do what you are supposed to be doing." (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006).

Nanceba members agreed that they thought ten members were enough even though there are currently only eight members in the co-operative. Ma G expresses this best when she states:

"I think it [ten] is fine because when there are many of you, the work does not go [move]. You wait on each other. Now we are eight and we know that if I do not come, there is a missing part...also the work that we are doing fits the number ten." (Ma G, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

The above quote indicates that, for Siyazama, the issue of the number of members is not as significant with regards to organization and mobilization, as that of people coming together for a common purpose. Nanceba members, on the other hand, do not display as great an emphasis on the need for members to come together.

Product and Financial management:

Despite being influenced to form from an external source, the co-operatives still take ownership over making production and financial decisions internally (and therefore independently of external agents). Furthermore, the members show that they are able to take the appropriate action independently from these decisions. Evidence of the actions taken following from internal production and financial decisions is illustrated by Ma P who explains that:

"We get that money [from GAPA] and buy fabrics to sew aprons and comforters. We started in that way, by informing each other." (Ma P, Siyazama FGL, October 2006).

Additional internal decisions made by the members of the organization, therefore, are about the way in which the money received from GAPA is mobilized. The above quotes indicate that Siyazama channel their funds from GAPA into the purchase of materials for production and therefore, towards meeting the organization's common purpose. Nanceba also stated that they used money received from GAPA to buy part of their raw materials for the production of beadwork.

The production of particular products in the co-operatives indicate that the groups are taking deliberate action towards achieving a common goal of selling goods so as to gain an income. The choice of the product to be produced by the organization indicates another aspect of organization and is discussed in Section Three under "participation and decision-making".

1.2.3 Voluntary membership

The ability for the members to form and manage their own organizations towards realizing self-reliance is largely predicated by the freedom that the members have in deciding on whether or not they want to join. Voluntary membership was reflected in both co-operatives. Ma N and Ma L indicate this through the following statements:

"This group is formed of the people that we found and got interested to form [join] this group." (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

"After listening [to other members speaking about the co-operatives], they [new potential recruits] will hear and feel the pain and decide that they should join." (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

It is important to note that just as it is voluntary for the members to join, it is equally voluntary for them to leave the co-operative. Siyazama reports that they have only had one member leave and this was due to health reasons. The member lived far away from the group's meeting place and was not healthy enough to continue traveling the long distances. Nanceba, on the other hand, reports that two members had left the group. The reasons for their leaving were not provided as they were reported to have *"never said anything, they just stopped coming"*.

1.3 Summary and Comments

Drawing from the findings provided, the tables displayed in the following "summary and comments" sections provide a brief description of each of the co-operatives in relation to the categories of self-reliance. A negative (-) mark is placed next to descriptions that show that the co-operative does not adequately display the characteristic, whereas the

positive mark (-) indicates that the description falls in line with the characteristics of the category.

Based on the evidence of the presence or absence of the characteristics of each of the categories, a measurement value of High, Medium, or Low is assigned to the co-operative in relation to the category. The values are assigned according to the criterion set in Table 5.2 below.

Value	Description
High	Where co-operative displays all (or all but one) of the characteristics of the category
Medium	Where co-operative displays at least half of the characteristics of the category
Low	Where co-operative displays two or less of the characteristics of the category

Table 5.3 displays a summary table of both co-operatives in relation to organization and mobilization.

		Table 5.3: Summary findings of ORGANIZATION AND MOBILIZATION	
		Siyazama	Nanccha
CHARACTERISTICS	Ability to organize themselves	Provide three broad reasons for joining the co-operative (money, support, knowledge) with clear indication that the business component of the co-operative is shared by the members. (-)	Provide two reasons for joining the co-operative (support and knowledge) - none of which includes money or business related reasons). (+)
		Members advised to join co-operative from external intervention (-)	Members advised to join co-operative from external intervention (-)
	Learn how to form and manage own organization + taking deliberate action towards achieving a goal	Voluntary membership. (+)	Voluntary membership. (+)
		Present assertiveness in making internal decisions and taking action based on these decisions. (+)	Little evidence of autonomy with regard to internal business decisions. (-)
		Comprehensive knowledge of committee members and the roles they are meant to play (+)	Little knowledge of the committee members' roles (-)
		Management of finances largely directed towards funds received from GAPA (-)	Management of finances largely directed towards funds received from GAPA (-)
		Money received from GAPA channeled towards purchase of raw materials. (+)	Raw materials donated by GAPA and beads are bought with the money received from GAPA. (+)
		MEDIUM	MEDIUM

In terms of the ability of the members to organize themselves, motivation and common purpose were measured in each co-operative. Both organizations held similar reasons. The motivations linked closely with the common interest that the co-operatives had. Thus, "support", "knowledge" and "business and production" were identified as the main

purposes for which the co-operatives exist. Interesting to note is that while GAPA created the co-operative as an intervention with the purpose of providing financial self-reliance, Nanceba did not regard "business and production" as one of the purposes of their organization.

Although both groups were encouraged to form through external advice, Siyazama shows great initiative with regard to organizing themselves internally and mobilizing themselves and the financial resources available to the organization.

Mobilization of the members is evidenced through the formation of a committee in the organization. Whereas the members of Siyazama were able to define clearly the roles of the committee members, Nanceba members indicated that they could not recall who their committee members were and displayed little understanding of the roles played by the committee members - thus demonstrating a weak ability to organize and mobilize themselves. Both co-operatives, however, indicate that there is no "boss" in the organization and that leadership in terms of decision-making is shared amongst the members. Additionally, Siyazama show a clear understanding of their purpose and align their activities with this purpose (as evidenced through the purposes of "developing each other" and "business and production" and their activities consisting of "informing each other" and buying materials for production and sale).

In exploring the key decisions made with regard to the membership and size of the organization, both co-operatives indicated that these are predetermined conditions

stipulated by GAPA. This includes the rule of voluntary membership as well as that of ten members per co-operative. While Nanceba state that these are GAPA rules, Siyazama take ownership of these conditions and appropriate them to suit their purposes and needs. For example, while they understand that ten members is the maximum required for the organization, they emphasize that the numbers are not important and that what matters is that every one is working together and striving towards realizing the common purpose. Siyazama therefore show greater forms of organization and mobilization than Nanceba.

2. Responsibility and Ownership

As is presented in Section 3.4.2 of Chapter Three, the qualities of responsibility and ownership are evidenced through the members of the co-operatives displaying a belief that their own efforts are driving the development process. Additionally, the more areas in which the members are responsible for doing things for themselves, the greater the presence of this quality of organizational self-reliance.

The general characteristics displayed in this category are:

- the belief that own efforts are driving the development process through evidence
- doing things for oneself
- reliance on groups own power, judgement and ability

These are evidenced through questions related

- (i) the degree of knowledge about the nature of the co-operatives activities and structures
- (ii) the control that members have over the management decisions
- (iii) the resources that the members channel into the organization.

Indicators that were used to gauge the characteristics of the category are: attitudes and perceptions around objectives and bye laws, consideration of the nature of the co-operative in terms of the group activities, regularity of meetings, as well as the degree of autonomy (or input) over the decisions involved in the discernment of each of these factors. Additionally, results from the semi-structured questionnaire present a more detailed understanding of the type of decisions and activities made around control over product and financial management and reveal elements of responsibility and ownership.

2.1 Knowledge about the nature of the co-operative

A number of organizations are governed by internal structures and rules. In discussing whether or not there were any rules to be followed in the co-operatives, the main observation made was that Siyazama mentioned rules regarding logistical and business related functions whereas Nanceba mentioned rules that related to leaving members only.

Logistical and business related functions include:

- i) the business hours of the co-operative (from 11am to 4pm every Monday)
- ii) the attendance of every member each week unless they report the reason for their absence.

"We mark a person absent on the register when they do not make it to the group on the meeting day." (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

- iii) the accountability of sales made by each member.

"We have rules here. When we produce a blanket and a person sells it, their name is put down on the book. The person that sold the blanket is

responsible for collecting the money [if sold on credit] and bringing it to the group.” (Ma Nk, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

- iv) the submission of money from sales at the end of each month or at the agreed upon date of submission.

“[we] make sure that if we agreed that the money should all be collected at the end of the month, all the money should be in. This is to make sure that we do not get discouraged in our work.” (Ma N, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Ma Nk. of Siyazama expresses the group’s sense of ownership over the organization best when she states:

“We have elderly women...that are diabetic so when they go to the clinic, they should come back to sewing. This [business] should be ours together, there should not be people that are left behind. It’s ours together; we love it and we plan to continue working on it.” (Ma Nk, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

In Nanceba, the rules related to leaving are as follows:

- i) the members are free to leave the group at any time
- ii) the members are to return the GAPA t-shirt provided to all members of the co-operative.

Ma L explains the rationale behind the latter rule when she states:

“When you quit, according to the rule, you should return the t-shirt. It’s not yours, it’s GAPA’s.” (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

The above rules indicate, to a certain degree, the areas in which the co-operatives channel their priorities as an organization. Whereas Nanceba pay greater attention to the rules for members who are leaving the co-operative, Siyazama focus on the structures and

procedures for conducting business and therefore displays a greater degree of responsibility and ownership. Siyazama also emphasize the importance of every member taking responsibility in contributing to the purpose of the co-operative.

2.2 Control over management of resources

The two co-operatives displayed differences with regard to the extent to which the members of each co-operative have control over the management of their financial resources.

Both co-operatives receive an amount of four hundred rands from GAPA every month. The co-operatives also receive money from the sale of their goods, although this source of income is not always regular due to selling goods on credit as well as failing to sell as many goods as anticipated over the months (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

A common theme in both co-operatives was that of the need for the money received from GAPA to “develop”. Ma Nk from Siyazama explains:

“When we got the money...we did not know how to handle it. We were under the impression that we were supposed to spend the money, buy food and feed ourselves full and go home and do the same the following day. So in time we realized that this organization is supposed to develop us.” (Ma L, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Similarly, Ma M from Nanceba notes with regard to operating without the GAPA money that:

"it has to develop first; we cannot work while it is still small [very little]. It would have to develop first." (Ma M, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

Little information was provided on what is meant by "developing" the money or how this money is supposed to "develop", although the members of Siyazama did provide proposals for ways in which the organization could expand with additional funding from GAPA as well as other sources. These are covered in Section Four, conscientization and creativity.

Both co-operatives choose to deposit monies received from GAPA and through the sale of their goods into the bank every month. Money needed to purchase raw materials is drawn from the account when required. Both organizations choose to share the revenue of their sales at the end of every year (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). In terms of the management of these funds, Nanceba differed from Siyazama in that Siyazama clearly indicated that they kept records of all transaction and sales during the months. Ma Nk explains that:

"We keep the till slips and the bank money. We [should] document our expenditure...and buy books for book keeping. We [should] know how to save each cent." (Ma Nk, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Although Nanceba did mention that they had financial records, the records were not up to date, unclear in calculations, and inconsistent in data being captured (field notes, November 2006).

