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**Exploring the Unconsciousness of Process:  
Toward a Grounded Theory for Leadership in Development**

[Based on a Case Study of the Elgin Community College,  
Western Cape Province, South Africa]

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

Signature:

Date: 28 February 2006

Signed by candidate

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\* \* \* \* \*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover emergent patterns in the processes used and experienced by project leaders, whether consciously or unconsciously, when working toward the goal of social development: improving beneficiaries' quality of life. In demystifying and decoding the elusive role of leadership, this research aims to inform project leader selection, training, and evaluation procedures to ensure greater leadership competency in social development.

The research was conceptualized as a case study involving nine project leaders at the Elgin Community College (E.C.C.), Western Cape Province, South Africa. Serving as a development hub for the diverse, largely rural population of approximately 55,000 people living in the Elgin/Grabouw region, the college offers a variety of education programmes and training courses in a multi-cultural setting.

Guided by the philosophy of participatory action research and theoretically oriented within the literature on people-centred development, the study comprised two phases. In Phase I, data collection methods included group and individual discussions, designing and conducting a pilot workshop with one project leader, and participant observation. Analysis, carried out within the framework of participatory development practices offered by Chambers (1995), revealed that E.C.C. leaders are largely unconscious of their own limiting assumptions about beneficiaries' motivations and behaviours.

Contrasting "unconsciousness of process" in project leaders and beneficiaries at the college became the conceptual link for understanding complex, unarticulated leadership processes in Phase II using Grounded Theory methods (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978). Semi-structured interviews with the nine leaders were recorded verbatim and analysed line-by line with the N-Vivo computer software programme

according to open coding procedures. Theoretical coding, whereby the fractured data set is conceptually reconstructed, and extensive theoretical memoing and diagramming eventually revealed the core category, the process of interdependent shifting, and its two main properties, gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates.

The process of interdependent shifting is conceptualized as patterns of continuous, mutually influential interaction between leaders and beneficiaries. Though the accepted purpose of the social development sector is to aid less fortunate “others,” this study reveals that leaders’ growth and development interacts horizontally with the development of those “others” in a relationship of interdependence.

In gauging their shift tolerance—determining how, and the degree to which, they actively embrace dynamic interaction with project beneficiaries—leaders can measure increasing openness, flexibility, and creativity. In plotting new identity coordinates—defining pivotal moments or stages in their own development to enlarge their overt self-conceptualization—leaders purposefully recognize the incremental changes happening within themselves and make the development process tangible.

Strategically engaging in these processes opens the door to horizontal learning; to transparent dialogue about intrapersonal processes impacting, and often impeding, improved quality of life; and to continued progress toward development aims when the project is over. Chronic frustration surrounding lack of sustainability in many social development initiatives suggests something fundamental is being overlooked. The study concludes that the process of interdependent shifting experienced by leaders and beneficiaries, and not the project itself, is actually the “privileged particle” of development (Hirschman 1967).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Acknowledgements ..... ii**

**Abstract ..... iii**

**I. Introduction: Elusive Leadership ..... 1**

A. The Research Question ..... 1

B. Defining Terms: “Development” and “Leader” ..... 2

C. Determining Scope ..... 3

D. Selecting a Case Study ..... 5

E. Presentation of the Report ..... 7

**II. Research Framework: Marrying Methods and Motivations ..... 9**

A. Participatory Action Research ..... 12

B. Grounded Theory ..... 16

**III. Reconnaissance at Elgin: Participatory Action Research, Reflection and Relationship ..... 21**

A. Theoretical Context of Phase I Research ..... 21

B. Participatory Action Research: Data Collection ..... 24

C. Preliminary Analysis: Evaluating Participatory Development Practices ..... 27

D. Launching the E.C.C. Case Study ..... 38

**IV. The Elgin Case Study: Collecting, Coding, and Conceptualizing ..... 41**

A. Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews ..... 42

B. Open Coding, Theoretical Coding, and Revisiting Open Coding ..... 45

C. Theoretical Memos and Diagrams ..... 59

<b>V.</b>	<b>Toward a Theory for Leadership in Development: The Process of Interdependent Shifting .....</b>	<b>62</b>
A.	The Core Phenomenon: Interdependent Shifting .....	62
B.	Elaborating the Core Phenomenon: Gauging Shift Tension .....	65
C.	Elaborating the Core Phenomenon: Plotting Identity Coordinates .....	76
<b>VI.</b>	<b>The Analysis in Context: Exploring the Concept of Interdependence in the Development Literature .....</b>	<b>90</b>
A.	Chambers: Role Reversals .....	90
B.	Kaplan: Dependence, Independence and Interdependence .....	92
C.	Max-Neef and Human Scale Development: Organic Articulations .....	95
D.	Taking the Next Step: Interdependent Shifting .....	98
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Theory and Practise: Pinning Down Leadership in Development .....</b>	<b>101</b>
A.	Concluding Thoughts .....	101
B.	Moving Forward with the Theory .....	104
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>106</b>

## ILLUSTRATION

Process of Interdependent Shifting .....	89
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## APPENDICES

### A. Participatory Action Research

1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C. ....	1
2. Pilot Workshop Planning Sessions with Mercy .....	11
3. "Ukudubula ko Mthi" Workshop Facilitation Guide .....	14
4. "Ukudubula ko Mthi" Workshop Transcript .....	16
5. Learners' Trees .....	27a.-h.
6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff .....	28

### B. Grounded Theory: Elgin Community College Case Study

1. Semi-Structured Interviews with E.C.C. Staff .....	31
---	----

### C. Max-Neef's Matrix of Needs and Satisfiers .....

	77
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## **I. Introduction: Elusive Leadership**

I begin with a simple premise: leadership is fundamental to success in development. Without it, ingenious project design, generous funding, and the best intentions have failed to produce planned outcomes.

Development horror stories abound. No country, no culture, no sector has traversed the development terrain unscathed. Various explanations have been formulated: economic development theory ill-suited to developing country contexts; under-representation of women in development; environmentally unsound infrastructure development; insensitivity to local culture in development planning and implementation; top-down, rather than participatory, development processes. And leadership in development? I have found no evidence from international development literature that the role of project leaders in either the successes or failures of development initiatives has been systematically investigated or evaluated.

Development organisations and funding agencies go to great effort and expense to fill top project posts with qualified leaders. Experience suggests, however, that impressive professional and academic credentials are no guarantee of effectiveness in project implementation. There is a particular challenge to understanding the complex dynamics of a leader's performance in development: organisations responsible for the leader's selection and supervision are reluctant to expose a project and its leader to critical performance review. Project evaluation now required by donor agencies and development organisations generally measures the extent to which project goals are met, but it does not include a process of systematic reflection and analysis of the project leader's performance. Is it that the potential negative impact on an organisation's reputation, and the concomitant inability to secure future development contracts and funding, may be perceived as too great?

In contrast to the volumes of information and case studies available on the successes and failures of leadership in the business world, the paucity of literature on leadership in development bears silent witness to this long-neglected area of study.

### *A. The Research Question*

The subject of my Master's dissertation is directly informed by my experience as a development practitioner since 1991. Working as a researcher, trainer and community mobilization consultant in projects across a range of national and sectoral

settings—cooperatives in Equatorial Guinea, food security in Bosnia-Herzegovina, health and education in Pakistan, small enterprises in South Africa—I discovered first-hand that leadership in development is elusive. I also observed that the multi-cultural composition of many international project teams proved particularly difficult for leaders in development; a detailed Terms of Reference invariably binds the leader to project end-products rather than to individual and work-team processes which most certainly impact on those end-products. My keen interest in exploring and articulating the challenges facing leaders in multi-cultural development contexts, therefore, corresponds to an equally strong desire to contribute some understanding to how those challenges might be addressed.

To that end, my Master's dissertation is the academic portal through which my exploration has been launched. In this initial endeavour, my research focuses on the question of how project leaders working for a non-governmental organisation (N.G.O.), the Elgin Community College in Western Cape Province, South Africa, meet their professional responsibilities in the field of social development. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to discover emergent patterns in the processes used and experienced by project leaders, whether consciously or unconsciously, when confronting the challenges of development in a multi-cultural setting.

### *B. Defining Terms: "Development" and "Leader"*

Before outlining the scope of this research project, some points of clarification are in order, perhaps the most important being how I am defining the nebulous terms "development" and "leader" for the purposes of my inquiry. The United Nations Development Programme defines development as "creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests...and about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value" with economic growth an important means of doing so (UNDP 2001:9).

Economist David Korten's oft-used definition of development is consistent with the UNDP's focus on expanding choices, but is more specific, introducing the key concepts of capacity, resources, sustainability and equitable distribution: "A process by which 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 1990:67). These definitions taken together, I believe, capture the essence of current thinking on development and provide a useful point of departure for my own, more general definition: measurable, sustained improvement in people's living conditions, be those conditions physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

My definition of a leader is also a simple one and, as implied above, hinges on the individual assuming contractual responsibility in a professional work environment to meet stated development goals with the community served by the organisation. Though the hiring of project leaders may have been based on prior work experience and academic qualifications, these qualifications *per se* do not define a leader in this study. Keeping to the first, and most basic, definition given for "leader" in the Oxford English Dictionary, I assume that a leader "is a person or thing that leads" a development project. The second definition, "a person or thing that is the most successful or advanced in a particular area," does not necessarily pertain, though the college's growing reputation as a model institution for community development suggests that its staff are also leaders in their respective fields of expertise.

I refrain from borrowing metaphorically from the O.E.D.'s sixth definition of "leader," to wit, "a short strip of non-functioning material at each end of a reel of film or recording tape for connection to the spool." Though leadership may be elusive, it does indeed have a function in social development. This study explores that function.

### *C. Determining Scope*

My first conceptual design of this research project was a grand one. I intended to select, interview, and "shadow" eight to ten well known project leaders working in international development with demonstrable success across national, sectoral, and cultural barriers. These men and women would be drawn from a variety of well-established development organisations and would represent a range of qualifications and experience. Projects in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe would be targeted. It wasn't long before I realized I was in trouble.

Apart from the obvious logistic and financial hurdles, my greatest concern was my own bias. This manifested in the preliminary semi-structured interview format I created for the international development context. Many questions seemed to reflect my own preconceived ideas about what effective project leadership should look like. Organisation and people skills, for example, figured prominently. Selecting project leaders on the basis of "demonstrated success" was also problematic: success

according to whom and by what criteria? Contracts awarded, position and salary achieved, community feedback on a project's longer term results, superiors' reports on the individual's performance, self-selection? In considering possible routes to follow to answer my research question, I realized I may be using the wrong map altogether.

An unexpected, but well-timed, request from two colleagues working in research and social development in Eastern Cape and Gauteng Provinces helped steer me toward my present course. They argued that a study of this nature is desperately needed right here in South Africa. I then reconceptualised my research as a national study of leadership in development. But my concerns about bias, research design, and participant selection remained.

A fortuitous invitation from the Independent Development Trust (I.D.T.) prompted the final conceptual leap from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic development context.

Asked by I.D.T. to review a rural N.G.O.'s promising strategy for small business development, I visited the Elgin Community College (E.C.C.) in October 2002. The college is located in the deciduous fruit-growing region of the Overberg, an hour's drive from Cape Town, and was established in 1995 as a non-profit learning foundation. Serving the town of Grabouw, five informal settlements, 10 villages and 100 local farms comprising approximately 55,000 people (E.C.C. 2001), its vision statement is "to be nationally recognised as a community college which provides the opportunity for all people to develop their full potential through appropriate education and skills" (*ibid*). Consistent with this vision, the college director, Mark Walker, and staff asked me to help them with their "new paradigm for development," a model integrating marketable skills training, community consciousness-raising, and agrarian reform. The question was how?

In my first discussion with the E.C.C. staff, a variety of issues and problems of immediate relevance were identified for consideration as possible research topics (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.). The staff member responsible for the mobile library and other community outreach programmes suggested an inquiry into community knowledge and information systems and how these impact development processes. Small business department staff were particularly interested in understanding the basis for learner commitment to training programmes, translating a lacking of commitment as a lack of ownership. The head

of the department hinted that the college might hold incorrect assumptions about learners who leave the college for seasonal employment opportunities on local farms. The director himself raised a host of questions relating to development, including the challenges of globalisation, land redistribution, and import substitution.

Underlying many of the staff inputs was a strong desire to understand how learners could be persuaded to take responsibility for their own development. The group seemed to agree that learners would only realise their full potential through holding a longer-term view of their personal development and employment opportunities. Staff specifically mentioned wanting “to change the people’s minds to help them” because “people are unconscious of solutions and the way the world works” (*ibid*). We decided to initiate a small pilot project using participatory action research principles to explore the “unconsciousness of process” with learners at the college. It was hoped that research results would help staff improve training and project design in order to raise learners’ critical awareness of their own development.

This first foray into participatory action research (P.A.R.) with the college in Elgin proved to be the catalyst for a complete re-thinking of my Master’s dissertation. As staff revealed their frustrations and their victories, their weaknesses and their talents, it became clear that college staff themselves might be unconscious of the very development processes they were facilitating with college learners and community members. I wondered how these staff leaders, responsible for a range of community development projects on behalf of the college and sharing a collective vision of changing people’s lives, engaged in development processes and whether these processes could be understood and explained through systematic investigation. Thus, the conceptualisation of my research design as a case study was born.

#### *D. Selecting a Case Study*

Focusing on leadership within one development organisation resolved a number of issues for me. By narrowing the scope of my research, I have been able to undertake an intensive investigation of leadership processes within a single social unit while allowing for the possibility of multiple variables to emerge from the data. All project leaders in the organisation were included in the study, an easy and equitable solution to the problem of participant selection. Because of the manageability of a case study, I was able to employ the research methods of Grounded Theory, thus greatly reducing my own bias as a development practitioner through the use of an

inductive approach. My provisional theory has been built on multiple perspectives and experiences of development within a clearly defined context.

The academic parameters established for a minor dissertation in the Department of Sociology at U.C.T. also influenced my decision to circumscribe the research within a case study. I knew I would have to maintain a healthy discipline when collecting and analysing the data in order to present my findings coherently and completely. In spite of this caveat, I have exceeded the recommended length for the dissertation in order to explicate fully the theory that emerged from my qualitative analysis. Both research process and product are privileged to give greater insight into how I applied Grounded Theory methods to achieve my goal.

Though my work with the community college in Elgin influenced my decision to develop a case study for my Master's research, only after careful thought did I ask the E.C.C. to participate in my larger research agenda on leadership in development. In keeping with the ethos of P.A.R., it was important to me that the project would enhance the college's development goals. It was equally important that, to the extent possible, my original research criteria be met: between eight to ten project leaders working across various sectors, a multi-cultural setting, and participants generally representative of the diversity within development. The E.C.C. was a good fit.

First, there is sectoral diversity within the college. Some of the development projects operating simultaneously at the college include: (1) agricultural learnerships, (2) Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), (3) small business training and project development, (4) health care training and project management, and (5) ongoing market research and fundraising efforts.

Second, the college serves and represents a dynamic, multi-cultural environment. Working with various population groups, including Coloured and Black emerging farmers, seasonal farm workers from Eastern Cape, White farm owners, small business entrepreneurs, women and men, older citizens and youth, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Sotho and English speakers, the E.C.C. serves as a development hub for the entire population of the Elgin/Grabouw region. The college's nine project leaders themselves come from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Third, preliminary data collection and analysis with college staff suggested that the college was wrestling with some of the same issues surrounding project leadership and implementation as I wished to pursue in my dissertation.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, in my early visits to the college, I established a rapport with the director and some of the eight project leaders working at the college. Based on their interest in P.A.R. and how it might contribute to their own development as professionals, and on my enthusiasm for the important work they are doing with the Elgin Valley communities, it became clear that continuing the research journey with the E.C.C. could serve our mutual and individual goals. In fact, it was the college director who unwittingly contributed the title for my dissertation: “exploring the unconsciousness of process.”

### *E. Presentation of the Report*

In this first chapter, I have explained the purpose of my inquiry and the bearing my professional background had on the articulation of the research question. I have offered readers some insights into my orientation to development and decision-making processes by defining the two terms central to this study, by describing how I determined the scope of the research, and by giving my reasons for selecting the Elgin Community College as my case study.

In Chapter II, after a brief review of the common philosophical antecedents of P.A.R. and Grounded Theory, I present the specific research methods used for data collection and analysis as well as my motivations for selecting them, including related ethical issues. Through a focused discussion of the literature on P.A.R. and on Grounded Theory, I suggest the utility and some limitations of these approaches. While the approaches are complementary, this chapter is divided into two parts, one dedicated to P.A.R. and the other to Grounded Theory, for ease of reading.

Similarly, Chapters III and IV address the two distinct phases of the research. In Chapter III, I discuss Phase I of the research where I used P.A.R. methods to collect and analyse preliminary data for the study. After elaborating the theoretical context in which the P.A.R. research and my preference for participatory research methods are best understood, I describe the process of data collection and then analyse the data using Chambers’ framework for participatory practices. I also show how the P.A.R. project became the conceptual link for a Grounded Theory approach to understanding leadership in development using the college as a case study.

In Chapter IV, I move into the Grounded Theory phase of the research and outline the methodological process I followed to generate my theory. I elucidate data collection through semi-structured interviews with college staff and then data analysis

through open and theoretical coding. I also discuss the importance of theoretical memos and diagrams for working conceptually with the coded data set.

In Chapter V, I offer a provisional theory for leadership in development. After explaining the core phenomenon, the process of interdependent shifting, I elaborate its two main properties, gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates, and their various dimensions. I end this chapter with a graphic illustration of how processes of interdependent shifting are operationalised in the development context by leaders and beneficiaries; gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates are understood as the levers that move these processes forward.

The inductive research process prescribed by Grounded Theory methodology recommends relating literature to the theory *after* it is developed because “...the analyst may be hard put to know *which* conceptual field until a theory emerges (1978:31). In Chapter VI, therefore, I orient the emerging theory within relevant literature on people-centred development addressing the concept of interdependence. Drawing primarily from the work of Chambers, Kaplan, and Max-Neef, I discuss the ways in which leader-beneficiary relationships are understood and contrast these with my own conceptualisation of interdependence. I close the chapter by summarising briefly the modest contributions my research makes to existing development literature and social development.

Finally, in Chapter VII, I offer some concluding thoughts on how the emerging theory might be useful in demystifying the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding leadership in development. In showing how the theory provides useful insights into human management of complex social processes, I hope to have accomplished my goal: to contribute some understanding to how the challenges facing leaders in various development contexts might be addressed. I end the paper with a brief discussion of how I am currently taking the research forward in order to fill gaps in the provisional theory and to deepen my understanding of interdependence in development.

To encourage this report’s active use—by my colleagues at E.C.C. and other development practitioners, by my students and colleagues at U.C.T., and by fellow researchers interested in exploring the fascinating, but not necessarily intuitive, methods of Grounded Theory—I have chosen a communication style and language I trust my audience will find accessible.

## II. Research Framework: Marrying Methods and Motivation

P.A.R. and Grounded Theory share the essential premise that research should address problems relevant to social groups. These two approaches to research are also complementary in that a variety of data collection methods traditionally used for participatory action research, such as interviews, focus group discussions, and observation, can be used to build Grounded Theory. While I have delimited the research project into two phases for each of reference and logical sequencing of steps, the methods often overlapped or were used simultaneously.

I will preface my discussion of P.A.R. and Grounded Theory methods with a review of their common philosophical underpinnings. Whereas Grounded Theory was an explicit response by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to what they considered an overemphasis on theory verification, P.A.R. seemed to spring from the rib of the emerging participatory development paradigm in the 1970s and 1980s. While these explanations are straightforward, they fail to expose the broader thinking in the social sciences that justified these departures from mainstream social research. My curiosity led me to action science and the “new education” taking root nearly 100 years ago in the United States.

Even now, science and action, like theory and practice, are commonly considered to be mutually exclusive windows on the world. Whereas social “science” connotes systematic study of a carefully defined issue or problem in society, “action” encompasses what people do when confronted with that issue or problem without reference to scientific investigation or theory. John Dewey, American philosopher and educationist, united the two concepts as he navigated the academic debate on traditional vs. progressive education in the early 20th century. Articulating a philosophy of experience guided by both science and action, Dewey discerned two dynamic processes that worked together to create the educative experience: interaction and continuity (Dewey 1938). Rather than referring to interaction and continuity as social processes, however, Dewey called them “criteria of experience” and explained how they could be used to measure the efficacy of education.

The principle of interaction suggests there are two factors in experience, internal and external conditions, both carrying equal importance. Subjective conditions, such as attitude and perception, and objective conditions, or environmental phenomena, interact and influence each other to create a situation. As

the world is in reality a series of situations to move through, reflecting on the interplay of these objective and subjective conditions is fundamental to education. Dewey's criticism of traditional education was not its focus on the objective part of that reality, but on its inattention to the internal factors influencing students' experience in education.

The second criterion, continuity, relates to the progressive nature of experience as a motivating force influencing desires and purposes. The experiential continuum, a longitudinal complement to the more lateral interactive process, shows that each experience continuously draws from previous experience and influences subsequent experience. The direction of this force reveals the ways in which the cumulative experiences can be judged educative. Discriminating among experiences in education hinges on whether or not they contribute to active, continual growth (*ibid*:33-45).

Thus, for Dewey, the principles of interaction and continuity shed light on education's most crucial problem: "procuring the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened (*ibid*:69). Rather it is *intelligent* activity (Dewey's emphasis), paying due regard to its consequences, that allows purpose and desire to manifest in an open and continuous plan of action. Dewey suggested teachers in the classroom could use this social research process in a variety of ways to improve educational practice. He transcended the "either-or" debate on traditional vs. progressive education by advocating a pragmatic, reflective approach to building knowledge in the social sciences. Though he taught at the University of Chicago for only ten years, Dewey's work greatly influenced the research conducted by the Department of Sociology and the "Chicago school" that further developed the qualitative research paradigm.

Kurt Lewin, considered the father of cognitive social psychology in the United States, popularised the name "action research" and, like Dewey, was committed to employing science in the service of improving social practice. The conceptual maps produced by Lewin underscore the symbiotic relationship between science and practice. For example, Lewin's theory of social processes as "quasi-stationary equilibria" maintained by driving and restraining forces resulted from action science designed to pioneer new methods for facilitating positive group dynamics and understanding in organisational psychology (Lewin in Argyris et al. 1985:8).

The work of Lewin and Dewey reveals the significant wellsprings of thought and research informing the evolution of action science. Subsequent social theorists have agreed that the value of theory lies in its reciprocal relationship to action (Mills 1959; Habermas 1974, 1982). For example, Mills' sociological imagination speaks to an ability to move between personal troubles and structural issues, or the private and public domains, in order to discern the strategic leverage points for social intervention (Mills 1959:131). Mills stressed that a particular "quality of mind" is required for men to understand and to change society:

"It is not only information that they need—in this Age of Fact, information often dominates their attention and overwhelms their capacities to assimilate it. It is not only the skills of reason that they need—although their struggles to acquire these often exhaust their limited moral energy. What they need, and what they feel they need, is a *quality of mind* that will help them to use information and to develop reason in order to achieve lucid summations of what is going on in the world and of what may be happening within themselves. It is this quality...that may be called the sociological imagination (*ibid*:5, emphasis added).

This quality of mind is the key to freedom, the freedom to explore systematically all possible choices, to reflect on their merits, and then to choose in order "to enlarge the scope of human decisions in the making of history" (*ibid*:179). This is the social task of theoretical inquiry.

Habermas shows how critical theory moves beyond the normative-analytical sciences by using self-reflection as a transformative tool. Knowledge construction is driven by man's desire not only to control external, objectified processes and to govern relationship and communication across social institutions, but also to understand himself and his own life. Echoing Mills, Habermas suggests scientific enquiry can act as an emancipatory force propelling man toward adult or "mature autonomy" (1974:17) and an understanding of relations of power "embodied in systematically distorted communication" (*ibid*:281).

Habermas' own work reflected this progressive trend as he moved from a focus on language and epistemology to a "theory of communicative action," and as he expanded his focus on the objective social context of "language, labour and domination" (1984:174) to include a framework of communicative experience linked with subjective understanding (*ibid*:187). The interconnection between theory and praxis was fundamental to Habermas' thinking and the key to understanding the social processes underlying cultural tradition.

Delving into the antecedents of action science not only helped me to orient my research within the broader social science tradition, but also to appreciate that critical, systematic reflection spawned P.A.R. and Grounded Theory methods and lies at the heart of each. The perspectives of Dewey and Lewin, Mills and Habermas resonate with my desire to ensure compatibility between my motivations as a development practitioner and my methods as a researcher. Their voices added to my conviction that the process of building critical knowledge of leadership in the development context is best supported by participatory research methods.

#### *A. Participatory Action Research*

Action research in its present incarnation is most frequently used in the field of education. It involves education in a “self-reflective spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning” (McNiff 1988:7). Participants’ tacit knowledge becomes explicit through critical reflection and iterative feedback loops, bringing new awareness to the pedagogical process (Argyris 1985:78, 153). The aims of action research include establishing groups of self-reflective practitioners, testing and transforming practice through critical reflection, and linking practice with theoretical knowledge organized by the practitioners themselves (Carr and Kemmis 1986:209-221). Respect for the individual and his or her unique contribution is a tenet of action research (Argyris et al. 1985:237); Carr and Kemmis 1986:44; McNiff 1988:8; Stringer 1996:4). By definition, then, action research is participatory and aims to contribute to the resolution of problems, or the satisfaction of needs, of participants.

*Participatory* action research, or P.A.R., is in essence the same as “action research,” but reflects the influence of other traditions, such as anthropology and ethnography, social work, community development, and agricultural extension. In fact, P.A.R. is only one of the 29 participatory approaches to research in development listed by Cornwall (in Chambers 1995:36). The term is believed to have originated in developing countries where grassroots organisations were working to involve beneficiaries in development planning processes (Babbie and Mouton 2001:59). One important difference between action research and P.A.R. is that in action research the educators themselves are often the primary researchers, enacting a “community of inquiry within a community of practice” (Argyris et al. 1985:225; see also Carr and Kemmis 1986:221). With P.A.R., participants are usually approached by an external

researcher wanting to investigate a certain social issue or problem with them. From this point, participants can be engaged to varying degrees in the planning and execution of the research. The knowledge generated through this collaboration between participants and researcher should be usable: to foment constructive change at the local level, to contribute to theory testing or building for the researcher, and to motivate further action for both.

The quality of participation, therefore, is an important factor in P.A.R. methods, especially in development contexts. Chambers suggests participation is used in three ways in development: as a cosmetic label, as a co-opting practice and as an empowering process (Chambers 1995:30). He identifies four practises which help move development intervention toward a paradigm of empowerment: (1) activities can be performed as well or better by local people, rather than “expert” outsiders; (2) skills and technologies are more effectively transferred across peer groups rather than vertically using a top-down approach; (3) commitment and enthusiasm of “insiders” grow as they engage in group analysis based on visual representation of their decisions and knowledge, and linkages between them; and (4) role changes and reversals between dominant “uppers” and marginal “lowers” are more important than methods...The role of the outsider is to convene, initiate and facilitate...” (*ibid*:37-39).

P.A.R., therefore, should be considered a development intervention and organized to maximize the participation and benefit of community members. Long, focusing on the character and quality of participant-researcher collaboration, also asserts that intervention practices should be shaped more by actor interactions than by models of development. He suggests, “These interactions must be analysed as part of the ongoing processes of negotiation, adaptation and transformation of meaning that take place between specific actors” (Long 2001:64).

These guidelines for participation influenced how I conceptualised P.A.R. for my dissertation and how I interacted with E.C.C. staff during implementation. Because an important aim of the research was to inform the college’s development objectives, P.A.R. methods seemed the only possible approach to take with the college. Moreover, an organisational ethos of participation at E.C.C. and the director’s strong endorsement of staff involvement greatly facilitated the research process.

In Phase I, I used a combination of methods to collect data: group and individual discussions, designing a pilot workshop with a staff member, holding the pilot workshop for college learners, and general participant observation. When feasible, I took verbatim accounts of activities and discussions to optimise my recall as well as to remove as much of my own bias as possible. Briefly elaborating Phase I methods will give a sense of the collaborative nature of the research:

*Group and individual discussions:* Discussions with E.C.C. staff, in groups and individually, helped to formulate the research question, to derive a deeper understanding of staff perspectives on development, and to shed light on findings from the pilot workshop. In the case of the first brainstorming session with college staff, I assumed multiple functions: participant, co-facilitator, and recorder (see Appendices A.1. Preliminary Staff Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.; and A.6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff).

*Workshop design and staff capacity-building:* With the goal of building staff capacity to undertake research with learners and to assess their own practice, the college director invited a project leader in the small business department, Mercy, to work closely with me on the workshop design and implementation. Working side by side with Mercy grounded the research process firmly in the realities of the E.C.C. She actively participated in all aspects of the pilot workshop, from conceptualisation and design to facilitation, recording and feedback (see Appendix A.2. Pilot Workshop Planning Sessions with Mercy).

*Pilot workshop:* Named “Ukudubula ko Mthi,” or “Blossoming of the Tree,” the pilot workshop was run with local women currently enrolled in the college training programme for linen manufacture. It was conceived specifically to explore the “unconsciousness of process” for learners at the college. Though one of four methods of data gathering used during Phase I, the pilot workshop was the pivotal activity around which the other methods were oriented: it tested staff assumptions about learners’ awareness of their own development processes (see Appendices A.3. Workshop Facilitation Guide; A.4. Workshop Transcript; A.5. Learners’ Trees).

*Participant observation:* As participant observer, I documented all interactions with staff and learners at the college during Phase I. Writing as much detail as possible of conversations, events, and impressions, I relied on this record to develop my thinking as the research progressed as well as to provide a solid foundation of environmental and experiential data on which to base my analysis (see Appendices A.1. Preliminary Staff Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.; A.2. Pilot Workshop Planning Sessions with Mercy; A.6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff).

Preliminary analysis of data collected in Phase I was carried out within the framework of participatory development practices offered by Chambers. This served three purposes: to give college staff a basic account of how P.A.R. can be organized

and facilitated; to highlight various assumptions identified by project leaders relating to learners' abilities and motivations; and to contrast the "unconsciousness of process" in both staff and learners at the college. Based on this analysis, I decided to expand the research to include deeper dialogue on development processes with individual project leaders. Ensuing interviews were held in Phase II and analysed using Grounded Theory methods.