The above details of the two co-operatives display a form of the degree of responsibility over the management of the financial processes occurring in the co-operative.

2.3 Resources channeled into the organization

The sense of ownership and responsibility is strengthened through factors such as:

- the amount of time that the members invest in the organization
- the additional resources that the collective pool together in order to achieve their purpose
- the extent to which the members' external activities do not interfere with the co-operatives' activities

2.3.1 Time

As stated earlier, Siyazama meets every Monday from 11am to 4 pm. Nanceba meet every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm at a central location (one of the member's homes). Both co-operatives use this meeting time to produce items for sale as the central location is where all the equipment is stored (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

Important to note is that whereas all the members of Nanceba live in the same area, four of Siyazama's members are spread across different sections in Khayelitsha. Siyazama members therefore travel relatively longer distances than Nanceba members in order to attend the co-operative meetings (field notes, October 2006). The time spent at the meetings, however, is not the only signifier of the time that the members invest into the

co-operative. In discussing the procedures taken when buying raw materials, Siyazama explain that the members take turns to traveling to specific factory shops (located across Cape Town) in order to purchase raw materials for production. Members similarly take turns in marketing the products in order to gain customers and sell more. Each week, different members go to different areas (usually traveling by public transport) and sell their products door to door (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). This indicates the active role that the members take in the production and sale of their products.

Nanceba, on the other hand, state that they display their products in front of the central location and inform their neighbors on when (Wednesday) and where (member's home) they can buy the goods (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

Division of labor is an additional significant aspect of the way in which the members' time is allocated in the organization. Both co-operatives work under a system of dividing the tasks to be completed for the production of particular goods. The manner in which the division of tasks is decided upon is elaborated in Section Three, "participation and decision-making".

2.3.2 Equipment

The members of Siyazama also provide resources to the co-operative in the form of equipment needed for production. An example of this is Ma F from Siyazama who states that *"I decided to take one machine that I do not use regularly and lend it to [us- the co-operative] so that we can be successful"* (Ma F, Siyazama FGI, October 2006). Other

forms of investments made into the Siyazama are those of sewing machines bought by money made from the sale of goods. Siyazama have three sewing machines – two of which were bought from money generated through sales. The investment of one's own equipment into the organization, as well as that of the organization investing in itself, serves as an indication of responsibility and ownership of the co-operative.

With regard to equipment, Nanceba state that they cannot work without machines. Ma L explains that: *"If there are no machines, the material will just sit here. We need machines and materials."* (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006). Nanceba have one machine which was bought by money donated to them by GAPA. Even though the members of the co-operative have identified the need for more machines, they do not prioritize the purchase of these machines as Siyazama do, thus indicating lower levels of responsibility over the purchase of machines.

2.3.3 External Activities

A possible threat to the way in which resources are channeled into the organization is the matter of members engaging in similar business activities outside of the co-operatives and/or when they are not with the other members. Because the members only meet once a week, a number of the members in both co-operatives explained that they engage in their own businesses at home. Ma F from Siyazama explains:

"As we meet on Mondays here...we spend many days at our home. I sew and sell, I feed the children and come to [the co-operative]." (Ma F, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

Ma Mb adds that before she joined the co-operative, she used to sew and sell her own products and continues to do so.

"My work is my work, it is my money from my household... I do it at my own time, during my days at home. On the days of [the co-operative meetings], I come to join the other women. The problem is that I get bored at home because I am by myself." (Ma Mb, Siyazama FGI, October 2006).

In Nanceba, Ma L expresses the same views as those of the women from Siyazama, stating:

"Because there is one day that we work here, there is [only] one day that we meet. So the other days, people work on what they can work on...we do not have a problem with that [because] you cannot just sit at home when you can do something else." (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006).

The above quotes provide evidence that time allocated to the activities of the co-operatives is therefore not compromised by the external activities that the members engage in.

An important factor to take note of is the number of members in each of the co-operatives as this reflects, in part, the obligations of support that members have towards the organization. At the time of research, there were eight 'registered' members in Nanceba, although there were no more than five during each of my visits. In Siyazama, there are eleven registered members and there were no less than eight members present during my visits with them. Responsibility and ownership are reflected through regular attendance and participation in the organization. For Nanceba to have only five members present at their weekly meetings indicates that the members may not have a strong sense of responsibility towards, and ownership of the organization. Siyazama's members on the other hand, instill a rule of weekly attendance, and a report for any absenteeism. The members of this co-operative place great emphasis on working together and reaping the rewards of their collective effort - leaving no-one behind.

3. Participation and Decision-making

As presented in Section 3.4.3 of Chapter Three, this category focuses on the degree to which the members of the co-operatives are involved in making decisions in all aspects related to the interest of the organization. Evidence of participation and decision-making is displayed through the manner in which the members promote participation in the decision-making process, the way in which members assert their right to make choices in the co-operative, as well as their control over decision-making.

2.4 Summary and Comments

Table 5.4 displays a summary of both co-operatives in relation to responsibility and ownership.

		Table 5.4: Summary findings of RESPONSIBILITY AND OWNERSHIP	
		Siyazama	Nanceba
CHARACTERISTICS	(1) Belief that own efforts are driving the development process (2) Doing things for oneself (3) Reliance on groups own power, judgement and ability	Member attendance throughout the business process is regarded as most significant (+)	Little evidence of importance of member attendance throughout the business process (-)
		Co-operative rules are related to attendance logistics and business procedures (+)	Co-operative rules are based on leaving members. No indication of rules that are business related (-)
		Financial management procedures in place. Up to date financial records (+)	Lack of evidence of stringent financial management. Financial records are unclear and inconsistent (-)
		Members divide labor, take turns and invest time in purchasing raw materials, producing the goods, and selling the finished product from door-to-door (+)	Members invest time into production during the co-operative meeting days. No investment of time in the process of selling the product (+/-)
		Members invest equipment to assist in the production of goods (+)	No investment of equipment (-)
		Co-operative relies on finances from GAPA every month (-)	Co-operative relies on finances from GAPA every month (-)
		HIGH	LOW

Although there is a clear reflection of responsibility and ownership in both the co-operatives, Siyazama displays greater evidence of its members' obligation and commitment towards the organization. Factors such as the type of rules that are in place, the time that the members invest in activities concerned with achieving the goal, as well as the management of finances indicate that this co-operative reflects a higher degree of responsibility and ownership than Nanceba.

Thus far, the findings of all categories have been presented according to the characteristics of the category. A difficulty faced with the findings of this category was that of the characteristics overlapping with one another. I thus present the findings according to the related indicators. Key indicators used to illustrate the degree to which each co-operative displayed characteristics of this category are:

- questions dealing with the organization composition such as the size, voluntary membership, and the decision of setting up objectives and bye-laws.
- the decision-making process around the choice of product and the management of finances.

Finally, the experience and results of the visual reflection session exemplified the characteristics of this category – that is, observations were made on the manner in which the members discussed and agreed upon the arrangement of particular matters.

Important to note is that the indicator of “autonomy” was observed in each of the categories of organizational self-reliance. This indicator essentially attempts to gauge the level of sovereignty in making decisions within the other factors of measuring the successful formation and operation of an organization (Burkey, 1996).

3.1 Membership

Membership in both co-operatives is voluntary. Both co-operatives state that this aspect of the organization was predetermined by GAPA and is not an internal decision that was made initially by the members. Nevertheless, both co-operatives stressed the point that all

the decisions related to the running of the organization were made together as a co-operative (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). All the members participate in the decision-making process.

As mentioned in Section One (organization and mobilization), the decision of how many members are allowed in the co-operative was mainly a condition stipulated by GAPA. Although Nanceba appear to adhere to this condition, Siyazama indicates that they have appropriated the condition to suit their purposes better. Additionally mentioned in Section One (organization and mobilization) is that the members of Siyazama make it clear that it is not the numbers that are important, but that each member participates in the process of production. Thus, rather than adhering to the condition of ten members only, the co-operative consists of eleven members and ensure that each member is present throughout the process of conducting business activities. This displays the degree of autonomy present in Siyazama as well as the decisions that the members make as a group which strengthens this feature in the co-operative.

With regard to setting up bye-laws for the members in the group, Section Two (ownership and responsibility) presented the manner in which Siyazama have rules that are related to logistics and business functions whereas Nanceba have rules that are related to leaving members. The act of establishing rules by which the organizations function reflects the degree to which the members of the co-operative can agree upon, and abide to, certain decisions.

3.2 Product

It was not clear in which process of decision-making the groups engaged but Siyazama appeared to employ that of majority rule. This was evidenced through the decision of the product that the co-operative would focus on. Although some of the members in the co-operative can produce beadwork, the members had to decide to focus on one product – duvets - due to limited funds to purchase raw materials for both products (semi-structured questionnaire, November 2006).

Table 5.5 below displays the characteristics of each co-operative in terms of their choice of product, the source of raw materials, the prices of the products and the target market (information drawn from the semi-structured questionnaires conducted in both organizations, October 2006).

	Siyazama	Nanceba
Product	Blankets/Duvets (Comforters) and Pillows	Beadwork and Pillows
Source of raw materials	Bought from factory shops in Parow, Athlone, and Cape Town CBD	GAPA (scrap material) Bead shop
Sale Price	Duvet = R200 (within the group = R150) Small pillow = R15 Large pillow = R20	Large pillow = R20 Small pillow = R15 Beads = R10
Target market	The surrounding community and residents of Delft	The immediate community

A significant factor to consider from the above table is the source of raw materials. Siyazama invest their money into buying materials from factory shops located across Cape Town, whereas Nanceba source their raw materials from GAPA (scrap material that is provided for free - thus not investing any money in raw materials). Siyazama also choose to target the market outside of Khayelitsha, therefore indicating their awareness of the markets that they are able to access. Interesting to note is the process involved in the buying of raw materials as well as in the selling of the finished product. As mentioned in Section Two (responsibility and ownership), Siyazama members show active participation in the process of buying raw materials as well as selling the product through their system of members taking turns to go to the respective factory shops, and selling door-to-door in Khayelitsha and the surrounding community (particularly residents of Delft).

With regard to the choice of the product, Siyazama explain that they do not have enough money to buy materials for a wide variety of goods (for example beads and duvets) and also that they are not experts in producing anything else (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). Nanceba, on the other hand, explain that they produce beadwork and pillows because it is easier to access the material for these goods as the material is donated by GAPA and one member buys beads (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). Siyazama members indicate that they are aware of factory shops in the Cape Town area that donate materials. They add that they are unable to access these donations because they do not have an "official" or recognized identity as an organization (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

Whereas all the members of Siyazama take turns in purchasing the raw materials and selling the product from door-to-door, Nanceba display their product in front of a central location and rely on one member to purchase the beads every month. This indicates that there is less member participation involved in the process of buying and selling in Nanceba than in Siyazama.