#### *A.1. Strengths and limitations of participatory methods*

Legitimation of local knowledge, customs, and norms underpins community participation. Participatory methods, as an extension of participatory or people-centred development generally, can "build transcending behaviour where poor people are able to plan, take initiative, self-organise and take responsibility for social change and development" (James 1998:18). Participatory processes can have long-term benefits when the aim is to empower and to give voice at the local level. When the value and advantages of local participation in development processes are not appreciated by implementing "others," however, the poor and marginalized are effectively blocked from influencing circumstances that may dramatically change their lives, and—as past development efforts have shown—often not for the better.

This dynamic reveals one of the fundamental problems with participatory methods, according to James, who argues that they stem from a behavioural worldview stressing the attitudes and values of people rather than the power relations between them. "Following a participatory approach does not remove the 'central paradox' of development intervention: that of 'powerful outsiders' helping 'powerless insiders'" (*ibid*:19). Similarly, Stirrat underscores the inherent asymmetries of power between the "west" and the "rest" (Stirrat 2000:31). This asymmetry is apparent in the power of the implementing agent to choose whether (and which) participatory methods will be used in development projects, and to what extent local inputs will determine the course of implementation (*ibid*:39).

In gathering and analysing data collected during Phase I to explore the "unconsciousness of process," I was guided by the four practices elaborated by Chambers to assess whether participation was genuine and power was shared. Sensitivity to issues relating to power and actor interactions—between learners and staff and between staff and me—led to a subsidiary analysis of how meaning between

actors was negotiated and transformed through this development intervention, as proposed by Long.

### *B. Grounded Theory*

The inductive approach of Grounded Theory encourages the researcher to discard, to the extent possible, preconceived ideas and biases while investigating a social group's problem. Systematic comparative analysis is the *modus operandi* of Grounded Theory and creates the framework within which a theory can be built. It includes initial coding of fragmented data, developing increasingly abstract conceptualisations, generating and sorting theoretical memos, and integrating and elaborating categories, all contributing to the construction of theory.

Glaser and Strauss developed Grounded Theory methods in the 1960s (*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 1967). The authors argue that theory derived inductively through systematic comparative analysis and conceptual ordering of data is far more likely to explain the social phenomenon under examination than theory generated by logical deduction from *a priori* assumptions. They also suggest that the primacy of theory verification over theory generation in the social sciences should be reconsidered: while both are necessary to scientific enterprise, equal emphasis on the latter would provide more useful theoretical applications for sociologists, students, and laymen alike (*ibid*:3). These perspectives, increasingly shared by social scientists, have driven the further development of the grounded theory approach over three decades (Strauss and Corbin, 1997, *Grounded Theory in Practice*).

Grounded Theory comprises a number of inter-related, but discrete, steps. In Phase I of the research, I began a form of theoretical sampling in undertaking data collection, coding (conceptualisation) and preliminary analysis simultaneously. Theoretical sampling in this instance was explicitly exploratory and guided much more by existing group dynamics and priorities at the college than by my own research interests. These data revealed, however, that E.C.C. staff were facing some of the same problems I encountered in my own development work, particularly regarding project leadership. This discovery was the catalyst for the present, expanded study.

In Phase II, these preliminary conceptions informed further data collection in semi-structured interviews with all nine project leaders at the college. I chose to use semi-structured interviews in order to record as much detail as possible on

participants' beliefs, perceptions, and experiences relating to their development projects. This method gave the respondents and me greater flexibility than a structured interview or questionnaire in exploring complex and process-related issues and provided the maximum opportunity for each interviewee to tell his or own story (Smith 1995:10-12). I prepared only a few neutral, open questions in advance, hoping each interview would find its own direction and rhythm. Indeed, the first question I asked of each staff member—"How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?"—led to nine very different interview experiences. Some interviewees required a great deal of further prompting to discuss their work in development, others very little. Full transcripts of these interviews are included as Appendix B.1.

The semi-structured interview is particularly well suited to the Grounded Theory Approach. In this case, interviews with project leaders at the college generated a substantial data set from which to identify concepts and construct categories that could be compared across numerous incidents and examples. This is called open coding and is done by fracturing the data, usually line by line, while constantly querying what the data are indicating. The aim of constantly comparing, analysing, and generating sufficient codes to absorb the various phenomena is the complete saturation of the emergent main conceptual categories and their defining characteristics, termed "properties" in the Grounded Theory literature (Glaser 1978:36).

For example, properties of a tree might include its texture, colour, nutritional needs, size, utility, and so forth. The various dimensions of these properties—whether the bark texture is smooth, rough, prickly, or spongy—could clarify distinctions between different kinds of trees, or between healthy and unhealthy trees, or suggest different uses to which a tree could be put. Applied to investigation of a particular social phenomenon, penetrating observation of defining characteristics provides traction for analysis. Thus, the process of accurately identifying the main properties and their dimensions is a critical aspect of developing a grounded theory.

Selective coding begins when the core category—also called the core phenomenon or core variable in the literature—has emerged. At this point, only variables relating to it are further researched in order to build a "parsimonious theory" (*ibid*:62). Two practical considerations, however, influenced my decision to bypass selective coding. First, the interview schedule arranged by the college did not permit

comprehensive open coding of the data set as it grew. Second, I was reluctant to deviate from the open interview format with participants because of the heterogeneity of the group. Following a democratic process until the end and honouring the philosophy of action research, I gave each project leader the same opportunity to find his or her own voice within the interview. If, after completing open coding, additional data were needed to develop the core variable and its properties more fully, I was prepared to schedule a second round of interviews at the college. Fortunately, the core category emerged in a convincingly solid way to make this additional data collection unnecessary.

The N-Vivo computer software programme designed specifically for qualitative data analysis supported the process of constant comparative analysis. Because I took verbatim accounts of the nine interviews with project leaders, the data set contained all of their nuances, quirks of express, and other particularities. N-Vivo was an effective, high- and low-context “scanner” in that it augmented my capacity to “get under the skin” of the data while preventing me from getting lost in them. Careful use of the software helps in methodically “freezing” or isolating datum from the verbiage. As each bit of information may or may not correlate as theory is constructed, having a way to assign a variety of possibly meanings and to make preliminary linkages throughout the analysis prevents the process from becoming overwhelming. There is no other way to proceed with building theory than step by methodical step.

Having said that, I should acknowledge that this analytic process demands a level of sustained concentration quite unmatched by other analysis procedures I have used. I would liken the experience to listening actively to every instrument in the orchestra, simultaneously. Not surprisingly, this became easier with practice. By the end of the concert (theoretical sampling and open coding), the main themes (categories) had emerged, but the music still was not coherent. Only after many readings and re-workings of the “score,” that is, theoretical coding, could I assert what the music was *about*.

For the systematic ordering of this complex, iterative process I relied extensively on theoretical memoing. Theoretical memoing is similar to keeping a journal. While each entry may not be explicitly about the theory under construction, it nevertheless contributes to moving the process forward. Memos are an open but personal forum for commenting on and assessing the research process and well as for

interacting the emerging core phenomenon, its properties and their dimensions. After periods away from the research, regaining momentum was a simple matter when reviewing the theoretical memos. Factors external to my relationship with the E.C.C. also influenced my thinking in some very subtle ways; without the discipline of the memoing, the decision-making trail would not always have been obvious even to me.

Thus, my memos are an essential record of how I generated a provisional theory for leadership, including what I privileged and what I marginalized in the process (see Chapter 4). Sorting the memos provided the theoretical outline necessary for completing the research and this dissertation.

### *B.1. Strengths and limitations of grounded theory*

Perhaps the greatest limitation of using the Grounded Theory methodology for my dissertation was a personal one: my relative inexperience in using it. It would have been far easier and more intuitive to work with the data generated with E.C.C. project leaders along traditional lines. For example, I considered testing for specific characteristics of team leadership in learning organisations using Peter Senge's "fifth discipline" (Senge, et al. 1994:435). I also briefly entertained the possibility of borrowing patterns of leadership from business management literature, specifically in *The Leadership Mystique* by Manfred Kets de Vries (2001:220), to determine relevance and fit for the development context.

Any misgivings I had about my capacity to use Grounded Theory methods, however, were mitigated by a simple truth: I didn't know what I was looking for. Consciously placing development leaders themselves at the true centre of the research process, as required by P.A.R. and Grounded Theory approaches, gave me the confidence to tread this new terrain. The novelty of breaking with my academic training and my professional research experience was more liberating than daunting: I was certain that the Grounded Theory journey would lead me somewhere interesting, and possibly useful.

While this project has provided ample opportunity for my own capacity building in inductive analysis techniques, I believe all inquiry tests researcher competence in some way. The difference lies in how one is stretched or stumped or called to create. The inductive approach gives license to blur intellectual and disciplinary boundaries, to spend more time pondering the "what ifs" rather than massaging data to fit preconceived ideas, to change course when analysis reveals a

mistaken hypothesis. With so many possibly roads to choose, another real danger is lacking the discipline to stay the course until the end.

Perhaps this risk is the corollary to the main strength of the Grounded Theory methodology: that researchers can unabashedly claim, “We don’t know what we don’t know”...until constant comparative analysis reveals the most useful map for understanding the data. If a certain degree of ambiguity can be tolerated, Grounded Theory can serve as a reliable, flexible guide with which to chart unexplored territory, or to chart known territory in new ways.

Because the Grounded Theory literature is not unified, researchers new to the methods may be stymied by inconsistent or confusing instructions for how to proceed. While this might be a limitation of Grounded Theory, I channelled my initial frustration with the methodology into a personal challenge to find a way to make it work. If the founders of Grounded Theory didn’t agree on some of its premises—for example, the fundamental difference between emergence vs. forcing of the main problem from the data—then there was latitude for me to demonstrate heuristically whether the approach could satisfy the research brief or not. For me, this manoeuvrability is another reason to befriend the Grounded Theory approach.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of the research project relied heavily on the relationship of trust established between E.C.C. staff and me during Phase I. Confidentiality was assured to all project leaders agreeing to semi-structured interviews as well as to those engaging in casual conversations during my visits. Participants receive complete interview transcripts and expressed no reservation about their inclusion as appendices to this document. As this inquiry took as its point of departure the supreme value of local meanings in understanding and contributing to social development processes, I considered my role with the E.C.C. as a privilege to be safeguarded during every step of the research.

### **III. Reconnaissance at Elgin: Participatory Action Research, Reflection and Relationship**

In this chapter, I discuss Phase I of the research covering my initial involvement in the life of the Elgin Community College through a participatory action research project undertaken at the request of college staff. Though I present a review of development literature relevant to my grounded theory for leadership in Chapter 6, I provide in this chapter's first section a succinct summary of the theoretical context within which the P.A.R. research and my preference for participatory research methods are best understood.

The second section further elaborates data collection methods through staff interviews and a pilot workshop, "Ukudubula ko Mthi" (Blossoming of the Tree), undertaken with the Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprise (S.M.M.E.) Department and Xhosa-speaking learners.

I then use Chambers' framework for participatory development practices in the third section to analyse the data and to make some preliminary observations about the "unconsciousness of process" at the college, for both learners and staff.

Finally, in the fourth section I discuss how this small P.A.R. project became the conceptual link for a Grounded Theory approach to understanding leadership in development using the college as a case study.

#### *A. Theoretical Context of Phase I Research*

The overt synergies between the college's desired philosophical approach to development and my own led to a straightforward determination of the theoretical context within which the preliminary research could be positioned. The work of Paulo Freire and Manfred Max-Neef, familiar to college staff as part of their Training for Transformation course, lends itself to participatory research methods through a clear concern with individual and local meanings. As both theorists call for a human focus and a high degree of reflexivity when engaging in development processes, the theoretical context for the P.A.R. component of the research is necessarily a people-centred one. The work of Stirrat, referenced earlier, focuses more rigorously on power differences in development relationships and, in this regard, sheds light on what Chambers' prescribes for genuinely participatory practices. I also briefly introduce the work of Allan Kaplan, a South African development practitioner, whose

“new stance” for development equates increasing human consciousness with increasing humanness (Kaplan 1996:29).

Choosing this context facilitated data collection and analysis at two levels: at the organisational level of the college and at the student level. At the first, the staff interpretations of the ideas of Freire and Max-Neef were juxtaposed and cross-referenced with my own understanding and application of the theorists’ work in my academic work at U.C.T. and as a development consultant. At both the staff and learner levels, this theoretical context permitted exploration of some ideas relating to attitudinal change, trust-building, and establishing community norms in a constructive, non-threatening manner.

For example, Freire’s commitment to challenging orthodox thinking on education and politics is particularly relevant to the direction in which the E.C.C. would like to move. Advocating a radical pedagogy of asking questions and critical reflection, Freire maintains that education is not neutral: it either serves to ensure students conform to the present, oppressive system, or to launch students into the “practice of freedom” (Freire 1970). Freire’s criticism of traditional education extends beyond learning methods and teacher-student relationships to include the entire capitalist system; “conscientisation,” then, means learning to perceive and to take action against the economic, political and social contradictions in this oppressive system (Freire 1970,1989). Only “co-intentional education,” according to Freire, can move leaders and communities, teachers and students beyond pseudo-participation to committed involvement in societal transformation (1970:69). At Elgin, co-intentional education is conceptualized tacitly as a new paradigm for development in which the college is embracing the discovery of “...the living, powerful, dynamic relation between...word, action, and reflection” (1989:38). The stated objective of this paradigm is conscientisation of learners at the college, if not of the staff themselves.

Kaplan discusses expanding consciousness rather than conscientisation, but his ideas are similar to Freire’s. Drawing from the evolutionary stages found throughout the natural world, Kaplan sees human progress from dependence to independence as movement from a state of relative unconsciousness and acceptance of the status quo to one of critical consciousness and assuming greater personal power (Kaplan 1996:81). The third stage, interdependence, balances the polarities inherent in the previous stages while further transforming consciousness to greater wakefulness, capacity for reflection, and creativity (*ibid*:74-5). In facing the main

challenges of development—the conflict between freedom and responsibility, and between individualism and collectivism—development practitioners must facilitate processes that enable people and organisations to act for themselves because “the breeding ground for abuse of power is lack of consciousness” (*ibid*:120).

Max-Neef also aims to generate transformation in his response to human poverties, defined as inadequately satisfied human needs, and economic pathologies, such as unemployment and external debt. In his theory for human scale development, transformation depends on self-reliance, conceived as horizontal interdependence at local, regional and national levels (Max-Neef 1991:58). He outlines nine fundamental human needs expressed existentially through ways and forms of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting. A range of satisfiers serve to move these human needs—Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Identity, Idleness, Creation and Freedom—along the deprivation-potential continuum as human beings constantly, albeit largely unconsciously, strive to actualise various areas of potential within themselves (*ibid*:33-34; see also Appendix C. Matrix of Human Needs and Satisfiers).

According to Max- Neef, satisfiers may include food, education, values and norms, leisure time, and organisational affiliation. Work is valued as a “multi-resource” and one of the most important, synergistic satisfiers as many needs are addressed simultaneously (*ibid*:76-77). At a minimum, employment can positively satisfy the needs of Subsistence, Protection, Participation, and Identity. If the nature of the work is particularly relevant to a person’s development, then the need for experiencing Affection, Understanding, Creation and Freedom may also be moving toward greater fulfilment. Human scale development, then, broadens the definition of development while sharpening understanding of how to achieve it. Max-Neef places an individual’s or group’s synergic satisfaction of fundamental needs at the center of development processes. The work of Max-Neef serves as a useful theoretical reference for maintaining focus on the perspectives, experiences, and suggestions of staff and learners themselves, rather than on any pre-conceived ideas I might have about “how development should happen.”

Stirrat, a social anthropologist at the University of Sussex, also acknowledges the increasing emphasis in development on local culture, knowledge and abilities and people’s right to define their own goals and needs. However, Stirrat submits that indigenous knowledge seems to be accepted as knowledge only when it coincides

with “models of modernity” (Stirrat 2000:39). These models, in many ways the legacy of colonial and missionary work and aims, consider the relationship between the West and the so-called developing world in broadly historical terms where imperial, or industrialized, nations have determined the discourses used to understand and to shape the world of the “rest” (*ibid*:33). While not suggesting that modern development organisations are deliberately imperialistic in their objectives, Stirrat cautions against an “imperialism of thought” in which “particular cultural models and categories are being imposed upon and often accepted in the developing world” (*ibid*:41). Stirrat’s warning is particularly helpful in remembering that participatory approaches themselves are rooted in a modern paradigm of development that does not always make explicit inherent asymmetries of power.

This brief discussion of the theories and ideas used to contextualise the P.A.R. component of my research with the E.C.C. provides an overview of people-centred development. While this approach to development is consistent with a research design incorporating participatory methods, recognising the historical conditions from which it has evolved as well as some of its current limitations locates people-centred development more realistically as an increasingly coherent, yet still evolving, body of ideas within development theory generally.

### *B. Participatory Action Research: Data Collection*

A different kind of data collection began on my first trip to the college: after a 45-minute drive, I arrived in the apple orchards of the Elgin Valley to discover that the director and the entire staff, save Adrienne the receptionist, were delayed by a “Training for Transformation” programme some distance from the college. A walk around the impressive facilities with hospitable Adrienne accompanied by her descriptions of the numerous interesting projects run by the college led me to realize that it would be wise to keep an open mind regarding the director’s missed appointment. I later learned that the training at the Grail Centre in Kleinmond focused mainly on the work of Freire and Max-Neef, which I took to be a promising omen for our future collaboration.

The following week, after a weekend phone interview with college director Mark Walker, I drove out again and experienced the full force of the E.C.C. management team. All staff were called in to Mark’s office to share their ideas about the college’s most pressing information needs. Mark served primarily as discussion

facilitator while I acted as participant observer and took notes (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.). The various suggestions put forward by staff members, outlined above in Chapter 1, revealed their substantial engagement with issues of organisational development and increased effectiveness at the college. Staff concerns were personally felt and professionally articulated; I knew that day I had discovered an N.G.O. that was genuinely attempting to fulfil its mission of “changing people’s lives through education and service,” a tall order indeed.

The decision to conduct a workshop with women learners from the linen project was taken to (a) test their ability to learn from an education exercise picked up at the Kleinmond training, (b) give Mercy, a junior staff member in the small business department, the opportunity to develop workshop facilitation skills, and (3) allow me to demonstrate how to use participatory action research at the college. The mutually agreed theme underlying the P.A.R. project was “exploring the unconsciousness of process” amongst college learners. I extended the theme to include college staff, as well, because of some strong assumptions exposed during our first meeting, particularly relating to “the way the world works” and the unquestioning belief in the predominance of economic well-being in the development paradigm (*ibid*).

Mercy and I met over two days, for nearly six hours in total, to conceptualise the pilot workshop and to design the workshop facilitation guide. We brainstormed together on all issues relating to the workshop, including participant selection and group size, which training exercises from Kleinmond to test, how to adapt and translate the exercises for the Xhosa-speaking learners, the timing of each step of each activity, how she would introduce herself and conduct each phase of the workshop, and the best methods for recording the workshop proceedings for transcription and analysis.

Fresh from the Kleinmond training, Mercy was full of ideas for the workshop and put to good use her prior lessons learned as manager of the linen project. For example, she knew from previous experience that she could not select participants for the workshop because this would generate ill will amongst those not selected. Rather, Mercy suggested that she present the opportunity to the 85 learners and ask them to self-select a group of about eight, a number she could handle as a first-time facilitator.

When attempting to assuage Mercy’s slight nervousness about facilitating the workshop process, I discovered she was unfamiliar with the term “pilot.” She was delighted (and relieved) by the concept and made a point of explaining it to Mark

when briefing him, and getting his feedback, on planning progress; he in turn expressed disappointment that we were not going to run the workshop with all 85 linen project learners! So it was in this way that we realised staff could have different ideas about the simple research project. The importance of the participatory approach to research design, therefore, was underscored at the outset.

During breaks and after each working session with Mercy, I quickly recorded as much of our conversations as possible. Concretely monitoring this dialogue helped me to understand Mercy's implied and expressed thinking throughout. In our first planning session, for example, I asked her what she would like to see happen in the workshop. She responded that the women should learn the importance of "sticking to the process" (that is, not dropping out for seasonal employment or other reasons) and "understanding the vision of where they want to be." This seemed to come directly from the staff training as she referred to some of the exercises they had done in Kleinmond, going into some detail about the "tree" activity (where learners draw a tree representing different facets of themselves and their lives, e.g., roots are values and beliefs, leaves are skills, fruits are achievement, etc.). She also wanted to review with them "the things they're not supposed to do" and to identify community norms and "consequences for not following the rules."

This exchange produced a number of useful outcomes. Mercy determined which exercises she felt most comfortable leading with the participants. She also articulated how the frustrations of the linen project influenced her thinking about the desired impact of the P.A.R. pilot on learners, whether this was realistic or not. Finally, she was able to reflect afterwards on her attitudes toward learners; their responses to the exercises, in particular their drawings and how they shared personal experiences, surprised Mercy and helped her see that there was a lot of untapped potential in the linen project after all (see Appendix B.2. Pilot Workshop Planning Sessions with Mercy).

The pilot workshop, named "Ukudubula ko Mthi" (Blossoming of the Tree), comprised two exercises: "Ingcambu zo Mthi" (Roots of the Tree) and "Ukula ko Mthi" (Growing the Tree) (see Appendix A.3. Workshop Facilitation Guide). Three methods of data capturing—by Xolani, our Xhosa-language note-taker, by the temperamental tape-recorder, and by me as Mercy simultaneously translated most of the workshop discussion into English—ensured a full record (see Appendix A.4. Workshop Transcript). We spent the entire afternoon pulling together the various bits

into a coherent transcription and by the end of the day felt confident as a team that we had solid representation of the morning's work. The fact that it took longer to produce the transcript than it did to facilitate the workshop itself was not lost on Mercy and Xolani; only after the challenging experience could they appreciate how P.A.R. underscores the importance of local voice and meaning. Each word, each nuance was important to the overall understanding of the process.

In fact, it became clear to us that learners demonstrated quick understanding of the purposes of the exercises and an ability to move into deeper discussions on trust building and community norms. Mercy realised she no longer had to assume "their minds need changing" or they lack the ability to organise themselves. With little prompting from her, the learners took the discussion in many useful directions and came up with ideas she herself had not thought of. She concluded that raising awareness of learners at the college (*apropos* Mark's emphasis on Freire's idea of "conscientization") was only a matter of providing the opportunity, or the space and time within the schedule, and was an easily achievable goal.

Data collection ended three days later with discussion of the P.A.R. pilot with staff at their weekly meeting. Mercy focused her comments on how surprised she was by learner responsiveness to the workshop exercises; I outlined various principles of P.A.R. as actualised in the project (see Appendix A.6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff). Staff members were impressed by how quickly Mercy was able to use the training from Kleinmond and by how straightforwardly P.A.R. could provide real answers to their questions about learner awareness and commitment. They were keen to know how they could fit similar "conscientisation" exercises into their already tight course curricula and usual training activities.

Phase I rests on a variety of data collection methods at the college, including individual and group discussions, participant observation, staff capacity building in P.A.R. methods, and the pilot workshop with learners. In the following section, I consider how these preliminary data can be interpreted.

### *C. Preliminary Analysis: Evaluating Participatory Development Practices*

Chambers' framework for participatory development practices, outlined in Chapter 2, provides the starting point for data analysis in Phase I. To review briefly, these four practices are: locally facilitated development; peer-to-peer skills transfer; local analysis of local problems; and drastically limiting outsiders' roles. Because

this last practice, requiring role reversals between “uppers” and “lowers,” is particularly ambitious in the present context, I have refined the fourth practice to focus more specifically on actor interactions as a process of negotiation and transformation of meaning, as suggested by Long.

Each component of the research in Phase I, including interviews with college staff, workshop planning, activity implementation with community learners, and feedback to staff, are discussed according to the development practice(s) to which it corresponds. After describing and discussing the results of the research in light of each practice, I then consider the contribution of the research to the college’s stated development goals, reflect on the value of genuine participation in development processes, and indicate the way forward in the research journey.

### *C. 1 Local people, rather than “expert” outsiders, can perform activities better*

Perhaps the most obvious argument for encouraging local people to perform development activities is their ability to communicate in local languages. In this regard, among others having to do with local norms, values, beliefs, and experiences, they should be considered “expert insiders.” At two levels of the research project, this development practise was operationalised: the linen project coordinator, Mercy, facilitated the pilot workshop with women from the community; and the women who participated in the workshop then shared one of the workshop exercises with their peers in the linen project.

Mercy was born in the Eastern Cape to a Xhosa-speaking mother and a Sotho-speaking father. Her parents, like many others from the Eastern Cape, migrated to Grabouw seeking seasonal employment on the fruit farms in the area. After receiving her teaching certificate, she was employed by the college as a Xhosa-English translator and as a small business trainer. She is the only member of the staff who can communicate directly and fluently with Xhosa-speaking trainees, of whom there are many in spite of the predominance of Afrikaans in this region. Mercy then occupies, from a development perspective, the enviable dual role of “upper” and “lower,” “insider” and outsider,” and can serve as a bridge between the polarities.

When designing the workshop facilitation guide with me, Mercy appeared comfortable in expressing her ideas and concerns. In fact, she contributed the substantive inputs to the process whereas my suggestions were necessary only in the fine-tuning of the instrument and in maintaining the overall focus of the workshop on

the research objectives. When translating the facilitation guide into Xhosa, she readily acknowledged words she did not know, such as “norms” (izithethe/imithetho/yasekuhlaleni) and “blossoming” (ukudubula), turning to the dictionary (and later to her mother) for guidance. With no prior workshop facilitation experience, Mercy successfully led participants through the steps of two exercises adapted from the college staff training in Kleinmond she attended only a week before.

Mercy’s ability to use her own historical reference points as disadvantaged “lower” and peripheralised “outsider” served her well in workshop planning and execution. In addition to being sensitive to communication protocols and nuances preferred by participants, she acknowledged cultural norms by respecting the age gap and indicated to them that she, too, was interested in learning from their life experiences.

Only in one facet of the pilot workshop did I identify Mercy’s inability to shift from her professional “upper” status. This manifested in an inclination to spoon-feed participants based on her assumption that they would not adequately understand what was expected of them. Perhaps the most interesting example of this occurred the morning of the workshop before participants arrived. For the “Blossoming of the Tree” exercise, Mercy began to draw a large picture of a tree to give participants an idea of how to approach the drawing of their own trees. When I suggested the learners were well familiar with a variety of trees growing in their home environments and would not encounter grave difficulties in sketching one or the other, Mercy seemed doubtful. She argued that the women had no artistic training and would need a sample for guidance. Once the workshop got underway, she was amazed that the women drew their trees with no instructions from us beyond what each part of the tree represented. In fact, the women picked up the pencils and started drawing their trees before Mercy had completed her presentation of the exercise. The women’s trees were creatively drawn, coloured, and described. Each tree was distinctive (see Appendix A.5. Learners’ Trees).

Mercy’s inclination to ensure participants would grasp the meaning she herself attached to the workshop exercises also revealed itself in the level of instruction and explanation she thought appropriate. Rather than trust that the women would realize the usefulness of the exercises and form their own understanding of how to apply what they discovered in meaningful ways to their lives, Mercy here stepped more firmly on “upper,” or “expert outsider,” ground. While this may reflect her

inexperience as a development practitioner, rather than a fundamental disbelief in the abilities of local community members, it illustrates how difficult it can be to negotiate new spaces for genuine participation and empowerment. In this regard, the deeply ingrained philosophy of vertically-oriented education and teacher-training systems on Mercy's thinking, and on college staff generally, reveals the challenge for development leaders to shed the "expert" role in their interactions with community members.

On my last field visit, when Mercy and I were scheduled to make a joint presentation at the weekly staff meeting on the pilot workshop and action research, I was greeted by an elated Mercy. The day before, she learned that the women who participated in the workshop had taken the initiative to share one of the workshop exercises with their peers in the linen project during their lunch break. The women had asked Mercy for paper and coloured pencils for a small group of learners. Though I have no direct information on how this process was facilitated by the workshop participants or received by their fellow trainees, I believe it probably fit the mindsets, interests, and needs of the women even better than the exercise Mercy and I had developed. Had we invited some of the linen project trainees to develop the workshop plan and facilitation guide with us, Mercy and I might have discovered a process of greater relevance and interest to the participants. This tentative conclusion brought us full circle back to the meaning of Chambers' first practise: the more we, as development "experts" step aside, the greater the available space for local involvement in development activities.

### *C.2 Lateral, rather than vertical, transference of skills and technologies is more effective*

The above example clearly demonstrates that, without prompting, peer groups transfer information, skills and technologies amongst themselves. The workshop participants responded organically to the workshop process and outcomes by wanting to include peers in their new discovery; this runs counter-intuitive to vertical information exchanges where only information and skills deemed necessary by those higher on the ladder are transferred down to junior colleagues.

During an informal corridor chat with the leader of the woodworking project, Naym, I noted a similar phenomenon. Naym's dilemma was sparked by a seemingly innocuous comment made by a colleague in the small business department: "Seventy

percent of what is important in life is unseen” (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.). Focusing considerable attention and problem-solving skills to understand this perspective, Naym interrogated his own understanding of life and his values relating to material possessions. He took the trouble to ask me, a relative stranger, for my understanding and beliefs around “the unseen” and later, when discussing the subject at home with his wife, himself concluded that “99.99% of what is important in life is unseen” (see Appendix A.6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff).

Naym explained to me that when he and his wife considered their children, for example, it was the memory of a first step taken or of their close relationships that were most important to them as a family. While all the trappings of success, like the cell phone, the car, things in the house, seemed important at one time, Naym realised those were not the things that really brought meaning to his life. “This changed my definition of life, and I see a relationship between ‘happiness’ and ‘happening’ in that it is what happens in life that brings happiness rather than what I can see” (*ibid*). He said as a result of their conversations about “the unseen” that his wife was thrilled to have back “the man she married.” I thought this was a particularly strong testimony to the impact the college environment and peer interaction was having on its staff.