3.3 Finances

With regard to the financial management in the co-operatives, both organizations stated that the decision was to engage in business production for the whole year (except for the month of December). Throughout the year, money is saved in the bank and shared amongst the members in December. The members choose this time to split the money because this is the time of the year that their personal expenses increase due to the festive season (semi-structured questionnaire and field notes, October 2006). The above reflects a form of decision-making in the co-operative that is not determined by an external agent's intervention. It is important to consider however, that December is also the only time in the year that GAPA does not open and therefore, cannot provide the co-operatives with the monthly amount of four hundred rands (field notes, October 2006). Thus, the decision to cease trading in December may in fact, be indirectly due to external agent's influence.

In both co-operatives decisions made around finances related to considerations of the number of members, the amount that each member takes home, the amount saved in the bank. These details are displayed in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Take-home and savings amount of each co-operative

	Siyazama		Nanceba	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
Business year	2005	2006	2005	2006
Number of active members	10	11	10	8
Take-home revenue per member	R250.00	R400.00	R300.00	R470.00
Amount saved in bank	R400.00	R2233.00	R0.00	R51.00

With regard to financial management, Siyazama members explain that they learnt several lessons on how to spend and save their money during their first year of operation. The members expressed their optimism in yielding higher financial returns in the years to come because they would carry the lessons learnt from the previous years (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006)

Although Siyazama produced their financial records, Nanceba's amounts are estimates made by the members. The above table indicates that the take home revenue per member increased for each co-operative by more than R100.00. For Siyazama, member take-home revenue increased by R150 despite having an additional member. For Nanceba, the increase was R170.00 despite being two members short.

Interesting to note is the significant difference in the amount of money saved in the bank at the end of 2006. Whereas Nanceba were able to save R51.00, Siyazama saved

R2233.00. This shows that the members of Siyazama decided to take less home so as to save more money in the interest of their organization.

3.4 Asserting the right to make decisions

Participation and decision making was also measured through observations made during the visual reflection session. In this activity, the members were asked three key questions relating to the nature of the co-operative. Each member was required to respond individually and anonymously to the questions on a sheet of paper. The responses were collected and read out loud and presented to the group. The members were then asked to categorize the responses into themes. During this process of discussion and categorizing, in both co-operatives, it was observed that all the members participated in the form of shuffling the responses and talking about what each one meant. In Nanceba, however, the two members made most of the suggestions on what categories should be present and the rest of the group agreed thus indicating a form of passive participation for the members of this co-operative as well as a reliance on two members to make the decisions with regard to categorizing the responses (field notes, October 2006). In Siyazama, only two members were observed to have kept quiet during the discussion process but did indicate that they agreed with the categories being suggested by the group members. There were several instances of discussion and reshuffling of responses under particular categories, thus indicating that Siyazama members were more actively participating in the activity as well as in the process of making decisions together.

3.5 Summary and Comments

Table 5.7 below displays the characteristics of each co-operative in relation to participation and decision making.

		Table 5.7: Summary Findings of PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING	
		Siyazama	Nanceba
CHARACTERISTICS	(1) Promoting participation in decision-making (2) Control over decision-making	Division of labor in the process of production. Each member has a role to play in the production of the goods (+)	Division of labor in the process of production. Each member has a role to play in the production of goods (+)
		Great emphasis on the participation of members throughout the business process (buying raw materials, production, selling). No one is to be left behind (+)	Little evidence of emphasis on members participating throughout the business process (-)
		Appropriation of the condition of the number of members allowed - a group decision made against external determinants (+)	Accept the condition of the number of members. No decisions made around membership size (-)
		Group agree on the type of product to produce (through majority rule decision making process) (+)	Group agree on the type of product to produce (+)
		Financial management decisions made by members of the group (-)	Financial management decisions made by members of the group (+)
	Asserting ones right to make decisions	All group members displayed their independent right to make decisions in the visual reflection session - each member provided their opinion of key matters relating to the co-operative (-)	All group members displayed their independent right to make decisions in the visual reflection session - each member provided their opinion of key matters relating to the co-operative (+)
		HIGH	MEDIUM

It is clear that both the co-operatives foster a culture of participation and decision making in their organization. With regard to decision-making in the co-operative, both Nanceba and Siyazama indicate that all the members engage in the process of making decisions at various levels in the organization. The first decision that each member makes is that of

whether or not to join the co-operative. Both organizations have voluntary membership as well as voluntary leaving. Siyazama, however, place greater emphasis on the members involvement and participation throughout the production process – emphasizing that no member should be left behind or isolated in any way from the matters related to the co-operative.

With regards to the choice of product, Siyazama choose to produce duvets only whereas Nanceba choose to produce pillows and beadwork. Siyazama's decisions indicate that the co-operative is active in accessing raw materials from a range of sources as well as targeting a wider range of the market in that they go into the neighboring community of Delft in order to sell their products. Participation is also seen in the way in which the members actively take part in purchasing their products and selling them door to door – an aspect that also highlights the level of responsibility and ownership.

The financial management aspect of the co-operatives reveals that both co-operatives choose to share the income in the month of December only due to identifying a greater need for funds during the festive season. Some members state that they wish to “treat” their families at Christmas time, while others indicated that they need funds to travel back to their homes in the Eastern Cape. Although this may highlight a degree of autonomy with regard to the decisions that are made surrounding financial management, it is also important to note that GAPA does not open for business during the month of December, which therefore means that the co-operatives do not receive the monthly amount of four

hundred rands. Thus, indicating the degree of influence that GAPA maintains over the co-operatives.

Based on a quick glance at the take-home figures of the members of each co-operative (Table 5.3), one may conclude that Nanceba is the more financially self-reliant organization because its members took home R70.00 more than Siyazama at the end of 2006. Financial benefits are often based on the amount of money that the members receive. In the context of organizational self-reliance, a significant aspect of the financial management is the amount of money that is invested into the organization in order to contribute to its growth and development. The money that each member takes home is important; however, in order to rise out of the dependency on the monthly fund, the co-operative needs to display the ability to generate funds through their own activities and rely less on GAPA's external assistance. Thus, Siyazama, having taken home R400.00 per member, but having saved R2233.00 in the bank, reveal that they are more financially self-reliant than Nanceba.

In light of the above evidence, Siyazama display greater characteristics of participation and decision-making than Nanceba.

4. Conscientization and Creativity

The final category serves as one of the most difficult to measure in that it deals with concepts that are significantly elusive and relative. For the purposes of this research, conscientization and creativity are characterized by evidence of an awareness of the

context in which the members live as well as evidence of taking action towards addressing a situation, based on the reflection of one's context. Finally, a display of conscious leadership by all involved in the co-operative indicates that the organization is moving towards realizing the full degree of this category. A large part of the data in this category of findings is sourced from the results of the visual reflection session workshop.

4.1 Awareness of context

In an attempt to measure greater awareness of context, I analyzed the responses of the members when asked what the main motivation for joining the co-operative was (covered in Section One of this chapter). This provided an indication of the context in which the members lived before deciding to join the organization.

4.1.1 Motivation and Purpose

Briefly, the following reasons were provided by the members in both co-operatives as the main motivation behind joining the co-operative: money, support, and knowledge.

The motivations for joining the co-operative linked closely with the purpose of the co-operative. I then asked the members what they perceived the main purpose of the co-operative to be. The greater cohesiveness across the responses served as an indication that the members of both the groups were, in fact, working towards a common goal and therefore building their organization's consciousness – a key aspect in the realization of organizational self-reliance. Table 5.1 displays each co-operative's response to this

question (See Appendix B and C for the complete table of responses for Siyazama and Nanceba respectively).

Table 5.1: Purposes provided by members of each co-operative

	Siyazama (8)	Nanceba (5)
Purpose	To help each other (2)	Sharing Pain (3)
	To develop each other (4)	Knowledge/Understanding (2)
	To make business (2)	

Four out of eight members in Siyazama indicated that the purpose of the co-operative was for the members to “develop each other”. Responses under this category included statements such as:

“We wanted to develop each other and fight against poverty and also try to make money so that we can educate our children.”

Closely linked to this category is that of “to make business” in which the responses included:

“We wanted to sew and sell so that we can support our families.”

“To be successful in business.”

Finally, two out of eight members in Siyazama state that the purpose of the co-operative was “to help each other”. This was characterized by the following response:

“I heard people talk about AIDS and became interested to be amongst mothers.”

The above responses indicate that the members of Siyazama are aware of the need to fight the poverty that they face through creating a successful business that will generate

money that can be used to support (and educate) their families. Additionally, the members have all been affected by HIV/AIDS and use the co-operative as a space in which they can come together and gain support from each other.

In Nanceba, three out of five of the members identified "sharing pain" as one of the main purposes of the co-operative. The responses under this category included statements such as:

"To advise each other about the pain of having someone who is sick with AIDS."

"To relieve pain [from talking to people.]"

The second purpose identified by the members was that of "knowledge and/or understanding" in which the members state:

"[We wanted] knowledge about HIV/AIDS."

It is clear from the above statements and categories that the members of Nanceba are driven by the fact that they are affected by HIV/AIDS and seek to share their experiences with others like themselves. The context from which the members enter the co-operative, and therefore perceive the purpose of the co-operative to be, is highly influenced by the effect of HIV/AIDS in their lives.

Interesting to note is that Siyazama identify the development of business as part of the purpose of the co-operative, yet Nanceba make no mention of this but rather, focus on the elements of support and "sharing knowledge about HIV/AIDS".

With regard to the business-related aspect of the co-operative, the members of the co-operatives were asked to define themselves and their purpose (focus group interview). In setting apart an identity of the co-operative, Ma M from Nanceba states:

"We explain ourselves according to the work that we do." (Ma M, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

This somewhat vague definition of who the co-operative is serves as evidence of the lack of conscientization and creativity being realized in Nanceba. Additionally, although the organization is supposed to reflect elements of growth and learning (as part of realizing the category of conscientization and creativity), Ma L from Nanceba perhaps indicates the extent to which the co-operative fails to achieve this through her statement that:

"There is no difference [between the support groups and the co-operatives], I do not see any...they have their things that they do, maybe that is the difference. Some sew duvets and other things. The difference is the work" (Ma L, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

The above quote provides a clear indication that the aspects of independence from GAPA as well as democratic structures and an inclination towards operating as a business have not yet been recognized as the nature that the co-operative should embrace.

Benefits:

In an attempt to gauge whether or not the purpose of the co-operatives were being met, the members were asked whether being part of the co-operative has any benefits. Questions aimed to elicit information that would validate whether or not the purpose was being met. In both co-operatives, members mainly highlighted the benefits of gaining

support from others in the co-operative. Ma F and Ma N in particular express this through their responses, stating:

"The worries that we had end because we meet and talk about things that happen to us. Sometimes you get disturbed sitting at home. When you get in conversation, you find yourself talking about it and you get home with your spirit feeling better." (Ma F, Siyazama FGI, October 2006)

"Coming together has made a big difference, it helped even in our households as it has helped our souls. Because the items that we make here, we get to feed ourselves and get to console (heal) our wounds." (Ma M, Nanceba FGI, October 2006)

The above quotes provide evidence that the purpose of "helping each other" and/or "sharing pain" is realized in both Siyazama and Nanceba.