More generally, I observed lateral transference of ideas and understanding among college staff at the initial group interview and again at the staff meeting when sharing ideas on how to implement training exercises with college learners. This process was aided by the college director, Mark, who consciously stepped back from the dialogue in order for the staff to engage horizontally with each other. Only when he was particularly excited about a theme under discussion did Mark dominate staff interactions, though he repeatedly said he did not want to talk so much.

For example, when brainstorming on ideas for the research project during the second field visit (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.), Mark clearly used, and participated from, his status as college director to which his staff deferred. Though many of the staff personalities at E.C.C. are strong, Mark’s position of authority made it possible for him to lead the course of the discussion. At the later staff meeting, however, Mark deliberately took a backseat and most dialogue occurred directly between staff members. When this happened, I observed that staff seemed more relaxed and willing to voice their opinions (see Appendix A.6.

Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff). Even less vocal staff participated in these exchanges.

While lateral transfer of information seemed to be an operationalised priority for staff at the college, it was weak when it involved clear power differences between staff. Apart from examples involving the college director whose power status is obvious, I observed this dynamic on two specific occasions, both involving my workshop partner, Mercy. In the first, which occurred during the staff group interview, Mercy's knowledge of learners' income from seasonal work was directly challenged by Veronica, an older, white, Afrikaans-speaking woman working with the adult literacy and fund-raising programmes. Though Mercy maintained the information she was sharing came directly from interviews with the women themselves, Veronica said the information would need to be verified (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.).

On the second occasion, during our presentation to staff on the pilot workshop, Mercy herself chose a level of engagement disproportionate to the role she played in the design and implementation of the activity. She shortened her part of the presentation and seemed daunted by the prospect of fielding questions from her colleagues. This behaviour may be related to a comment Mercy made to me during our workshop planning session in which she expressed dismay at the perceived disrespect from staff when they choose to speak Afrikaans in her presence (see Appendix A.2. Workshop Planning Sessions with Mercy). This passing reference may have indicated a more general feeling of insecurity or a sense of status difference as the most junior member of the college staff. This phenomenon is consistent with current development theory highlighting power differences as a core challenge to shifting development to a new paradigm.

### *C.3. Insider group analysis of local decisions and knowledge raises enthusiasm and commitment, especially when accompanied by visual representations*

As indicated above, the pilot workshop generated sufficient enthusiasm to inspire participants to share their experiences with their fellow learners in a concrete way. That they chose to undertake the first of the two exercises with their peers may be significant. In this exercise, called the "Ingcambu zo Mthi (Roots of the Tree)," participants were asked to draw trees representing aspects of themselves: their values, beliefs, reputations in the community, activities, aspirations, and achievements (see

Appendices A.4. Workshop Transcript; A.5. Learners' Trees). In the second exercise, named "Ukula ko Mthi (Growing the Tree)," participants drew up lists of community norms they would like established at the college (see Appendix A.4. Workshop Transcript).

Articulating a new understanding of themselves and each other from their creative and visual representations of trees seemed to have a more profound impact on the learners than the more linear exercise in which norms were written on a flipchart. Participant feedback from the first exercise supports this hypothesis. One community member said, "This activity helps me to believe in myself, to understand and love myself better." Another said, "I learned how to view life and my dreams, how to understand them; it gives me a chance to see what kind of achievements we've made." A third participant associated the roots of her tree—her values and beliefs—with the fruit of the tree—her achievements—and declared, "I learned that good roots are leading to success" (*ibid*).

This "group-visual synergy," according to Chambers, results when groups engage in a visual analysis of their own "knowledge, judgments and preferences" and is an empowering experience (Chambers 1995:38). Results from the pilot workshop at the E.C.C. support Chambers' claim. This is a particularly useful finding as it speaks directly to a major concern expressed in the first group interview with staff. Bemoaning the lack of learner commitment to complete training programmes when seasonal employment opportunities arise, staff were at odds in explaining this situation. While all staff members sympathised with the economic realities of the learners, they gave different suggestions for how these could be overcome.

For example, the director averred that training in economically viable skills would help learners maintain focus on a stable, predictable future. A business skills facilitator associated the lack of commitment to a lack of ownership. Another staff member proposed, "We disguise our shortcomings under "commitment" of the beneficiaries. We say we struggle to find a way to get them to make a commitment, and we're shifting the blame to them. So it may not be a matter of their commitment, but of us learning from our mistakes" (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.). Though agreeing that the college is in the process of actively learning from mistakes, the director preferred the explanation that, "People are unconscious of solutions and the way the world works" (*ibid*).

The pilot workshop revealed to the college director and staff that “people” are not as unconscious of solutions as they might believe. Mercy’s presentation to the staff focused on her own surprise at how responsive the women from the linen project were to the group exercises: they easily made linkages between their own individual realities, abilities, and understanding and possibilities for enhancing their experience at the college and in their home communities (see Appendix A.6. Presentation of Workshop Findings to Staff).

#### *C.4 Actor interactions are processes of negotiation and transformation of meaning*

Findings presented and described above underscore the potentially transformative nature of participatory action research. Most E.C.C. project leaders interacting on various components of the research showed a clear willingness to consider the possibility of multiple meanings and to engage in a process of meaning negotiation with colleagues and, to a lesser degree, the college learners. The question to be asked at this juncture, however, is whether processes of negotiation and transformation of meaning are *consciously* understood and supported by staff at the college. Preliminary analysis would suggest this is not the case.

Two examples will serve to support this conclusion. The first example centres on the firm belief in knowing “how the world works” which influences staff interactions with learners (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions With Staff at E.C.C.). This belief assumes an implicit hierarchy of knowledge at the college, with learners clearly below staff. From a desire to control circumstances and processes to produce predictable results—ostensibly for the good of the learners—staff seem unaware that this control may prevent them from creating the conditions for truly sustainable development. This dynamic mirrors Stirrat’s assertion that, “What the development industry claims to be doing, and what consultants claim to be helping them to do, is to try to change the existing world in certain identifiable, predetermined ways” (Stirrat 2000:37). From the perspective of college staff, they define the “way the world works” and the way it can be changed. Because “superior” knowledge is associated with power and influence in today’s world, and specifically in the most common development practises, there is small likelihood at this point that staff will place learner knowledge and experience on par with their own. This is necessary if processes of negotiation and transformation are to move forward with any regularity or consistency.

The second example, following from the first, concerns the application at the college of the theories and ideas of Freire and Max-Neef. For Freire, education that raises critical awareness and liberates must be a process of problem solving and dialogue among equals. Though Freire's idea of "conscientisation" was introduced to college staff at a recent training, data gathered throughout the course of the research reveal a disconnect between a philosophical appreciation for the value of Freire's ideas and their actual application (see Appendix A.1. Preliminary Discussions with Staff at E.C.C.). According to Freire, stimulating curiosity is the primary objective of education and is inextricably linked to the "radical act of asking questions" and "the acknowledgment of existence itself as an act of questioning" (Freire 1989:40). To move from a pedagogy of answers to a pedagogy of curiosity, E.C.C. staff will themselves need to engage in a process of deep reflection on their assumptions, biases, and world views.

Principles of human scale development and an understanding of synergic satisfaction of the nine fundamental human needs identified by Max-Neef are not predominant, from the data collected during this condensed research project, in staff planning processes or in interactions with learners. Not once was explicit reference made to concepts of people-centred development during the five field visits. While the use of Max-Neef's model for development can be initiated and facilitated by college staff, it again entails placing analysis and decision-making power squarely in the hands of college learners. There is some evidence from the research to suggest that college staff are ready to move in this direction. Incidents related above—Naym's questioning how the visible and invisible affect the meaning of life, Henry's hypothesis that the college could be mistaken in its assumptions about learner commitment, and Mercy's surprise in workshop participants' outputs, Mark's attempts to allow staff to lead discussions—suggest an increasing awareness that each actor must take individual and joint responsibility in the on-going process of negotiating and transforming the meaning of development.

#### *C.5 Contribution of participatory action research to the E.C.C.'s development objectives*

As a first attempt in undertaking participatory action research at Elgin Community College, this project began with the narrow, yet compelling, brief of exploring the "unconsciousness of process" among learners currently attending

training programmes. Data collected and the framework used for analysis permitted a broader consideration of “unconsciousness of process” at the college generally. For this reason, the potential contribution of the project to the college’s development aims may be greater than initially anticipated.

As the results presented above suggest, the three-hour pilot workshop with linen project trainees shed light on a number of areas of interest to college staff: Will “training for transformation” actually raise learners’ awareness of their own development potential? Will learners enthusiastically engage in activities that may seem strange or even pointless to them? How can we as staff create the opportunity in our full schedules to plan and implement these activities? What are the implications of this process for the college learning environment? These questions, posed in different ways during the first staff group interview, were addressed through the pilot workshop with learners. Quickly bringing feedback from the workshop to the weekly staff meeting stimulated further discussion as staff discovered that participatory action research could provide some immediate answers to pressing questions.

For Mercy, because she was intimately associated with planning, facilitation, recording and feedback relating to the workshop, perhaps an additional set of questions was addressed: How will I perform in a project in which I have no prior experience? What will college staff and learners think of my contribution? Will Kate and I be able to work together? While neither Mercy nor I articulated these questions, her response to the outcomes from the pilot workshop indicated she was satisfied, as well as surprised, at how well she managed to rise to the challenge of a new situation. Following a long day of workshop facilitation and transcription, Mercy was eager to listen again to the tapes at home to review her performance. Afterwards, the positive feedback from both learners and staff on her work with the pilot workshop may have helped Mercy reflect on her (junior) role in the college and on how she is perceived by others.

More generally, participatory action research provided the opportunity for project leaders at the college to consider some of their assumptions and judgments about learners and development processes at the college. Through interviews, informal conversations, and discussion of outcomes, they were given some space and time to think about their role as change agents and development facilitators. My dual role as researcher and student was an ideal one for actively collaborating with staff on the action research project. By sharing some of my understanding and ideas

concerning development with the staff, we were able to engage in a process of negotiation of meaning. Because I consciously down-played my power as “researcher” and acted more from my role as “learner,” this process was a dynamic, non-threatening one, serving to build a degree of trust and empathy with staff within a relatively short time. I hope this experience of relationship building also serves as an example to staff in their future interactions.

### *C.6 The value of genuine participation in development processes*

Has the value of genuine participation in development been demonstrated through this research project? I believe the answer is a qualified yes. In an extremely abbreviated time frame, with limited resources and planning, this intervention revealed to college staff and learners what is possible when the opportunity is created for “words, actions, and reflections,” in the language of Freire, to come together. Though providing just a glimpse into the potential for awareness-raising and conscientisation of all members of the college community, the project stimulated thinking on the advantages of community participatory in action research and ways this might be used to inform efforts to create a new paradigm of sustainable development at the college.

While Mercy’s active participation is perhaps the strongest example of genuine participation during the pilot, I think we failed in allowing college learners an appropriate space for participation in the project. While the learners certainly participated actively in the workshop, they did not contribute to its design and facilitation. The participants themselves beautifully illustrated this missed opportunity afterwards: the very next day they were conducting their own workshop for their peers.

As with Shakespeare’s play, *Hamlet*, in which the beleaguered prince commissions a play for the entertainment—and enlightenment—of the court, this modest research initiative presented two, mutually reinforcing opportunities for exploring the “unconsciousness of process” at Elgin Community College. The pilot workshop not only generated insights into learner awareness, knowledge, and ability, it also allowed staff to reflect on their goals as development practitioners and their plans for achieving them. Similar to Hamlet’s motive for organising the play, the workshop functioned as a catalyst for conscious reflection and a method for “catching the conscience of the king.” In other words, as a “play within a play,” the workshop

experience gave staff members a different perspective on, and perhaps to varying degrees challenged, their own operating paradigm of development.

In the broader “play,” or participatory action research project, staff mostly unconsciously shared their own conceptualisations of development. Occasionally these conceptualisations were planted in the dominant development paradigm, specifically relating to the traditionally hierarchical teacher-learner dynamic. Consistent with this tendency, staff seemed to ascribe preconceived meanings to Freirian concepts and language, rather than to use his work to interrogate their own way of moving through the world and approaching their practice. This perhaps can be explained by the relative newness of his work to most of the staff.

But more frequently, staff conceptualisations indicated an appreciation for, if not an experience of, the other development practices outlined by Chambers that characterise an empowering development paradigm. Coming from widely divergent professional, educational, and personal backgrounds, staff members mostly engaged in horizontal patterns of communication with each other and generally spoke of college learners with respect and admiration. In advocating the use of “listening surveys” with the learners and each other, staff showed at least a willingness to open themselves to learning and receiving knowledge from all members of the college community. Considering how these practices can be implemented consciously and consistently at the college highlights the importance of staff training and of further participatory action research. Building in systematic reflexivity as a regular part of the work process may assist staff in increasing their own critical awareness and application of these practices.

Considering the receptivity of staff to the research project and findings, the college is well positioned to make progress in shifting to a new paradigm for sustainable development. Unlike the tragic fate met by Shakespeare’s famous prince, the college seems to be on solid ground as it creates its future with openness and optimism.

#### *D. Launching the E.C.C. Case Study*

Findings from the preliminary research undertaken in Phase I justify the interest and concern expressed by development theorists regarding power relations in development. Perceived power differences among staff at the college were shown to influence knowledge exchange, levels of staff confidence, and direction of discourse

development relating to the research. It is likely that learners view college staff as having resources and access to opportunities that would greatly enhance their own quality of life. College staff conceive learners as their professional *raison d'être* and as a “challenge” to be met. These fundamental differences, if not explicitly questioned and understood, could lead to underlying tensions and possibly overt conflict.

That learners and staff viewed this action research intervention as valuable suggests it came at a time when the community is open to this type of enquiry. Staff might ask themselves whether it would be possible and desirable to invite learners to participate more broadly in organisational goal setting and planning. This question could lead to considerations of power differences, synergic satisfaction of fundamental human needs, and the goal of greater conscientisation across the learning community.

A workshop participant articulated one of the most revealing questions of the research. After the perfunctory round of introductions, she asked, “What is the meaning of ‘workshop’?” (see Appendix A.4. Workshop Transcript). As development practitioners, it is useful to carry the refrain “we don’t know what we don’t know” with us at all times. While a “workshop” may be an opportunity to share ideas, to learn and have some fun together, as Mercy responded, it is clear that this ubiquitous term, among many others in the development world, carries a number of preconceived ideas and assumptions which bear scrutiny in a learning community where negotiation of shared meaning is so vital. Asking “what don’t we know?” may be the most useful question leaders can pose when working toward increasing the “consciousness of process” in development.

To that end, I proposed to college staff that we continue our research journey into the unconsciousness of our own processes as development facilitators and leaders. My request to work with the E.C.C. as a proper case study for my postgraduate research gave clear indication to staff that I see value in the work they are doing in the rural Elgin Valley communities and also desire to contribute in a small way to the achievement of their development aims. Though some were nervous about the prospects of being interviewed for the first time, staff welcomed the opportunity for deeper, individual reflection. My own reservations about using the Grounded Theory methodology were allayed by the collegial relationships established

during the P.A.R. experience at the college and by the staff's sincere interest in exploring new development terrain with me.

In Chapter IV, I review and assess my experience of taking an inductive research approach with college staff in order to understand and explain processes of leadership in development. While preliminary findings of the participatory action research undertaken in Phase I continued to influence my thinking, Grounded Theory methods of data collection, coding, and analysis guided my efforts in the more substantive Phase II of the research.

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#### **IV. The Elgin Case Study: Collecting, Coding, and Conceptualising**

In this chapter, I move into Phase II of my study and begin to respond to the research question, “What are the emergent patterns in process used and experienced by leaders in development?” In taking an inductive approach to my inquiry, I consciously tried to suspend, to the extent possible, my own ideas about, and experiences of, leading development projects. As Grounded Theory methods may be relatively unfamiliar to some readers, I summarize in this chapter the research process, including data collection, open and theoretical coding, and the use of memos and diagrams before offering a provisional theory for leadership in development in Chapter V.

The first section of the chapter reviews the process of data collection for this part of my study. I discuss why I used the semi-structured interview format with project leaders at the E.C.C, including my questions and prompts, and also explain why I chose to deviate from the usual course of theoretical sampling whereby data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously. Here, a potential difference between Grounded Theory methods and the underlying philosophy of P.A.R. is considered.

In the second section, I describe how I began data analysis through the method of open coding using the N-Vivo computer software programme. I share my experience with theoretical coding and constant comparative analysis, giving examples to illustrate the early process and some preliminary results. I also give my reasons for returning to a second round of open coding and show how this maintained rigor and facilitated progress in data analysis.

Finally, in section three, I briefly discuss the importance of theoretical memoing in analysis and theory building. I also explain how generating a series of diagrams helped me to become more flexible in moving within the coded data set and to conceptualise and determine appropriate fit for emerging patterns of relationship among categories.

I trust the following discussion of the Grounded Theory methods I used to conceptualise and conduct my research will serve as a reference for students interested in moving toward inductive inquiry and theory generation.

### *A. Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews*

In April and May of 2003, I undertook semi-structured interviews with the nine staff members at the E.C.C. who are responsible for leading the college's training programmes and development projects. At the front line of rural development, these leaders work in the agriculture, health, education, transportation, and business sectors as they seek to realise the college's mission statement: "changing people's lives through education and service."

More specifically, they facilitate government-funded learnerships in farming, mentor youth in community-outreach programmes, teach business skills to micro-enterprise owners and woodworking skills to hopeful entrepreneurs, organise relief for residents of informal settlements when fires and floods devastate an already precarious existence, design curricula and training modules for a number of national S.E.T.A.s, train local women in sewing and beadwork, offer A.B.E.T. courses, run H.I.V./A.I.D.S. awareness workshops on farms, write project proposals to ensure the college's economic viability, and liaise with commercial farmers to support compliance with new labour laws. Project leaders at the E.C.C. cover a full spectrum of development work.

All project leaders at the college agreed to participate in the research: four women (two Coloured, one Black Xhosa-speaker, and one White) and five men (two White and three Coloured). Interviews took place at the community college in Elgin and were spread over a four-week period according to staff availability. The average duration of an interview was about one hour, the shortest being 50 minutes and the longest 90 minutes.

I conducted and recorded the interviews simultaneously, typing directly into my laptop computer as the interviewee spoke. In addition to ensuring an accurate, verbatim transcription of each interview, this recording method required that I literally hang on the interviewee's every word and created an intimate space for reflection. This perhaps influenced participants' perception of my seriousness about, and connection to, the research, encouraging them to relax and to trust what they were saying was indeed valuable.

Each interview began with the same question: "How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?" I chose this question because, of the various questions I considered prior to data collection, this one was the most open and general. Having had particular difficulty answering the question myself, I also was

deeply curious how the Elgin staff would respond. Though I later considered whether I should have used a more focused interviewing strategy, Glaser reminded me, “The researcher *never, never* asks the question directly in interviews as this would preconceive the emergence of data” (1992:25, his emphasis).

The first interview with Naym proceeded smoothly and productively from this question, so I determined to give each staff member the same opportunity to respond to it. About half of the interviewees opened up immediately and spoke freely about what they do, revealing subtle aspects of their own internal dialogues and challenges in their work. Others required various prompts in the first 10-15 minutes of the session to orient themselves in the process of thinking about what they do, or perhaps to find a rhythm in their reflection. Keith proved to be the counterpoint to Naym when, after hearing the first question, responded, “Oh, that’s a difficult one. Give me another one.” To the next question I posed, however, he spoke without pause for nearly 15 minutes, the question being, “What is development to you?” (see Appendix B.1.:42).

To determine how I may have steered interviews in different directions through my use of prompts, or follow-up questions, I collated and reviewed all prompts when the interviews were completed. What was immediately striking was how the number of prompts I used in each interview varied: from seventeen with Edwin to only six with Veronica, and an average of ten each across the nine interviews. This variation, I thought, might suggest I was “pressing” some interviewees more than others. I discovered, however, that I did not diverge widely from the sample questions I formulated prior to data collection. As the goal with the semi-structured interviews was to remain as general as possible so that each project leader would focus on what was most important, relevant and meaningful to him or her, I was pleased that I did not indulge, at ripe interview moments, in forcing the issue of leadership in development. In fact, there were no questions specifically mentioning “leadership.” In six of the nine interviews, I asked at least one question related to development, but not necessarily the same question (*ibid*:42-44).

Overall, the prompts were interview-specific and intended to surface potential reflection “hooks,” mentioned by interviewees themselves, for further exploration. I hoped to support the interviewees in achieving more depth in their ruminations, if desired or if possible. For example, this worked particularly well with Veronica. The rather awkward prompt, “How has the transition been from what you were doing

before to now?” opened an intimate window onto Veronica’s professional and personal life in post-Apartheid South Africa (*ibid*:75). And asking Henry, “How do you track your own development through this process (of supporting others’ development)?” unleashed a torrent of reflection, ranging from the evolution of morning greetings with adult women learners to quality standards at Woolworths, from governance systems at the college to mistakes made by the S.M.M.E. department (*ibid*:39).

For the most part, it seems my prompts did little more than give interviewees “permission” to continue pursuing their own interests in, and preoccupations with, their work. By remaining as neutral as possible, I gave interviewees the space to gravitate toward self-determined emphases and conclusions, thus hoping to uncover where and how the axis turns for leadership in development, at least for this group of project leaders.

When I completed the data collection with Nita’s interview, I felt I had a treasure trove of information from college staff. All nine participants seemed to be as cooperative and forthcoming as they could be, given their own biases and perhaps areas of discomfort. Without explicitly focusing on “processes of leadership in development,” however, I was unclear what patterns would emerge from the data.

For sure, many of their attitudes and approaches, their experiences and expectations concerning their work had been captured, but at this stage I couldn’t be sure that it was primarily about *leadership* processes. The distinction between studying how project leaders themselves articulate their experience of their development work and observing what they actually do in practise is an important one and bears directly on the objective of this research: understanding the *process* of leadership. That process, whether unconscious or conscious, can be unravelled only from the inside, that is, the way leaders themselves understand and express the ways they perform in the development arena. The alternative, observing and externally interpreting leaders’ behaviour, would not only fail to explain the subtle decision-making and thinking processes underlying the behaviour, but is antithetical to the principles of P.A.R., as well.

My uncertainty regarding what I had in my hands after data collection, therefore, would be addressed by the analytical methods outlined by Grounded Theory: open and theoretical coding.

Only one other aspect of the data collection phase proved to be a niggling concern throughout: the question of theoretical sampling. This is, according to Glaser and Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process is controlled by emerging theory, whether substantive or formal” (1967:45). Whereas the Grounded Theory literature can be inconsistent or unclear, here even Strauss and Corbin straightforwardly concur that theoretical sampling is “sampling on the basis of the evolving theoretical relevance of concepts” (1990:179).

For a few reasons, I deliberately chose to deviate from this procedure and complete data collection at E.C.C. prior to open coding. First, knowing all project leaders personally from our previous P.A.R. experience, I felt positively obligated to give each the opportunity to speak freely within the interview context. Second, using a single organisation as a case study makes this even-handedness important; in entering each interview as a clean slate—without a plethora of ideas and concepts already emerging from a formal analysis process—I valued equally each voice at the college, consistent with P.A.R. values. And third, though I did pick up potential themes emerging as the interviewing progressed, for example, the ubiquitous idea of change or constant movement in their experiences and different approaches to a learner-centred pedagogy, I was reluctant to narrow data collection with such a small sample of interviewees.

Though these reasons may be compelling, still I wondered whether there might be deleterious consequences for the analysis. I accepted the potential risk knowing were I unable to elaborate fully the core phenomenon when it emerged, that I would have to resume data collection and return to theoretical sampling.

### *B. Data Analysis: Open Coding, Theoretical Coding, Open Coding Revisited*

While open coding and theoretical coding are undertaken simultaneously in Grounded Theory analysis, they are distinct conceptual steps. To promote the understanding of this complex process, I have divided this section into three parts: open coding, theoretical coding, and open coding revisited.

### *B.1. Open coding*

Open coding is a laborious task. It is the process of fracturing the gems contained in the data set into all their glorious facets. Because Grounded Theory analysis is inductive, meaning of the data is not sought and filtered through a predetermined coding list, but is derived first through deconstructing the interviews line by line in order to discover the substantive codes imbedded in the data set itself. Using the N-Vivo software programme to facilitate this open coding process, I spent twenty hours over a one-week period in the computer lab dissecting the nine interviews.

My first lengthy session of open coding generated nearly 200 codes. In the beginning, the analysis moved quickly because practically each sentence was open terrain: numerous concepts or codes (terms I will use interchangeably in this section) emerged and had to be coded separately because potential interrelations were as-yet unknown. When a statement contained more than one concept, or an idea had a variety of possible meanings, I initially opted to code the most dominant in order to proceed efficiently through—or to touch—the entire data set. During theoretical coding, however, I realized this decision had sacrificed precision and completeness in a systematic, deconstructive process. This was one of the reasons I returned to a second round of open coding.

In subsequent sessions of open coding, the analysis slowed considerably. The coding decision for each datum first required a search for related concepts in order to group them under the same code when identical, or to assign a similar or completely different code. With a substantial foundation of codes to work with, I found multiple possible fits for the data and scrolled countless times through the N-Vivo Node (that is, Code) List to make the best choices. While coding over longer periods made this process easier because the codes remained fresh in my mind, still it was a taxing experience to move between so many concepts constantly questioning (“what does this mean?”), scanning (for possible related concepts), comparing (to determine best fit), and selecting the final code or codes.

Until I was coding the seventh interview, the analysis felt extremely ponderous and disjointed. I felt mired in the abundance of data and, with so many possible interpretations of the data, often questioned my own coding decisions. While analysing Nicky’s interview, however, codes began falling into place more easily and consistently; patterns in the way codes grouped together as broader concepts, and

potential conceptual categories, became clearer, making the back and forth linking to existing codes much more straightforward. Even with 400 codes, I moved through the analysis with greater assurance and speed.

This experience served as a useful indicator of the purpose and utility of theoretical sampling. Had I been collecting and coding the data simultaneously, I would have understood that a shift in data collection and analysis was occurring. Hypothetically, at this point I may have considered moving into the selective coding stage of the Grounded Theory methodology, narrowing my focus in the remaining interviews to search only for the concepts required to complete the saturation of the emergent categories. In conforming to the methods, data collection would have been circumscribed.

In deviating slightly from the Grounded Theory path, I discovered that this circumscription occurs of its own accord: coding the last two interviews moved comfortably within the concepts and patterns already established in the coding report. Approaching analysis inductively and allowing meaningful data patterns to emerge, that is, categories as well as relationships between those categories, means that eventually, when appropriate, the narrowing of focus *must* occur.

The initial open coding phase of the analysis resulted in 439 separate concepts. During this phase, I also pursued theoretical coding, writing up memos containing my ideas, questions, and reflections during and between lab sessions. While open coding and theoretical coding concurrently move analysis forward, they are discrete steps and I discuss theoretical coding separately in the next section.

## *B.2. Theoretical coding*

Where substantive codes conceptualise the empirical evidence gathered for the study, theoretical codes conceptualise possible relationships between the substantive codes as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory-building process (Glaser, 1978:55). Thus, with my mind deeply immersed in the data at the microscopic level while generating substantive codes, my first inkling of a theoretical code was the broad concept of change or fluctuation. Resonating through many of the substantive codes, this nebulous concept not only related to the college's mission of "changing people's lives," but also to the way project leaders articulated their own life experiences. The development context they exposed seemed to be in a state of constant flux, alternating randomly between a focus on college learners or project

participants and their own personal growth and development. Though I could determine no balance between these poles, various concepts increasingly gravitated toward one or the other.

Inspired by this polarity, I posed an early question to myself: “Are project leaders motivated to change or develop by the same forces that they believe their learners and participants are motivated by?” As I did not ask about motivation in the interviews with project leaders, I wondered whether this was a huge oversight on my part given the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for effective leadership. Again I was forced to trust the Grounded Theory mantra of emergence to reveal how the concept of motivation would be important in my study.

Exploring possible relationships of causality, I also asked myself, “What are the actual triggers for change happening within the leader, and within the learner?” While this was not clear during open coding, the idea of transitions started to form in my mind because of numerous overt references in the interviews. For example, one transition was moving from a top-down or teacher-centred pedagogy to a philosophy of mutual learning where the prior experience of adult learners is valued. Naym says, “Now I allow myself to learn, to learn from others and that’s a *big* thing, and I’m growing from others” (see Appendix B.1:58). Similarly, for Keith the transition is reflected in a more student-centred approach,

“...going from the one known situation to the unknown situation and looking back again and evaluating my method and adapting it again if it’s not working, constantly shaping it because people are different. The one thing that will work with the one group won’t necessarily work with the other one. I need to be creative, let the creative juices flow while in the situation” (*ibid*:43).

And Veronica found that working with local farm workers in the agricultural learnerships was “mind-boggling” as she learned so much from them (*ibid*:75).

Another transition common to the interviews relates to previous and current employment contexts. Henry actually begins his interview by exclaiming enthusiastically that the social and business development facilitation he is now doing at the E.C.C. is what he should have been doing years ago as a commercial farmer (*ibid*:36). Mark, Veronica, and Naym discuss various frustrating aspects of earlier jobs to highlight the significance of their present efforts in rural development, or “getting down to the real South Africa,” as Veronica expresses it (*ibid*:76). Perhaps Nita expressed this concept of positive employment transitioning most colourfully

when discussing how much she has changed, or “when I was *rrrrrr* and now *aaahhh*” (*ibid*:71).

I became excited at this point in my memo writing by the idea of proactively generating “transition dialogues” (my term) with participants in development processes. I determined that, whether or not this concept evolved more fully in the theory-building process, I would take this up in my own development work.

At the end of open coding with the data set finally fragmented into 439 concepts and spread across 88 pages of the Document Coding Report, I started to move from my random musings to a more systematic engagement with theoretical coding. Theoretical coding, however, is not intuitive, or at least was not for me when considering how to use the N-Vivo documents to move forward. In fact, I again felt adrift in a sea of data, this time in the form of codes. The potential for relationships across so many concepts was great and, for the second time, I realized I was reluctant to begin narrowing my focus for fear of possibly missing the *real* big picture.