4.1.2 Challenges

A further question around context is concerned with the challenges faced by the co-operatives. In naming the challenges, the members indicated what they perceived to be the factors hindering the organization from achieving its purpose. Table 5.8 displays the responses from each co-operative (See Appendix B and C for the full table of responses under each category).

	Siyazama (8)	Nanceba (5)
Challenges	Lack of funds (6)	Absenteeism (2)
	Crime (2)	Not enough members (2)
		Members quitting (1)

In Siyazama, six out of eight of the members regarded "lack of funds" as one of the main challenges being faced by the organization. Responses under this category include:

"Shortage of work equipment and not enough money."

"No machines, place to work, and money."

"Lack of money."

Only two members mentioned crime being a challenge because of the location in which they are situated. The members explained that the crime incidents in the area make it unsafe to conduct business and that in selling their products door-to-door, the members take a risk (field notes, October 2006).

In Nanceba, the prevalent theme in the identified challenges was that of membership. "Absenteeism", "not enough members", and "members quitting" were the challenges identified by this co-operative. Each of these deals with the problem of the number of members. A correlation can therefore be made between this challenge and the attention paid to the rules with regard to leaving members (covered in Section Two – responsibility and ownership). It is clear that there is a problem of membership in this co-operative which hinders the organization from realizing its purpose and, perhaps, growing into perceiving the co-operative as a business rather than a support group.

4.1.3 Solutions

Finally, a review of the possible solutions to the challenges being faced would display the creativity that accompanies the process of conscientization. This is presented in Table 5.9 below (See Appendix B and C for the full table of responses under each category).

	Siyazama (8)	Nanceba (5)
Proposed Solutions	Sourcing Money (5)	Recruiting members (2)
	A place for work (2)	Talking with people (2)
	Profit (1)	Encouraging (1)

Five out of eight members in Siyazama state that a possible solution is that of "sourcing money". Particular examples of this solution include:

"Asking for help from the authorities -- for them to help us with this development we are getting because everything needs money."

"Raising the money."

Further explanations on how they could source the money were provided by Ma M from Siyazama who explained that they were in need of initial capital that would assist them in expanding their organization.

"[Just] as the government has helped us with GAPA, they should give us money."

Closely linked to this idea of accessing money in order to expand is the second solution of accessing "a place to work" which includes statements such as:

"Getting more money and a place to work."

Particular ideas on expansion included buying or renting a container (space) from which they could conduct business, store their machines, and sell their products (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

The final purpose of "profit" covered the response of:

"Being sure of what we want to do."

When discussed further, the members agreed that what they knew for sure was that they wanted to make a profit from the sale of their goods. The above ideas indicate the creativity present in the members of the co-operative

In Nanceba, possible solutions for the challenges that they face were "recruiting members", "talking with people", and "encouraging". The three categories revealed a common theme of "team building". It is clear that the members of this group all agreed that greater focus on fostering a closer knit group would be required.

Particular responses under these categories, respectively, were as follows:

"By recruiting other people to fill the (membership) numbers."

"We should gather them together to talk to them."

"Encouraging each other so that we don't get discouraged."

4.2 Summary and Comments

Table 5.10 displays the characteristics of each co-operative in relation to conscientization and creativity.

		Table 5.10: Summary Findings of CONSCIENTIZATION AND CREATIVITY	
		Siyazama	Nanceba
CHARACTERISTICS	Awareness of Context	Members indicate awareness of the need to fight poverty through the creation of a successful business that will generate enough money to support their families (+)	Members are driven by being affected by HIV/AIDS and therefore seek to interact with others like themselves. No mention of the need to make money in order to support families (+)
		Main challenge being faced by the co-operative is the lack of funds to expand - buy/rent a work place. (+)	Main challenge being faced is that of lack of members through leaving or absenteeism. (+)
		Possible solution to the challenges faced is sourcing money from authorities to assist them in expanding their business (+)	Possible solution to challenges faced is recruiting more members and opening lines of communication more so that members are free to talk about any other problems they may have (+)
		HIGH	HIGH

In terms of conscientization, members of both co-operatives reflected on the key questions posed and presented the individual opinions and perceptions. Although the responses differed between the co-operatives, internally, what held significance is the act of being able to reflect on key questions and provide responses that are more or less the same as this shows that the members of the organization had a collective consciousness. They are relatively "united" in their understanding of the nature of their co-operative.

With regard to the development of conscious leadership by all involved in the co-operative, Nanceba members were observed to follow the lead of two members during

the activity, whereas all the members in Siyazama were observed to have provided suggestions on where to place certain responses and what to name the categories. The above indicates the manner in which the members in Siyazama assert their right to make, as well as influence, decisions – a reflection of the development of conscious leadership.

With regards to creativity, Nanceba mention that possible solutions to their challenges are steps to be taken towards enhancing the membership experience. These included solutions such as the need to recruit more members, the need to talk to the members more as well as the need to engage in activities that would serve to encourage the members of the co-operative. Creativity in this case is presented in terms of changing or adapting the nature of interactions amongst the members of the co-operative. The solutions are not suggestions that can be manifested in a tangible manner, but rather, require a great deal of psychological and interpersonal support.

Six out of eight of the members in Siyazama stated that the broad category of “sourcing money” was a possible solution for addressing the challenges that they faced. The particular responses provided under this category, as well the elaborated discussion on these solutions served to show the level of creativity held by the members of the co-operative. Members explained their plan of sourcing an initial bulk sum that could be used to assist them in purchasing or hiring a space in from which they could conduct their business. In discussing issues such as the need to access more funds in order to buy or rent a place from which the organization could conduct business, the members display greater qualities of conscientization and creativity in that they are relating the solutions to

enhancing their business – thus fulfilling the purpose of “making business” and, in turn, “developing each other”.

5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented the characteristics of two co-operatives in relation to each of the developed categories of organizational self-reliance. The comparative method by which the two co-operatives were presented served to highlight the degree of difference between the two organizations, and therefore, present the extent to which certain characteristics of the categories of organizational self-reliance exist.

The tables in each of the “summary and comments” sections indicate that the two co-operatives, despite having existed for the same length of time and selling more or less the same type of products, reflect different degrees of the presence of the categories of self-reliance.

Siyazama scores “high” on all but one of the categories of organizational self-reliance (organization and mobilization) where the co-operative scores “medium”. Nanceba’s scores, on the other hand, vary from low to high across the categories. The following table (Table 5.11) highlights each co-operatives score per category:

Category	Siyazama	Nanceba
Organization and Mobilization	Medium	Medium
Responsibility and Ownership	High	Low
Participation and Decision-making	High	Medium
Conscientization and Creativity	High	High

The above table clearly indicates that Siyazama reflects greater characteristics of organizational self-reliance than Nanceba.

The scale of organizational self-reliance (presented in Chapter Three) presents four points under which an organization can fall, namely: absence of self reliance, partial self-reliance, approaching self-reliance, and maintaining self-reliance. Although the scale is crude, it is useful in providing a “snapshot” of the status of an organization.

In this instance, because Siyazama scored “high” on all but one of the categories, this co-operative can be placed under the point of “approaching self-reliance” on the scale. This point is described as “where there is evidence of more than two thirds of the characteristics of the categories of self-reliance in the organization”.

Nanceba, having scored two “mediums”, one “low” and one “high” across the categories can adequately be placed under the point of “partial self-reliance” as this is “where at least half of the characteristics of the categories are evidenced in the organization.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter serves as a space for the consideration and reflection of the major issues that arose from the application of the instruments as well as the results of the findings. This chapter is therefore presented in two sections. The first section presents a discussion of the methodological approach in relation to the broader macro-micro development debate. The second section focuses on the key findings of the research and links these to discussions of related development issues. Wherever possible, I provide recommendations on how these issues can begin to be addressed. I conclude this chapter by advocating further research into developing similar micro-level approaches for operationalizing and measuring people-centered development concepts.

6.1 Methodological Approach

A central aspect of this dissertation is the development of "measurement" instruments and the results of their application in grassroots organizations. In Chapter Four, I highlighted a number of the limitations and benefits of each of the instruments used. Although Chapter Four presents significant assertions regarding the particular instruments, I have chosen to present a critical reflection of the general methodological approach in this chapter for two main reasons: (1) in order to reflect on the research approach *after* the process of collecting, analyzing and presenting the findings, (2) because the issues raised in the critical reflection of the methodology lie parallel to the discussion of development issues related to intervention assessments and research approaches. I do not, therefore, repeat the assertions made in Chapter Four, but rather,

critically add to them, and integrate the reflections of the methodology to the broader developmental issues.

In this section, I begin with contextualizing the discussion of the instruments by presenting the broader micro-macro development assessment debate and highlight the need for greater attention to be paid towards micro-level developmental research approaches. I then critically reflect on the role of a Participatory Action Research-informed approach to micro-level research. I draw from the experience of this research process to highlight the significance of the role of facilitation and the consideration of flexibility. This is followed by a brief discussion of the value of employing this methodology for NGOs, members of grassroots organizations, and various other players who are concerned with the operationalization and "measurement" of people-centered development concepts such as organizational self-reliance.

6.1.1 "Measuring" Development: the macro/micro debate

Development has, for a long time, been considered in terms of economic growth. Although the past two decades have seen a shift in the perception of development from being purely economic to more people-centered, the manner in which development is assessed continues to be largely determined by quantitative economic measurements such as the Gross Domestic Product or Gross National Product of countries. These development indicators have, however, largely ignored the effects that development interventions and economic changes have had on people on the micro-level. Alternative measurements, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), were therefore introduced.

The degree of a country's human development is measured by the HDI which focuses on levels of life expectancy, educational attainment and income. By taking health and knowledge into consideration when measuring the development of humans, development strategies were able to shift their focus on improving these spheres so as to work towards higher levels of human development.

Although the above indicate an aspect of the progress made in the development of indicators, a major critique of the above measurements is that they are mainly based on quantitative, macro-level analyzes of development – that is national or regional level analyzes. Such measurements make it “possible to compare areas of countries and essentially contribute to policy development at an administrative level, such as in the framing of legislation, the planning of services or monitoring, the implementation of change” (Bullock et. al, 1995: 85). The measurements are thus a result of macro-analyzes that provide information on the state of countries or regions in terms of numerical values that indicate positive or negative developmental growth.

Although there is obvious value in the quantitative macro-development indicators, they are limited and are designed to address questions that locate the scale or dimensions of poverty. This also applies to quantitative indicators of self-reliance. The measurements essentially fall short in providing an analysis of the micro-level reality in the areas in which they are applied. Kaplan notes that:

there is an increase of poverty for the masses of the third world, even as – or perhaps because – certain countries become economically more developed. And within national borders, there is poverty, growing unemployment and marginalization in the midst of plenty...

(Kaplan, 1996: 43)

Macro-level assessments, even those that reflect positive results with regard to economic growth, do not always capture the reality of the conditions of the people in the particular context of study. Development practitioners are interested in addressing questions that ask about *how* people work towards realizing self-reliance. By asking such questions, one is able to gain insight into the strategies that people use to realize this goal. Additionally, an understanding of these strategies creates a point from which alternative approaches to the interventions can be developed. Edwards states that:

economic growth may bring material benefits to people, but development is about much more than this, being a process of enrichment in every aspect of life. No one would deny that material benefits are an essential part of development, but the underlying principle of control is much more important.

(Edwards, 1994: 282)

The increasing attention being paid to people-centered development promotes the idea of creating spaces in which people generate greater degrees of control over the development of their lives. NGOs have been singled out as the vehicles through which people can gain greater access to development interventions that enrich their lives and expand their choices. In his discussion on the NGO sector Hulme states that:

the sector claims to be able to address the situation through the processes of 'conscientization', 'mobilization', 'empowerment', 'policy advocacy' and, sometimes, 'social transformation'...Such claims demand analysis by researchers who reject narrow economic notions of development.

(Hulme, 1994: 253)

It is important to note, however, that this research does not entirely reject economic notions of development, but rather, embraces them as part of a more holistic approach to

understanding development. The concepts listed by Hulme are predominantly grounded on micro-level concepts that require a similarly framed type of research approach in order to be explored and understood fully. This would then inform relevant stakeholders in the development sector on the manner in which they can begin realizing the concepts in practice as well as how they can monitor and evaluate the success or failure of their operationalization. Greater attention therefore needs to be paid to the manner in which these concepts are translated into practice on the ground level. Edwards perhaps states it best when he asserts that:

good research (relevant research) helps us to make to make informed choices about alternative ways of doing things, enabling a selection to be made between more and less effective strategies to reach our goals.

(Edwards, 1994: 283)

There is therefore a clear call for greater micro-level research that contributes to gaining insight into the experiences of NGOs and grassroots organizations so as to assess the choices available to this sector in terms of realizing their goals.

6.1.2 Considering the PAR approach

Although detailed findings of the research are presented in Chapter Five, it is important to note that these findings provide evidence of the instruments' ability to gauge the levels of organizational self-reliance at the grassroots level. The methodology employed in this research was informed by the Participatory Action Research approach which is commonly used in people-centered development as it is:

intended to increase the people's knowledge of themselves and their situation and, with this knowledge, gain greater control over their own lives through action emerging from the research.

(Burkey, 1996: 63)

With the exception of observation, all the methods in this study used inquiry techniques that created an opportunity for the members of the co-operatives to reflect on the nature of their organization. The visual reflection session, in particular, was the most interactive method applied as it involved the members providing individual opinions related to key questions, presenting these opinions in an anonymous manner, and collectively discussing the responses before organizing their thoughts in a space that allowed them to visualize their opinions. The activity essentially serves as a step towards informing the type of action that needs to be taken by the organization in order to begin working towards the realization of their goals.

Hulme (1994), however, warns against too much reliance on PAR approaches and excluding the established “conventional” methods applied in social research. In discussing the relevance of social development research to the non-profit and non-governmental sector in terms of its capacity to assist organizations to achieve the development goals that they promote, Hulme (1994) refutes the claim that relevance can be achieved only by “action research” or “participatory research”. Explaining that although these approaches are desirable, and even feasible, there is a risk that the failure to apply “conventional approaches” will result in a fundamental loss of knowledge that is not only imperative to understanding social and political change, but also to the selection of strategies by NGOs (Hulme 1994):

There is a distinct likelihood that much of the efforts of this sector, especially in Asia and Africa, will be decreasing relevance to development (in terms of the alleviation of poverty and the strengthening of opportunities for poor people to exercise influence over decisions that affect their lives) unless the sector is subjected to intensified research that relates micro-level activities to macro-level processes

(Hulme, 1994: 252)

The experience of my research has revealed the possibility of participants playing an active role in the PAR process with regard to reflecting on their current context and proposing possible solutions. Once again, however, while it is important that the perspectives of those for whom development interventions are geared are included in the development process, research also needs to focus on generating knowledge that contributes to operationalizing and testing the various development approaches being advocated by development agencies, and linking the results of these to the broader, macro-level analyzes of the state of development in the nation, region, or continent.

6.1.3 Facilitation and Flexibility

A critical aspect of the application of these instruments is the skill of facilitation. As stated earlier, development practitioners are concerned with asking questions that relate to *how* people work towards enhancing their development. The facilitation of the dialogue between the participants of the research, therefore, serves a significant role. In order to present clearly the importance of effective and efficient facilitation, I draw from my experience during the research process.

Flexibility is an important matter to consider on two levels: the first level is in terms of the order and manner in which questions are posed; and the second is concerned with the

schedule of appointments when these instruments are applied in the particular organizations.

Facilitation served as one of the crucial ingredients in the research process, particularly with regard to the focus group interviews and the visual reflection session. A major hindrance to this research process was my inability to speak isiXhosa. This meant that I had to hire a facilitator and translator to conduct the focus group interviews as well as the visual reflection session. In the review of the transcribed interviews however, I noticed areas that could have benefited from further prompting. For example, further questioning of the decisions that the members of the co-operative make as well as questions related to the process of decision-making within the organizations could have provided deeper insight and understanding of the participation and decision-making aspect of the organization. Kaplan perhaps states it best when he writes:

indeed the primary activity of facilitation is the asking of questions. The ability to find and put the right question at the right time, the one question which will elicit further self-reflection and growing awareness, is a profound skill.

(Kaplan, 1996: 114)

It is also important to note the key, but limited, role played by the facilitator during the visual reflection session. This instrument essentially measured not only the presence of the category of conscientization and creativity (one of the four categories of organizational self-reliance), but also attempted to provide the members with a space in which to reflect on their organization and identify possible avenues of action that can be taken in order to achieve their purpose(s). The type of facilitation involved in this process

is “soft” in that the facilitator simply asks the key questions and directs the order of the activity. Kaplan notes that:

questions can also be used to confront and challenge, it depends on the nature and manner of questions. Soft facilitation respects the development process; it is also, sometimes, unable to assist beyond a certain point if resistance to change or unconscious patterns maintain intransigence.

(Kaplan, 1996: 114)

In other words, facilitation cannot make the change. It simply contributes to guiding the development process towards the direction in which the participants lead it to if they lead at all. The outcome of the PAR process is therefore, highly dependent on the degree of input and participation from the members.

Conducting research with co-operatives needs to take into account the process of agreeing on times at which one can apply the instruments. Being flexible and open to changes during the research process is a valuable skill to be learnt. Due to the somewhat “informal” nature of the co-operatives, I experienced three occasions of cancellations of the appointments made with the co-operatives. The reasons for these cancellations range from the members attending a funeral to that of too few members being present in order to conduct group research. The outcome of this was the prolonging of the research process as I then had to arrange different dates for the application of the instruments with the co-operatives.

Micro-level research of this sort needs to take into account the possibility of external, and personal matters interfering with the research schedule. Additionally, one needs to consider that that the research is taking place in order to gauge the degree of

organizational self-reliance, but also to create a space in which the members gain more knowledge and insight into their own organization and how they can begin to realize greater degrees of organizational self-reliance. Applying the instruments when the majority of the members are present is therefore crucial to the research process.

6.1.4 Value of the methodology

The findings produced from the methods employed in this research provide evidence to show that it is possible to gauge levels of organizational self-reliance. Although the same instruments were applied to two different co-operatives, a comparative presentation of the findings shows that organizational self-reliance is not expressed in the same way in the two co-operatives, thus further demonstrating the manner in which the instruments are able to assess levels of organizational self-reliance.

In reflecting on the research approach, it is important to note that the analysis of the results obtained from the instruments requires a degree of interpretation and judgement. This highlights the importance of the conceptualization aspect of the research process as this stage consists of setting clear definitions of the key characteristics of each category, which then serve as guidelines in the measurement process and prevent the researcher from interpreting the data outside of the established categories. As was experienced in the presentation of the findings of the category of participation and decision-making, difficulties do arise clearly analyzing in the areas where there are overlaps between the characteristics. Research into the possible ways in which this category can be further refined is therefore required.

Ideally, these methods should be available and applicable to organizations wishing to assess the extent to which they realize organizational self-reliance. The organizational self-reliance scale (Table 3.3 in Chapter Three) is a useful tool in that it provides a crude, yet quick, assessment of where an organization falls in relation to self-reliance. The value of these instruments for organizations, however, lies in the documentation and detail of the presence (or absence) of particular characteristics in each category of self-reliance as this provides the aspects in which organizations can begin to address the factors that they are lacking. This self-assessment also allows the members of the organizations to reflect on their current status and consider ways in which they can begin addressing particular issues – thus reinforcing the principles of people-centered development which advance the idea of people learning to take control over their own development.

Edwards (1994: 290) notes that “NGOs around the world are becoming much more serious about evaluating the impact of their work and feeding the lessons of their experience back into policy and practice”. With regard to the extent of the capacity that the organizations have in applying these methods, Edwards states that:

the critical analysis of alternative strategies to promote development (which must include the perspectives of those who are participating in these strategies) is clearly critical to the success of NGOs and other agencies, yet it is debatable whether the NGOs themselves have the skills, time or objectivity to do this alone.
(Edwards, 1994: 294)

The consideration of the complexity of the instruments may require that further research to be geared towards their simplification. This includes approaches such as translating the instruments into vernacular. Organizations may, additionally, have to begin fostering a

culture of building their skills capacity through training individuals on the facilitation approaches as well as various aspects from which to ask questions that will yield relevant responses. Finally, organizations will have to begin making the time to assess their organization using methods that consist of a degree of objectivity. Alternatively, organizations may have to consider inviting external facilitators to implement this although this somewhat undermines the objective of promoting self-reliance in the organization. The key, however, lies in organizations recognizing the value of such applications in providing insight into the current state of their development, and subsequently, providing points of departure from which they can begin addressing the realization of their goals

6.2 Key Findings

In this section, I highlight the major issues that emerged from the findings of the research conducted in the two co-operatives. In presenting these issues, I seek to reflect and consider the ways in which they relate to broader developmental issues/debates. Thus far, discussion has focused on the value of employing particular methodologies in gauging levels of organizational self-reliance. These “measurement” instruments, however, can only be used for the assessment of organizations – that is, identifying an organizations’ current state with regard to self-reliance. The instruments do not deliver change but rather, provide insight into the factors of the organization that may hinder or promote the realization of self-reliance. For development practitioners, it is valuable to consider and explore these factors because of their role in informing the manner in which future (or further) development interventions should be implemented.