To break the impasse, I decided to trust my earlier discovery of substantive codes coalescing around the three broad themes of (1) change or fluctuation, (2) putting learners (or development beneficiaries’) first, and (3) project leaders’ own growth and development. Repeatedly scanning the Node List once again, I highlighted all codes relating to these potential conceptual categories. I was surprised that, of the three categories I investigated, it was leaders’ growth and development that has the greatest spread in the codes. Twenty-five codes, containing 55 passages, related to the leaders’ personal or professional growth and development; a minimum of 50 additional codes referred to a wide range of experiences which can be construed to relate indirectly to their own development. My subtitle for this category was Nita’s expression, “from *rrrrrr* to *aaahhh*,” showing how she had changed as a result of her professional experiences.

The category putting learners first, including their knowledge, experience, needs, and vision, was supported by 15 codes consisting of 28 passages, with another 31 codes emphasizing learners’ or beneficiaries in some way. Twenty-one codes with 41 passages explicitly addressed change or movement in its many manifestations; 34 additional codes implicitly addressed change of some kind, but are not named as such.

The process of theoretical coding hinges on amassing similar codes to build conceptual categories and to discover compelling relationships between them. My purpose in provisionally sorting analogous codes and grouping them according to

what seemed to be the dominant categories was to interrogate the possible “weight” of each in the data set, that is, to ensure I was on a substantive conceptual track. This procedure allowed me to work with multitudinous qualitative data *systematically*, rather than automatically assume that I was intuitively grasping the most important dimensions of the data set. As Grounded Theory literature can be ambiguous about how exactly to perform certain operational steps, and acknowledging that computer software programmes to assist with qualitative data analysis did not exist during the earlier evolution of Grounded Theory methods, I decided to plot my own course cautiously, to note its shortcomings and strengths, and to move forward accordingly.

Consequently, I was able to conclude that my ideas were worth investigating, but my focus needed adjusting. Whereas change or fluctuation had been the most prominent theme in my mind during open coding, this exercise revealed that leaders’ growth and development was a more *explicit* phenomenon in the data set. Of course, growth and development suggest change of some kind is taking place, so the question I formulated at this juncture was, “How does the concept of change (or movement or fluctuation) in development generally ‘fit’ with the category relating to leaders’ own growth and development?” Asked another way, “How would leaders’ personal growth and development, and corresponding change in identity, impact their work with beneficiaries?”

The process of theoretical coding also allowed me to correct earlier preconceptions. Contrary to an initial observation I made about the interviews lacking references to colleagues, I found the influence of colleagues *is* significant in that it contributes to the quality of the local context in which development processes occur. As the provisional theory emerged, I began to understand that an encouraging collegial influence positively contributes to greater tolerance for change processes to unfold. This is a simple, but important, example of how to keep the analysis grounded in the data. I realized it was far too easy to set aside this concept—or any idea, for that matter—before I had worked methodically with the data set. I imagine this kind of inadvertent decision-making happens far too often in research.

The greatest reward in this initial theoretical coding process was unearthing striking conceptual *contrasts* in the codes. As I was grouping similar codes to build and test possible categories, I discovered that a continuum of variation emerges as the conceptual category grows. For example, project leaders’ social commentary covering development beneficiaries, colleagues, and others ranges from blatantly

negative to positive: from “people are clueless,” “students probably gangsters,” “unemployed are lazy,” “(emerging) farmers like robots” to “people are gifts,” “(people are) created in God’s image”. Located mid-way along the continuum are a few neutral codes, “human like me,” “everyone unique,” “people on different levels,” or positive codes expressed negatively, “not empty vessels,” “not developing a robot.”

These attitudinal dimensions give insight into the psychological and development contexts experienced and created by leaders. If significant correlations are found, they could help explain variation in properties associated with the core category, for example, leaders’ facilitation strategies or in their conceptualisation of development. More generally, contrasts in the codes reveal the parameters within which the core phenomenon occurs. Possible parameters could be behavioural, attitudinal, or conceptual, and emerge from the data along with the core category and its properties.

In the category concerning pedagogical approaches to development facilitation, nearly 40 codes reflect an inclination on the part of project leaders to value their clients’ knowledge and experience and to adapt their facilitation methods accordingly. Most of the contrasting codes, when cross-referenced with the Coding Report, reveal that these more conservative ideas are what project leaders are working *against*. Pedagogical rigidity, or perhaps conformity, however, does come through in some codes—for example, “(I have) 5 days to hammer in (the information),” “(teacher must be) master in the class”—and is a clear, though weak, variation.

I was struck not only by these contrasts, but also by how the contrasts seemed to reflect polarities in thinking. If a learner is either conscientised or not conscientised, developed or not developed, then project leaders must inhabit a rather stark world. I then considered whether these contrasts construct reality for leaders. If they serve as boundaries, what is the degree of fluidity between them? Is it a matter of being on the same side or on different sides of the development fence as learners? Questions relating to hypothetical relationship continued to fill my memos, inspire my diagrams, and inform the theoretical coding process.

Contrasting leaders’ growth and development and putting learners first, I reflected again on the possibility of these two categories forming a balanced equation of some kind. With change being the impetus for both sides, I imagined that project leaders might go back and forth trying to maintain a balance between a focus on the learners and a focus on themselves. Though this hypothesis sounded plausible, it was

not explicitly supported by the data: actual references to balance numbered exactly one.

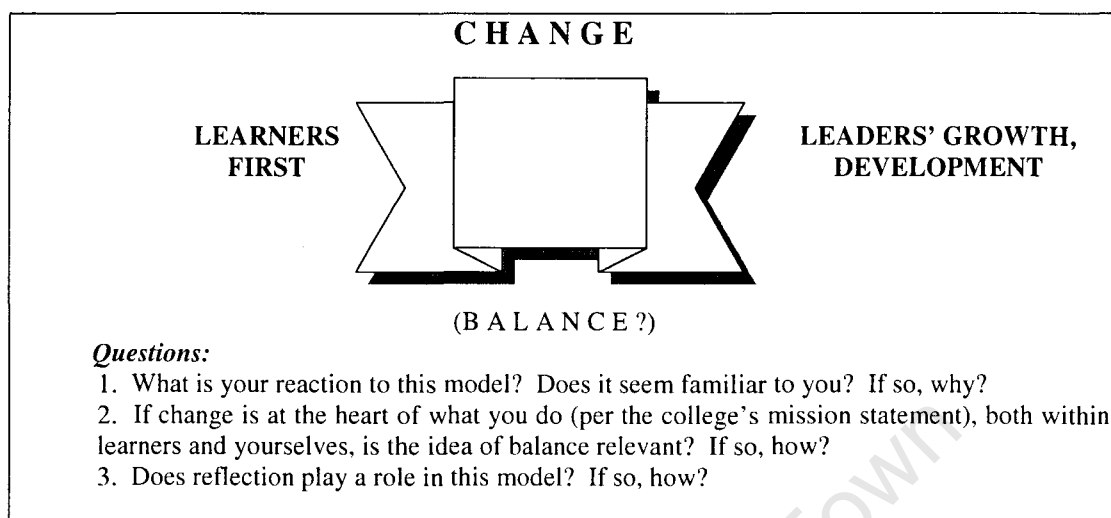
At this early stage of theoretical coding, identifying conceptual contrasts within and between categories helped the emerging categories to crystallize. Juxtaposing emergent conceptual categories proved to be a useful way to uncover potential relationships, or patterns, in the data set. This also sensitised me to the potentially tricky distinction between a category and property; according to Glaser, they are both conceptual elements of theory, but vary in their degree of conceptual abstraction (Glaser 1992:153). Whereas they are linked in a “conceptually systematic relationship,” a category can stand alone, a property cannot. As Grounded Theory is based on emerging patterns (*ibid*:85), or on recurring relationships (Strauss & Corbin 1990:130), I understood the importance of not assuming or preconceiving the fit of the data into models to expedite the analytical process.

At this point, I decided to present results of my preliminary analysis to E.C.C. for their impressions and feedback. To better understand the constant motion or flux I sensed underlying the data and to clarify my understanding of the relationships between the dominant main categories, I thought it best to go directly to the source and invite project leaders to participate in the analysis with me. As with the presentation and discussion of the P.A.R. results in Phase I of the research, I was again given a slot by the director in the weekly staff meeting.

After briefly explaining the basic principles and methods of Grounded Theory and my reasons for using this approach with them, I outlined the major themes, or conceptual categories, that had emerged: leaders’ growth and development and putting learners first, with the concept of change or fluctuation being ever-present but difficult to pin down. To demonstrate how I built these preliminary categories, I listed a number of related conceptual codes for each, giving some of these with the actual interview quotes. This exercise was effective in making the links between what staff actually experienced and shared in the interview and how I was building a theory, grounded in that information. They also liked hearing their own words and those of their colleagues, and were able to distinguish between the different voices in all but a few instances.

To prompt reflection on the possible patterns of relationship between these conceptual categories, I presented a crude diagram in the shape of a bow tie, with “change” as the knot, to suggest that there was constant fluctuation of some kind

between the loosely balanced student and leader foci, either consciously or unconsciously. Acknowledging that I was experimenting with this model, I elicited feedback with three general questions, shown below.



Staff agreed that this scenario made sense to them, but were surprised to see their own growth and development on par with what was happening with the learners at the college. While acknowledging that they are learning from their work and from their students all the time, still they had not considered this to be an “equal” part of their work experience at E.C.C.

Wanting clarification, I asked whether their development *is* on the same level as the students, or if I got this wrong. Their feeling was that I was partially right, because their professional and personal development influences their competencies and performance, and partially wrong, because there isn't much time or opportunity to discuss it at the college. It isn't explicit.

Thinking about life at the college as “a balancing act” resonated with them because they feel constantly under pressure to move forward with the projects and training, yet at the same time also to integrate lessons they learned, their insights, and new training materials into interactions with learners. This response, however, did not characterize the kind of balance I identified between the staff and learners. Whereas I had conceptualised this two-dimensional model as a simplified representation of a given dynamic in relationship between staff and learners, staff members used it to capture the non-stop pace of their work and concomitant frustrations, balancing or juggling multiple responsibilities and project demands simultaneously. I was able to conclude, therefore, that the main categories of leaders'

growth and development and putting learners first were *not* in balance, but related somehow differently, yet to be determined.

Project leaders agreed with Naym: “There’s not enough sharing between staff, really deep sharing about what happens with learners. There is reporting back in staff-meetings, but not systematic unpacking of process amongst ourselves.” Discussing the importance of active reflection, of making conscious the development processes relating to themselves and to the learners at the college, occupied the remainder of the 90-minute group dialogue. Encouraged by their contributions to the research and by realizing that their own growth and development had emerged as significant in the preliminary analysis, staff members saw the value in taking the time to reflect to understand themselves and their work better. Naym and Veronica were particularly strong advocates for making it a priority, claiming they could now see how empowered they had become as a result of their work at the college.

I took this critical dialogue with the college staff as a positive indication that I was more or less on track, but needed to move carefully in establishing relationships between the emerging categories.

What my initial efforts in theoretical coding had not produced at this stage in the analysis was a clear core phenomenon. I was not satisfied that any of the conceptual categories I had developed thus far had the power to explain, “what is going on here.” Each category seemed to hold relatively more or less space in the overarching schema, but the conceptual glue was lacking. Without the core category, I could not proceed with analysing the emerging relationships in the data.

In this beginning stage of theoretical coding, I identified three weaknesses to my management of open coding. First, I found that many of the names I assigned my codes were too general and did not appropriately isolate or conceptualise the meaning of the data. Throughout theoretical coding, this meant additional detective work, returning to the interview transcripts to figure out what was really being said.

Second, as mentioned earlier, I did not fracture the data sufficiently. Two examples illustrate how much meaning can be packed into one sentence. Node 263 from Mark’s interview reads, “But that needs time and space that is not available at the moment, so I get back to running by the seat of my pants again.” I named the code, “No time to reflect.” In addition to the context regarding opportunities for reflection, the concepts of time, space, and running by the seat of one’s pants (perhaps

spontaneous or uncontrolled action) are captured in this short sentence (Appendix B.1.:48).

In Node 314, which I named “priorities change weekly,” Veronica stated, “Sometimes it’s a problem, frustrating, and sometimes it’s challenging, because the organisation is very dynamic, almost organic, changes almost weekly with regard to priorities and deadlines with things that come to the college or ELF that we never thought of, that is just arriving on our plate” (*ibid*:74). In discussing the changing priorities, Veronica also reveals a microscopic continuum of response to the dynamism: it can be a problem, it can be frustrating, it can be challenging. The nuances here are subtle, but potentially important. She also mentions the time element (weekly changes, deadlines). Clearly, the various concepts contained in a single line of text merit their own codes so as not to lose possible relationships across the data set.

Third, suggested by the examples above, I missed altogether some very fine, but quite prominent, threads in the tapestry. By being so deeply immersed in the line-by-line coding, concepts such as time and motivation, which lurk within many nodes, were not teased out.

For these reasons, and to satisfy my own need for analytical rigour, I decided to resume open coding, once again moving through the entire data set, but this time with greater sensitivity. And in the process, I hoped to discover the core phenomenon.

### *B.3. Open coding revisited*

I did not anticipate that the second round of open coding would require another 26 hours in the computer lab, but this merely confirms that it needed to be done.

Before actually sitting down with N-Vivo again, I decided to comb through the Coding Report, highlighting data that merited furthering fracturing into additional codes. I also sifted out codes relating to conceptual categories, such as time and motivation, which I had missed earlier. I used the Node (Code) List to check whether I had similar codes and, if so, how they could be named more accurately to capture the different conceptual nuances.

For example, Strauss and Corbin recommend using the interviewee’s own words to name a code. Though this is a good strategy to keep concepts linked closely

to the ground from which the data are drawn, it makes tracking within the increasingly lengthy Node List difficult. When the code name I assigned did not resonate with the essence of the concept or the actual point the interviewee had made (as opposed to the *way* it had been expressed), it was often impossible to make these decisions without reviewing the data behind the code. And with 50 pages of interview transcripts, this was proving time-consuming indeed.

I eventually modified my strategy for naming codes to take advantage of the automatic alphabetisation function of the N-Vivo software: I used the possible conceptual link as the first word in my naming, then differentiated between the concepts with a datum-specific reference. For example, concepts related to “being” I named as “being 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizen,” “being creative difficult,” “being oldest not negative.” Concepts related to “reflection” I named “reflection of what I wanted to see,” “reflection puts you on path,” “reflection thru dialogue.” Similarly, multiple references to development, change and other broad concepts were then easily tracked in the Node List while the exact differences between the individual concepts were maintained within the Coding Report. Though the limited space given in the N-Vivo programme for naming codes was a drawback on occasion, it also challenged me to think precisely about the meaning of each concept as I moved through open coding analysis.

Revisiting the Coding Report plunged me back into the depths of the data set. By reading each coded section carefully and fully, I was able to split hairs that had already been split very finely, thereby bringing to life any further meaning that might be dormant there. The provisional conceptual categories helped to bring into clear focus any missed codes that were relevant and where they fit best.