The issues raised in this section are divided according to the following themes:

1. External influence
2. Lack of “conventional” leadership
3. Financial dependency
4. Financial returns
5. Absenteeism
6. Peer support and HIV/AIDS

6.2.1 External influence

One of the key issues found to be present in both co-operatives was that of the influence of external agents in the process of organization and mobilization. With regard to the processes of forming the co-operatives, both organizations state that they were encouraged to do so by GAPA support group members.

At this point, it is important to recall the stages that GAPA members take when interacting with the organization (GAPA). The support groups from which the members break away to form the co-operatives are medium term solutions for the individuals. The maximum number of people allowed in the support groups is nineteen. Once there are approximately nineteen people in the support group, ten members are encouraged to leave the group and form independent home-based business co-operatives. Thus, forming and joining the co-operatives is largely based on the numbers in the support groups.

Despite membership into the co-operative being voluntary, consideration of the above conditions for the formation of a co-operative suggests that there is little room for the

choice of staying in the support groups. This means that members have the option of either “voluntarily” joining a co-operative, or discontinuing participation in any GAPA-related organizations all together. With regard to the formation of the co-operatives, further findings indicate that particular organizational factors such as the number of members per co-operative as well as the leadership structure of the co-operative are predetermined by GAPA.

Silberberg (1998) notes that linkages established between NGOs and the GROs that they assist can often result in one organization influencing the other. The author stresses the point that “self-management of the poor and the enhancement of democracy are central aims for many community organizations [and that] dependence, or lack of autonomy, undercuts this aim by definition” (Silberberg, 1998: 48). It is clear, in this case, that GAPA plays an influential role in the formation of the co-operatives. As Silberberg notes, the consequence of this influence results in the hindrance of the co-operatives from realizing higher degrees of organization and mobilization (one of the four categories of organizational self-reliance). The findings of the research show that both co-operatives failed to realize a “high” score in this category because of the existing strong links to GAPA with regard to the process of formation.

GAPA therefore finds itself in the common position of contradiction of the objectives and the activities implemented by NGOs that assist GROs. In influencing the co-operatives with regard to formation, GAPA essentially serves to undermine the autonomy of the members of the co-operative in forming their own organization and making decisions

related to the nature of these organizations, therefore undermining the realization of organizational self-reliance in the co-operatives.

In light of these findings, the two pertinent questions to consider are (1) whether people really are able to organize and mobilize themselves without a degree of influence from external agents? And (2) how external agents can work with the participants in order to achieve a form of development that does not undermine the capacity of those involved?

Eade and Williams (1997) note that:

there are many ways for NGOs to become involved in promoting social organizations... But the need for external assistance is clear, and the issue for NGOs is how to use their material and technical resources as a catalyst to maximize the autonomy of poor people.

(Eade and Williams, 1994: 343)

Further areas of investigation would include questioning where the boundaries of external influence lie and *how* an NGO can approach assisting a GRO within these boundaries. What processes and methodologies need to be employed to assist people in realizing their own development? When does external intervention shift from being a "catalyst" to serving as a source of influence on which the GROs are dependent? To what extent does the NGO determine the nature of the GRO? Is it acceptable, for example, for the NGO to predetermine the number of members for the organization and not the leadership structure? Do these predetermined decisions compromise or, in fact, enhance the level of self-management for the members of the organization?

6.2.2 Lack of “conventional” leadership

Although literature on the formation of organizations (Burkey, 1996; Eade and Williams, 1997) stresses the importance of leadership in NGOs and GROs, the findings indicate that this theme did not emerge as strongly as anticipated. Each co-operative is designed to have ten members and, out of these ten, three elected committee members. A committee is made up of a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary and essentially makes up the leadership structure of the co-operatives. Unlike Nanceba, Siyazama indicated that the persons elected in the committee played relatively active roles. Very little additional information was provided around the leadership structure in the organization; however, members in both co-operatives did clearly state that there was no boss in the organization.

While the absence of a formal leadership structure may indicate a lack of “organization and mobilization” (one of the four categories of organizational self-reliance), it is important to consider that both co-operatives stating that they “lead” the co-operative as a collective (i.e. making decisions together), may in fact, highlight an alternative form of mobilization and organization. Blunt and Jones (1997: 15, citing Linquist and Adolph, 1996) assert that “African societies tend to be egalitarian within age groups, but hierarchical or gerontocratic between age groups”. The members of the co-operatives are all more or less over the age of fifty. In making decisions together, the members of the co-operatives lead and manage themselves based on an understanding of egalitarianism and cooperation, thus nullifying the need to establish distinct leadership positions in the organization.

The above reveals a degree of the agency practiced by the members of the co-operatives in that despite being influenced by external preconditions, the members choose to construct and practice their own type of leadership structure and approach. Acre et al. (1994) explain that:

the concept of human agency starts from the notion that the individual has the knowledge and capability to understand social experiences and to solve the riddles of everyday life. The individual recognizes himself/herself in his/her social practices within specific situations.

(Acre et al., 1994: 156)

Thus, while a formal leadership structure may not be in place in these co-operatives, it is clear that the members of the organizations recognize the best practice for their situation and apply their agency in making significant decisions collectively, thus positively feeding into realizing aspects of self-reliance.

Important to note is that the committee structure is an aspect of the organization that is determined by GAPA. It would therefore be insightful to investigate whether the members feel that there is a need for a committee. Do they simply create one because it is advised from GAPA or do they see the value of having a committee in the organization? Is this simply a structure put in place to demonstrate the “democratic” nature of the co-operatives?

In development practice, it is of little use implementing interventions in which the participants see no value. If the participants do not assign any value to the predetermined leadership structures, they will inevitably not succeed in fulfilling the purpose for which

they were designed. This line of thinking follows for all other aspects of development interventions. It is the task of the development practitioner therefore, to determine the structures and procedures that carry a significant value for those who participate in their construction and practice - thus ensuring that the intervention is relevant for the participants. Edwards (1994) asserts that:

the key to being relevant lies in the participation of poor people in constructing our understanding of how the world operates. We cannot be relevant to people unless we understand their problems, but we cannot understand these problems unless people tell us about them.

(Edwards, 1994: 281)

Enquiry into the relevant structures and procedures of development intervention is therefore a key aspect in the design of these interventions.

6.2.3 Financial dependency

Both co-operatives reveal reliance on GAPA funds for the operation of their business. Besides a unanimous agreement from both co-operatives that the money received from GAPA is important for the operation of their organizations, a significant revelation of the co-operatives' reliance on GAPA funds is that of the co-operatives' closing of business during the month of December – the same month that GAPA closes for business. This means that the co-operatives do not receive funds from GAPA during that month and would therefore, be limited in their operations.

Money (and the lack thereof) is a major challenge for Siyazama who identified this as one of the factors hindering them from realizing their purpose. Although organizational

self-reliance is not solely determined by the degree of financial self-reliance, this aspect of the organization is crucial for its survival.

Ghimire (2006) argues that the financial dimension is rarely debated within NGOs. As a result of the lack of attention paid to this dimension, attempts to be financially autonomous are few and far between. It therefore becomes paradoxical that NGOs - who often fall short of realizing their own financial self-reliance - promote this exact notion in the GROs that they support. Additionally, in assisting the co-operatives with a monthly amount of working capital, GAPA essentially works against promoting self-reliance and reinforces the very dependency that they seek to fight against.

For the purposes of this research, attention is directed towards the manner in which GROs such as home-based business co-operatives can rely less on the money provided by the NGO for their business operations. Writing within the context of economic self-reliance in income generating projects for refugee women, Shultz asserts that:

increased economic self-reliance has many advantages... providing opportunities for self-sufficiency costs less than continually satisfying basic needs through assistance programmes.

(Shultz, 1994: 587)

The above point is particularly relevant to GAPA as the co-operatives indicate that they receive (and rely on) funds from GAPA every month. This is inevitably a cost for GAPA and contributes to undermining the ability for the co-operatives to overcome their dependence on the monthly funds. In practice, Shultz identifies the following as the goals for economic self-reliance in income generating projects:

In planning a self-sufficiency project, the goals should be to generate income for the participants, to receive a return at least equal to that invested and to have realistic expectations of the outcomes. Problems result when planners and implementers have different or overly ambitious objectives.

(Shultz, 1994: 575)

Important to note in the consideration of these goals is that the income generating projects (i.e. business co-operatives) move through various stages of organizational development. Kaplan (1996) draws attention to the manner in which organizations, like people, move through various phases of development, namely: dependence, independence, and interdependence.

The phase of dependence is characterized as the “pioneer phase” in which the organization is run as a family unit, personally and informally. It is a state of “unconscious acceptance and natural conformity” (Kaplan, 1996: 26). As the organization grows, the need for structures and procedures gradually eclipses informality...and the organization enters the phase of differentiation: the formation of specialized sub-systems, and of formal structures and procedures (Kaplan, 1996). The organization at this stage gains efficiency through division of labor, specialization and standardization (ibid.) – thus characterizing the phase of independence. This is stage “represents the beginning of individual awareness... [and] is essential in awakening consciousness, but not enough to maintain it” (Kaplan, 1996: 26-27) During the stage of interdependence, the organization matures into a state of:

a *conscious* attempt at integration...It demands striving for balance between dependence and independence, and needs an awareness of context and enthusiasm for creativity. Indeed, it demands the development of conscious leadership by all involved

(Kaplan, 1996: 24; emphasis in original)

Failure of the ability to gauge the phase of development of the organization inevitably leads to the failure of particular interventions. GAPA may therefore, consider taking up the responsibility of assessing the phase in which the co-operatives are before intervening in a particular manner.

Possible recommendations to address the issue of financial dependence on GAPA are as follows:

1. Provide training on how to access funds and resources from various sources
2. Reduce money provided at different phases of organizational development
3. Provide money for alternative purposes
4. Provide a lump sum to start-up the business co-operatives

1. Provide training on how to access funds and resources from various sources

During the semi-structured questionnaire (October 2006), members in Siyazama discussed how they are aware that some factory shops donate materials to recognized NGOs. It is, however, difficult to access these donations without “proper representation” from an organization that they are linked to such as GAPA (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). The co-operatives, however, find themselves in a dilemma of not having a “marketable identity”. Additionally, being represented by GAPA may compromise the independent nature of the co-operative.

It is thus recommended that GAPA provide the members of the co-operatives with training workshops on methods that the members can use to present themselves

effectively to potential funders (including micro-credit schemes) or donation agencies.

2. Reduce money at different phases of organizational development

By drawing from Kaplan (1996) who notes that organizations go through various phases of development, GAPA could consider gauging the phase in which particular co-operatives exist at a particular time and providing the organization with the appropriate type of assistance based on the stage of development. Thus, co-operatives that indicate that they are in the “pioneer phase” may require the continuous receipt of the monthly funds from GAPA to assist them in their operations until they reach the next phase of development. A co-operative that grows into the phase of independence may have better structures and financial management procedures in place. GAPA may therefore consider reducing the amount accredited to these organizations as they begin to gain greater independence with regard to the management of their co-operatives.

The financial records show that the members of both co-operatives took home more money during the second year of business than they did in the first. Additionally, Siyazama stated that they were still new in the business and did not know how to manage their finances during the first year. Lessons learnt from the pioneer year were thus carried into the second year of business operation (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006).

In this case, GAPA may have considered reducing the funds disseminated to the co-operatives during their second year of business as this not only obligates the co-operatives to be less dependent of the funds, but also ensures that the co-operatives make decisions that allow them to organize and mobilize their resources in an effective manner. It may also encourage the members to take greater ownership and responsibility over the management of their co-operatives finances, therefore enhancing the aspect of self-management. Additionally, this option allows GAPA to channel their funds towards new co-operatives.

3. Provide money for alternative purposes

The potential limitation of the above presented recommendation (reducing money at different phases of the organizations development), is that it may “interrupt” the progress of the co-operatives. Because the co-operatives are accustomed to receiving the money every month, knowledge of the eventual withdrawal of the money may, in fact serve as a disincentive for the organizations to move through the phases of development.

Keeping in line with being aware of the phases of development that an organization is in, a possible solution for addressing the dependency that the co-operatives have on the funds from GAPA for the operation of their business is that of using the money for different purposes. Currently, the funds serve as working capital for the co-operatives. GAPA may consider providing these funds for the purpose of building a trust fund for each co-operative. During the phases of independence and

interdependence, GAPA can begin channeling the money to the co-operatives for the purpose of saving or investing for future business opportunities. In this way, the co-operatives receive the money from GAPA and do not channel this towards their operations, but rather towards opportunities that can enhance their business in the future.

4. Provide a lump sum to start-up the business co-operatives

GAPA may consider providing the co-operatives with a lump sum at the conception of the business. This sum could, for example amount to the total money provided to the co-operatives over the year. A larger amount of money may allow the co-operatives to take advantage of economies of scale and invest into larger resources such as buying a location from which to conduct business or buying equipment and materials wholesale.

Possible problems with this option, however, are (1) the determination of the appropriate lump sum and (2) the mismanagement of funds. The former problem requires a micro-level analysis of the context in which the co-operatives will operate, as well as a macro-level analysis of the economic structures in place and the ways in which the co-operatives can address or positively participate in the wider economic realm. This method reiterates that which is proposed by Edwards (1994) when he states:

both the 'micro' and 'macro' levels are crucial to relevance in developmental research: the important thing is to ensure that they are explicitly related to one-another... There are many ways of linking the two together: the crucial things is always to build from the 'bottom upwards'. In other words, always to ensure that

people's real experiences and concerns provide the raw material for the high-level (macro) analysis and synthesis. Any higher-level research which fails to do this may misinterpret what is actually happening and will therefore fail to inform development policy and practice at higher levels in a responsible way.

(Edwards, 1994: 285)

In addressing the mismanagement of funds, the technical and human resource assistance from GAPA may, once again, be required with regard to providing the members of the co-operatives with training on the type of questions that need to be asked when deciding on how to invest this money. It is assumed, however, that NGOs, themselves have the capacity to address these questions and make informed decisions based on financial management. In reality, however, this is not the case. Focus should therefore be geared towards building the capacity of NGOs' ability to manage finances effectively and make informed financial decisions, before they move onto supporting GROs in this regard.

6.2.4 Financial returns

The intervention that is most often employed in an attempt to lead women out of conditions of poverty is that of implementing a source of income-generation. Income-generation was, and continues to be, seen as a route that could be taken to strengthen women's economic capacity and therefore enhance the opportunities available to them.

In 2006, Siyazama generated R2633.00 and Nanceba had a total revenue of R521.00.

At a take-home amount of R400.00 and R470.00 per year for the members of Siyazama and Nanceba respectively, the financial returns per member are relatively low. Important to note, however, is that the co-operatives are not making losses – a positive aspect of the

home-based business. A possible area for further investigation is that of exploring how the money received from the co-operatives contributes to the livelihood of the member and her family.

A positive finding in this aspect is that Siyazama, the co-operative that is approaching self-reliance, fosters a culture of saving money earned from the sale of goods in order to advance the organizations purpose. An additionally important, yet often ignored, aspect of income generating activities that could require further research is the area of saving. The amount of money that a co-operative saves can essentially contribute to providing the organization with a means of generating more resources for the achievement of their goals. This savings approach is crucial and may require more prominence in discussions related to income generating activities.

The lack of financial returns from income-generating projects, however, is not a new issue to be identified in this sector. In highlighting best practice for income-generating projects, Schultz (1994) asserts earlier in this section that income-generating projects should aim to receive a return at least equal to that invested. The results of my research indicate that the products produced by both co-operatives are sometimes sold on credit and the payment is sometimes delayed (semi-structured questionnaire, October 2006). Financial management with regard to the income from sales is therefore more or less informal thus highlighting the manner in which the informal nature of the co-operatives needs to be taken into account when designing the intervention.

I once again emphasize the importance of conducting micro-level research that provides insight into, and an understanding of, the economic context in which the co-operatives operate. Eade (1997) maintains that the success of income-generating projects (IGPs) is often patchy for a wide range of reasons, including: IGPs being regarded as survival, rather than growth or profit activities; IGPs existing as forms of informal businesses, rather than formal sector activities; and IGPs being based on superficial understandings of the wider economic context and seen as existing in isolation rather than as part of a dynamic (global) system.

In similar light, Max-Neef (1991) points out that failure of several micro-organizations' ability to achieve their goals is due to factors such as the size of the market, the opportunities available for entering into a competitive market, and the capacity to avoid dependence on few buyers (to name but a few of the reasons).

The above assertions may be the factors that contribute to the low financial returns of the co-operatives and require that further integrated micro-level and macro-level research be conducted in order to establish the manner in which these issues can be addressed so as to enhance the process of realizing organizational self-reliance.

6.2.5 Absenteeism

Nanceba indicated that one of the main challenges that they faced was that of absenteeisms. Members do not arrive at the meetings on the days in which the co-operatives meet. Absenteeism in an organization may be due to several factors.

Generally, however, it can be considered a reflection of the lack of responsibility and organization of the members in the co-operatives.

The failure of the members to attend group meetings that occur once a week (for less than six hours a day) indicates that the level of commitment towards the organization is low. Possible factors for this low level of commitment may be due to the members diversifying the number of activities that they are engaged in and therefore, contributing minimal energy into the co-operatives. This perspective is drawn from the sustainable livelihoods approach which recognizes that “the poor survive in their precarious state by employing a variety of livelihood or survival strategies... [where] men and women draw on their assets which are both tangible and intangible” (Meikle et al., 2001: 2 citing Chambers and Conway, 1995). Meikle et al. (2001) add that the urban poor... survive through undertaking a variety of activities, which mainly take place in the informal sector.

With regard to Nanceba, it is clear that (1) the purposes for which the members understand the co-operative to exist do not include that of “profit making” or “business”; and (2) the returns of the sale of goods are relatively minimal and do not necessarily contribute to the realization of financial security in the lives of the women involved. Perhaps the former assertion informs the latter results or, alternatively, the latter results inform the shared understanding of the purpose of the organization. Whatever the case, absenteeism and members leaving are the main challenges identified by Nanceba.

Consideration of the above contextual factors of Nanceba raises the question of whether the needs of members of this co-operative are being met. Clearly, there are needs that have either not been identified, or have been identified and are not being met by the activities of the co-operatives. The members may therefore be seeking the satisfaction of these needs in various other areas of their lives through various other activities. Absenteeisms and members leaving reflect a lack of ownership and responsibility in the organization and therefore undermines the process of becoming self-reliant.

These findings suggest, once again, that it is somewhat naive for development practitioners to assume that their interventions satisfy all the needs of participants. The need for research that provides information on the particular needs of the participants, and the best approach to satisfying them is, therefore, required.

6.2.6 Peer support and HIV/AIDS

A prevalent theme in the findings was that of the support gained through membership in the co-operatives. It is clear that the co-operatives serve an important purpose with regard to fighting against poverty and HIV/AIDS. One relatively similar purpose held by both co-operatives is that of “helping each other”. This is manifested through the manner in which the members talk about “sharing their pain”, “advising each other” with regard to caring for loved ones who are infected with HIV/AIDS and “meeting together as women to talk to each other and work together”. The satisfaction of the need for support – both psychological and spiritual – is clear in the testimonies of the members. The co-operatives thus serve functions other than simply generating income for the members.

By drawing from Max-Neef's (1991: 18) definition of poverty as a being about "any fundamental need that is not adequately satisfied", I identify three main needs that are satisfied by the co-operatives. With regard to meeting needs, the findings clearly show that the co-operatives meet the members need for affection. In meeting once a week and engaging in business activities as well as talking with other members of the co-operative, a sense of support is experienced by the women. Additionally, the act of making decisions together and working towards a common goal reflects the need of participation being met. Finally, the need of creativity is satisfied through the production of goods for sale by the co-operatives.

This research gives a brief perspective of the satisfaction of certain fundamental needs, further research could be focused on the particular needs that are met by the co-operatives and how these manifest themselves.

The issue of support in the co-operatives does, however, bring to light the possibility that some of the members may not necessarily need to be in the co-operatives - which are meant to serve the purpose of generating income and realizing organizational self-reliance - but rather, in a support group with other women. Nanceba members, in particular, show no sign of understanding the purpose of their co-operative as being economically self-reliant but rather, focus on the purpose of coming together and gaining a better understanding of HIV/AIDS. Perhaps this purpose is a result of the knowledge that the co-operatives are in fact, not economically self-reliant. Thus, in an effort to create

and maintain an identity for themselves, the members may state that their co-operative exists for the above-stated purpose.

Unless these co-operatives can recognize the positive function and the strengths of the support in their organizations and manipulate this towards implementing interventions that will lead to economic improvement, GAPA may have to consider the option of encouraging the members to form a support group rather than attempting to manage a business co-operative.

These findings once again highlight the value of conducting micro-level research. The application of the instruments drew attention to unveiling the “unintended outcomes” of the co-operative as a development intervention. Outcomes, that would have otherwise been unknown to the concerned parties are now revealed and can be addressed appropriately wherever possible.

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to reflect on, and critically discuss, the general methodological approach employed in order to gauge levels of organizational self-reliance. I have also presented particular issues that arose out of the findings of the research and integrated these into discussions of broader developmental concerns.

Although there is significant value in the research methodology employed to gauge the extent to which organizations realize self-reliance, these “measurement” instruments can only provide an indication of the current state of an organization. The instruments cannot

implement any sort of change in the organizations. The value lies in the details obtained and the insights gained of the experiences of co-operatives. These details can essentially be used to inform both development practitioners as well as the participants of development interventions on the possible approaches that can be taken in order to enhance the development experience.

Micro-level research is an important approach to adopt because it provides more detailed insight into the reality of development interventions. The micro-level research approach provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of the experiences of the co-operatives and the manner in which they strive towards realizing organizational self-reliance. Knowing the various aspects of self-reliance that exist in the organizations results in the posing of relevant questions for possible interventions that can be implemented to enhance the lives of those for and with whom development interventions are geared. Understanding these details allows development practitioners, in particular, to consider the ways in which they can use the strengths of the organizations effectively in interventions that they seek to implement in the future.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Development concepts have evolved from being primarily economic-centered to focusing increasingly on people and the role that they can play in taking control over their own development. People-centered development promotes the notion of people actively, and collectively being involved in the process of improving their livelihood, building the capacity to help themselves, and effectively mobilizing and managing the resources available to them. Essentially, people-centered development promotes the notions of enhancing participation, empowerment, and self-reliance amongst people. The concept of self-reliance in particular, has proliferated in the development discourse.

Manfred Max-Neef, a development economist from Latin America, states that “a commitment to Human Scale Development makes it necessary to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for a development alternative based on self-reliance” (Max-Neef, 1991: 64). Despite the growth of development interventions being planned and implemented in the name of self-reliance, there are two main concerns that arise from this occurrence: the first is that a large part of the references made to self-reliance remain within the financial and economic aspect. There is arguably little evidence that those who implement and participate in these interventions fully understand the concept of self-reliance beyond its economic dimension. Secondly, like several other people-centered development concepts such as “participation” and “empowerment”, the manner in which

the concept of self-reliance can be translated into practice (i.e. operationalized) and effectively “measured” remains inadequately explored.

Development has often been “measured” or assessed through indicators such as the Gross Domestic Product and the Gross National Product, and more recently, the Human Development Index and similarly framed indicators. Although these measurements provide valuable assessments of the progress of development in countries and regions, they address questions related to the scale or dimensions of poverty and are based on mainly on quantitative, macro-level analyzes of development. The results of these measurements are often used to inform policies and the planning of development interventions. The measurements, however, essentially fall short in providing an analysis of the micro-level reality of the conditions of the people in the particular context of study, thus providing a partial point (or perspective) from which to inform policy and development interventions.

People-centered development practitioners are interested in addressing questions that ask about *how* people work towards realizing their own development (in this instance - self-reliance). Insight into the manner in which people translate developmental concepts into practice creates a point from which alternative (and improved) approaches to the interventions can be developed. Such insight, however, can only be achieved through the employment of micro-analyzes at the ground or grassroots level.

Thus, while macro-level analyzes provide valuable information on questions related to large-scale, mainly quantitative aggregations, micro-level analyzes pose the questions of *how* people-centered development concepts are being realized at the ground-level and what needs to be done in order to enhance the experience of those participating in these interventions.

Working from a micro-level approach, my research has focused on the concept of organizational self-reliance in the developmental context. The aim was to explore how organizational self-reliance could be conceptualized, operationalized and tested at the grassroots level.

In Chapter Two, I introduced Grandmothers Against Poverty and AIDS (GAPA), the non-governmental organization which provided the context for my research. I conducted my research with two grassroots organizations named Siyazama and Nanceba Club. These organizations are home-based business co-operatives that were established by GAPA as development interventions with the primary goal of promoting financial self-reliance.

In an attempt to test the level of self-reliance in these organizations, I began (in Chapter Three) with conceptualizing organizational self-reliance beyond the purely economic realm. I argued that although financial self-reliance is a significant aspect in the existence of grassroots organizations, there are multiple, qualitative and internal organizational factors that must be considered in the creation of an environment in which organizational

self-reliance can begin to be realized – particularly in context of the fight against HIV/AIDS. I thus constructed the working definition of self-reliance as:

A process whereby individuals, through their own efforts, assume responsibility in forming and managing their own organizations; in which the members assert their independent right to make decisions and control resources that will contribute to increasing the capacity of the organization to achieve the common goal for which it was formed (usually that of positively transforming an aspect of the members' reality).

Through an engagement with a range of development literature, I developed four main categories by which organizational self-reliance can begin to be understood, namely:

1. Organization and Mobilization
2. Responsibility and Ownership
3. Participation and Decision-making
4. Conscientization and Creativity.

I articulated the characteristics of each of the categories and presented a crude assessment scale of organizational self-reliance. This scale was developed in order to provide practitioners, participants and other stakeholders with a “quick diagnosis” of the level of self-reliance in the organizations.

Chapter Four presented the methodology by which the research was conducted. Using an underlying Participatory Action Research (PAR)-informed approach, I employed various

research methods in order to develop “measurement” indicators that could be used to gauge the extent to which characteristics of each of the above categories were present in these organizations. The instruments thus assessed the level of self-reliance of the home-based business co-operatives. The four methods used were observation, semi-structured questionnaires, focus group interviews and a visual reflection session. Data was analyzed using a mainly qualitative analytical approach that is comprised of a three-phased process.

Chapter Five consisted of the research findings. I presented the findings in a comparative and detailed manner so as to highlight the similarities and differences that exist between the two co-operatives with regard to the extent to which they reflect characteristics of each category of organizational self-reliance. With the exception of the category “organization and mobilization”, Siyazama ranked “high” on each of the categories of self-reliance. Siyazama was thus adequately assessed as an organization that is “approaching self-reliance” according to the organizational self-reliance scale. This point is described as “where there is evidence of more than two thirds of the characteristics of the categories of self-reliance in the organization”. Nanceba, on the other hand, reflected scores ranging from one “low”, two “mediums”, and one “high” across the categories and was placed under the point of “partial self-reliance” as this is “where at least half of the characteristics of the categories are evidenced in the organization”.

Key issues that arose in the research were presented and discussed in Chapter Six. These issues consisted of: the degree of influence from GAPA in the process of organization

and mobilization for the co-operatives; the lack of conventional leadership in the organization which is replaced by an alternative, collective form of leadership; the evident reliance on GAPA for funds for the operation of their businesses; the relatively low financial returns of the businesses; and finally, the manner in which HIV/AIDS is being fought by the co-operatives through the satisfaction of the need for psychological and spiritual support.

The findings served to present two main points of consideration: the first is that, despite room for refinement, the instruments were able to gauge levels of self-reliance in the two organizations. The second consideration is that the information gained from the findings served to provide insight into the realities of the organizations and therefore provide a platform from which development practitioners can begin assessing the various options available for interventions that can enhance the development experience of these organizations.

With regard to the contribution that my research has sought to make, I reiterate that my research was informed by a Participatory Action Research approach - a commonly used approach in people-centered development which seeks to "actively involve people in generating knowledge about their own condition and how it can be changed, to stimulate social and economic change based on the awakening of the common people, and to empower the oppressed" (Chambers, 1997: 108). It is important to note that my research drew from the characteristics of the PAR approach and did not necessarily exhaust the entire process.

I have argued that the value of the instruments developed in this research is in their ability to provide an assessment of the extent of self-reliance that an organization has achieved. The employment of the instruments provides development practitioners and members of NGOs and GROs with the opportunity to analyze their current context and reflect on the possible avenues of change that they can take. The PAR-informed approach thus promotes and contributes to an empowering process as it is intended to give the members greater insight, ownership and control over their development, thus reinforcing the very principles of self-reliance.

It is important, however, to note two factors: (1) the micro-level analyzes of the reality of grassroots organizations should not be separated from, but rather be incorporated with, the macro-level analyzes. This will inform the complexities of development policies and practices more fully. (2) These instruments do not deliver change, but rather provide insight into the factors of the organization that may hinder or promote the realization of self-reliance. It is hoped that in gaining insight into one's current situation, organizations will collectively be able to decide on what their needs are, and how to satisfy these identified needs.

The value of this research lies, therefore, in providing members of grassroots organizations with a tool with which they can begin to reflect on their organization and take appropriate action based on this reflection. Although room remains for the refinement of these instruments, further research in the development of similar micro-

level approaches should be encouraged. It is through the generation of such approaches that we begin to better understand the relationship that exists between “micro-level activities and macro-level processes” (Edwards, 1994). Essentially, we begin to better understand the complexities of the world in which we live, the opportunities available to us, and the possibilities of realizing self-reliance.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Questionnaire of Co-operative Details			
	Co-operative 1	Co-operative 2	Additional comments
A. Co-Operative			
1 Co-Op Name			
2 Location			
3 Duration of existence			
4 No. of Active members			
5 Active Committee? (Yes/No)			
B. Product			
1 What is produced?			
2 Where do raw materials come from?			
3 Where does production take place?			
4 Do you look for production? (Yes/No)			
5 Who are products targeted to?			
6 Where do you sell your products?			
C. Finances			
1 How much do you spend on raw materials each month?			
2 How much do you sell your product for?			
3 Do you sell your products on credit?			
4 What do you do with the money you receive from the sale of goods?			
5 Are there any months when you do not make an income?			
6 How much did each member take home at the end of 2006?			

APPENDIX B

SIYAZAMA VISUAL REFLECTION SESSION RESULTS						
VISION		CHALLENGES		SOLUTION		
1.1 To help eachother	Aim is to help eachother	2.1 Funds	Lack of money	3.1 Money	Asking for help from the authorities for them to help us with this development we are getting because everything needs money	
	I heard people talk about aids and became interested to be amongst mothers		Shortage of work equipment and not enough money		As the government has helped us with GAPFA, they should give us money	
1.2 To make business	To be successful in business		(No) machines, place to work, and money		It is not having money	If we can get support in our needs
	We wanted to sew and sell so that we can support our families		It is not having money			Raising the money
						More finances/funds
1.3 To develop eachother	Fighting poverty as there are no jobs	2.2 Crime	Too much crime	3.2 A place for work	Getting more money and our own place for work	
	To create/develop/improve work		Crime		A place for work	
	To develop eachother and help eachother with things			3.3 Profit	Being sure of what we want to do	
	We wanted to develop eachother and fight against poverty and also try to make money so that we can educate our children					

APPENDIX C

NANCEBA CLUB VISUAL REFLECTION SESSION RESULTS				
VISION		PROBLEMS		SOLUTIONS
1.1 Sharing Pain	To advise eachother on our pain	2.1 Absenteeism	3.1 Recruiting members	By adding members
	To advise eachother about the pain of having someone who is sick with AIDS	2.2 Not enough members		By recruiting other people too fill the (membership) numbers
	To relieve pain [from talking to people]	2.3 Members quitting	3.2 Talking with people	We should gather them together to talk to them
1.2 Knowledge/Understanding	Knowledge about HIV/AIDS			Gathering them together and listening to their problems
	We wanted knowledge		3.3 Encouraging	Encouraging eachother so that we don't get discouraged

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