While reconstructing the fractured data during theoretical coding, I spent much more time with the concepts themselves and thus with the Node List, referring to the Coding Report primarily when I was unsure of (1) a concept’s meaning, (2) who contributed the supporting data, or (3) nuances between similar codes. But it was extremely useful to read the Coding Report again, from beginning to end, to listen to the interviews afresh, but in a vastly different and of course supremely fragmented order. The process seemed to jostle me out of my present, somewhat stalled, track and make me more alert or receptive.

The preliminary Coding Report “clean-up” helped me hit the ground running. Many of the new codes related to temporality, motivation, reflection, choice, and

additional conceptualisations of development. Mid-way through the open coding, I had an unexpected revelation about a grossly overlooked category pertaining to project leaders' crises and pivotal experiences. When I realized that staff members' personal crises might *be* pivotal experiences influencing their personal and professional growth and development, I knew that I was discovering a potentially critical category.

I had found crises in six of the interviews during the first round of open coding. In the remaining three interviews, crisis was mentioned, but without much detail. The crises elaborated, or alluded to, by the other project leaders seem to play a role in raising critical self-awareness and influencing career decisions. Greater capacity to appreciate others' suffering and life experiences also emerged. Thus, I was wondering whether leaders in development more or less actively use their personal crises as key identity facets, as learning tools, as developmental markers, as a motivational force, or a combination of these things.

As exciting as this discovery was, the real prize was the emergence of the core phenomenon.

Like spontaneous combustion, the core phenomenon popped onto my mental screen as a result of a number of mutually reinforcing incidents: I was toying with the simple diagram juxtaposing the categories leaders' growth and development with putting learners first that I had shared with the staff at Elgin; I was thinking about the work rhythms project leaders might experience; I was obsessing a bit about the choices leaders make from day to day, and even moment to moment; I was again asking how the contrasts emerging from the data might define the leaders' reality in some way; and I was glancing at the Coding Report where I left off the open coding the previous night, that is, a node from Edwin's interview, "...I started training adults and learners since then and that was quite a different shift for me, from teaching kids to adults." Suddenly, a phrase came into my mind: "shifting sands of development." And it *reverberated* like a finely tuned bell throughout the fractured data set.

The conceptual category of *shifting* seems to capture what these project leaders are doing constantly, and mostly unconsciously: shifting between their learners' development and progress and their own, their learners' living situations and their own, their learners' expectations and their own; shifting between the limitations of the apartheid past and the future opportunities for their learners and themselves; shifting between the legacy of racial stereotypes, cultural biases, and systematic

oppression and a new democratic dispensation with attendant reality and rhetoric; shifting between past ways of interacting with current colleagues of different races (who for some might have been considered “servant” or “baas”) and the current political and social protocols; shifting between how they were taught as children and young adults in the “old South Africa” and how they now want to work with community members coming to the college; shifting between various concepts of development. These facets from the data set, triggered by the concept of shifting, flooded into my mind, bringing coherence to so much that, until then, had been vaguely connected or completely disjointed. Why, I thought, these leaders are *grand master shifters*...or not, depending on the circumstances.

For me, the process of shifting, while still needing to be refined in relation to the main conceptual categories, began to answer the broader question motivating the research: What are the emergent patterns in processes used and experienced by leaders in development?

As I created a memo with these ideas, I sensed there must be additional facets, or shifting points, bubbling under the surface of the data set that required investigation. I could have moved directly back into theoretical coding after discovering the core phenomenon, but chose to finish the open coding to ensure my Coding Report and Node Listing were accurate and complete.

The open coding process, though time-consuming, was much smoother the second time. I moved rhythmically, sifting, sorting, splitting, reconceptualising, recoding, renaming, and always comparing, comparing, comparing. There were additions or changes or corrections on nearly every single page of the original Coding Report. I generated an additional 255 conceptual codes and added over 35 pages to the Coding Report, a solid indication that this effort was needed.

Toward the end of the open coding process, I felt as though I were cleaning the data. There was a growing sense that “the fit is clear,” “I see this piece goes precisely *here*,” rather than “I’ll put this code here *for now*,” or “What is *really* being said with this code?” Clearly, a great deal of refining was necessary to break the data set. The extra effort was its own reward, not only by improving my open coding skills and continuing to unpack the Grounded Theory approach to qualitative analysis, but also, and especially, because my confidence in the data set grew exponentially. It was a revelation to me that I can expect to reach this point of confidence in the analysis of qualitative data, that I *should* reach this point.

With this new sense of assurance, I returned to theoretical coding and sorting a large pile of memos, eager to discover how the core phenomenon would manifest more concretely within the emerging theoretical context.

### *C. Theoretical Memos and Diagrams*

Theoretical memoing is the lynchpin of Grounded Theory: this procedure moves the various steps of inductive analysis forward, often simultaneously, and tracks the evolution of increasingly abstract conceptual ordering. I believe theory building would be impossible without this component. Certainly, without generating this set of documents, I would have been unable to complete the project.

I used memos for noting and tracing my ideas, questions, problems, and progress; grouping and regrouping the substantive codes and hypothesizing about possible conceptual categories until theoretical coding took flight; transcribing my hand-written notes and diagrams; referencing potentially useful contextual literature; thinking aloud about possible lines of inquiry, some for this study and others for future use; recording changes and corrections I made throughout the analysis; and for keeping the trail warm after extended periods away from the project.

The theoretical memos also serve as an account of the many variables that influenced my thinking and decision-making throughout the research project. For example, development consultancies I undertook during the period of research, theoretical concepts from other disciplines such as intercultural communication, and physical conditions in the computer lab where I used the N-Vivo programme all filter into the overall experience and the product of the analysis, to varying degrees.

Perhaps most importantly, I used the memoing function to keep myself grounded in a research process that was not at all linear, was at times overwhelming, and was particularly successful in stimulating fascinating, but not necessarily applicable, internal dialogue. Working inductively, where *everything* is important until the categories and relationship patterns begin to emerge, requires that the analyst bring order out of chaos. Theoretical memos girded this process.

Complementing the theoretical memos, diagrams helped me to become more flexible in moving within the substantively coded data set and to conceptualise and determine appropriate fit for relationships between theoretical categories.

For example, what evolved from the simple bow tie diagram, shown above, was a series of increasingly complex diagram depicting leadership processes as a

wheel. These visuals helped me to test a variety of hypotheses about possible causes, contexts, conditions, and consequences of shifting parallel to my asking the standard why, how, what, where, when questions in my memos. By way of illustration, in isolating and clarifying both external (tyre) and internal (rim) contexts, that is, the national-historic and the college-local, I could understand the important distinctions between these two contexts as well as some of the ways they impacted on leaders' work, or caused leaders to make certain choices. In this way, the diagram helped me integrate the relationship between concepts. The idea of the entire development system being in perpetual motion was captured in these diagram, as the shifting, or forward, movement became a matter of degree and type depending on the specific interplay of the variables.

It was both frustrating and fortuitous that numerous versions of this diagram failed to reveal satisfactorily what exists at the very hub of the wheel, that is, the core phenomenon. Because the thrust of Grounded Theory is the emergence of conceptual relationships from a substantive field, there is little attraction in forcing codes into a model or pictorial representation. When the fit is right, the relationships between concepts integrate easily. For this reason, as indicated above, I chose to return to open coding and to continue the process of constant comparative analysis, confident that the basic relationship patterns in the data set would surface.

In summary, using Grounded Theory methods for qualitative data analysis was a challenging and a rewarding experience for me: challenging in that I had to interrogate my use of the methods throughout the entire analysis, and rewarding not only because I produced a modest theoretical sketch of leadership processes in development but also because my confidence in working inductively has grown considerably. It is especially gratifying to be able to elucidate and unravel a problem I have been wrestling with for years, that is, the reasons why leadership in development is elusive, and to know my preliminary conclusions are grounded in empirical data.

While each enquiry will require its own unique application and there is no one correct way to use the methods, as Strauss and Corbin's *Grounded Theory in Practise* suggests (1992), the early Grounded Theory literature (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1976) does provide fairly straightforward guidelines on how to move inductively through qualitative analysis. Whether this results in formulating useful hypothetical relationships between conceptual categories or in building a substantive, or even a

formal, theory depends on the motivations of the researcher. For my part, I hope this greatly abridged version of my work with the methods contributes to making Grounded Theory more accessible for those wishing to move away from theory verification and onto the less-travelled road of theory generation.

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## **V. Toward a Theory for Leadership in Development: The Process of Interdependent Shifting**

In this chapter I offer the results of my Grounded Theory analysis: a provisional theory for leadership in development. After explaining the core phenomenon, the process of interdependent shifting, I identify and elaborate its two main properties, shift tolerance and identity coordinates. I outline in detail how these variables characterise the core phenomenon, drawing references from the interviews with leaders to exemplify my points. To support the text, I provide a graphic illustration of the process at the end of the chapter.

### *A. The Core Phenomenon: The Process of Interdependent Shifting*

Development inhabits a transitional space. As a course of action aiming to improve or change people's lives, it is necessarily a dynamic, process-oriented experience rather than a sudden occurrence. Returning to the definition posited at the beginning of this paper, development is "measurable, sustained improvement in people's living conditions, be those conditions physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual" and occurs as a result of multiple, interrelated phenomena, as does any basic social process (Glaser 1978:96).

The phenomenon that emerged from my analysis as underpinning leadership in development is the process of interdependent shifting. This phenomenon infuses so much of the action of development as described and facilitated by the project leaders I interviewed that it was difficult to isolate precisely. It was inconspicuous by its pervasiveness: it was everywhere.

Interdependent shifting captures patterns of interaction between project leaders and project beneficiaries in the development context. Shifting implies energetic movement between two or more participating units, in this case between these two main actors in development. Leaders and beneficiaries exchange a constant flow of information and feedback at various levels—physical, mental, and emotional—both visibly and invisibly. The current of shifting alternates between these two axes simultaneously and is continuous, as indicated by the gerund form of the verb. This would be consistent with the nature of a development project itself: though usually of an agreed-upon duration, it contains multiple leader-beneficiary contacts within it.

Shifting, therefore, hinges on the interaction of leaders and beneficiaries. When one actor, or group of actors, steps out of the equation, shifting in the development profession stops. Whereas beneficiaries are the reason project leaders engage in processes of development, leaders serve as the guardians, and perhaps gatekeepers, of beneficiaries' plans and expectations for a better life. Though the primary purpose of the social development sector is to aid less fortunate "others," to serve the needy of society from a well-resourced top to an under-resourced bottom, this study reveals that leaders' growth and development interacts horizontally with the development of those "others": one depends on, and stimulates, the other.

Thus, while the process of shifting is dependent on the interactive relationship of leaders and beneficiaries and occurs between these two units, it also happens within each participating unit and becomes apparent in one or both axes. Shifting can manifest as behavioural or attitude changes, problem-solving, insights into personal motivation, new perceptions about social or psychological phenomena, or generally improving personal circumstances in some way. Because my data gathering focused only on one side of the development equation, that is, project leaders, my analysis relates specifically to how leaders are constantly navigating the shifting process between themselves and learners and within themselves.

That development beneficiaries and leaders are actually interdependent in these change processes is not a widespread idea in development literature or in perceptions held by development actors themselves. At the Elgin Community College, this interdependence is neither uppermost in the minds of project leaders, nor used as a way to describe their relationship with college learners and project beneficiaries. On the contrary, when the few overt references *are* made to the concept in the interviews, the realisation or the articulation seems to come as a result of the deep reflection inspired by the interview itself.

For example, Nita highlights her experience working with a woman participating in the college's small business training programme run in outlying areas of the Elgin/Grabouw valley. After a lengthy description of the evolution of the project, Nita says,

"I looked at myself and then looked at Molly and actually see the resemblance. No, it is appropriate, it definitely is. It actually is a good thing that it is happening because I can reflect in her the way I was and the way I became after a while... -She will be a reflection on how I can be a better

person as well and we can actually learn from each other, giving, taking...”  
(see Appendix B.1.:70).

Perceiving Molly as a mirror through which she can see and expand her own personal and professional development, Nita conceptually repositions her connection with Molly from trainer-trainee to learning partner.

Veronica also acknowledges that she learns from her work with “so many layers, levels” at the college, for example from the kitchen staff with whom “previously you wouldn’t have actually spoken.” But the process of *unlearning* is more fundamental to Veronica’s work relationships:

“But I never got into close contact personally [with black and coloured people]. And here I find I have to reinvent myself and to unlearn, it’s even more in my face here. The only way I can succeed is by unlearning almost everything, things that have been brainwashed [into me] from the time I’ve been born in South Africa as a white Afrikaans person” (*ibid*:75).

Veronica’s own development, through discarding old conceptions and through opening herself to a broader spectrum of humanity, depends on her interactions with her colleagues and with college learners. That she pursues a course of self-reinvention suggests she has some awareness of the dynamic, interdependent shifting taking place at the college, but does not communicate it as such.

Of all the leaders interviewed, the college director reveals the greatest awareness of the interdependent nature of his relationships with development beneficiaries. Mark does not speak of relationship with college learners *per se*, but of the encouragement their development gives him. Concluding that his self-knowledge lacks depth, Mark’s unrefined sense of the shifting dynamic is that it is both externally oriented, in interaction with others, and internally oriented, in the work he does with himself:

“So the development in other people’s lives encourages me in my development to continue. But I’m also inside of myself...wouldn’t be intellectually...would it be emotionally? ...I’m shallow in my knowledge of myself, so I think...so what I’m trying to say is that the development of myself has something to do with the development of others, but at this stage has been more to do with work inside myself, my internal work, because the process of development doesn’t just happen through others, it needs to happen inside of me, the work of consciousness-raising inside of myself, of development myself...that I’m very shallow at” (*ibid*:49).

Mark’s reflections clearly speak to the dual loci of the shifting process, but do not explain how that process is operationalised.

Nicky perhaps came closest to providing a succinct explanation by claiming, “Whatever you are doing [in your development work with others], you have to start with yourself... -It’s like practise what you preach!” (*ibid*:64).

Interdependent shifting functions primarily by means of two levers: gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates. Called theoretical codes in Grounded Theory, these sub-categories further conceptualise the key relationships in the substantive data and are essential characteristics, or properties, of interdependent shifting. In the following sections, I discuss how gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates influence and relate to the core phenomenon.

### *B. Elaborating the Core Phenomenon of Interdependent Shifting: Gauging Shift Tolerance*

Shift tolerance explains how, and the degree to which, leaders actively embrace dynamic interaction with project beneficiaries and learners. It associates qualities of elasticity and open-mindedness with the process of interdependent shifting. At the personal level of leaders’ work, shift tolerance reveals itself in how they facilitate and respond to development processes. This encompasses not only the pedagogical approaches to their interactions with beneficiaries, but also their conceptualisations of development and corresponding attitudes toward beneficiaries.

Contrasts in facilitation approaches and attitudes are striking at the college. Whereas some project leaders demonstrate a high degree of shift tolerance in the way they interact with learners, others are plainly reluctant to move from traditional practise. For example, Naym’s personal and professional development journey has moved along a wide arc. His professional training encouraged him to play the role of omniscient educator: “The methodologies they use [at the university], is that you have to be “the man.” You’re not “the man,” you’re not all-knowing” (*ibid*:56). Later in the interview, he takes this point further:

“One thing I used to struggle with, I *used* to think everyone needs to think like me. I’m always right, I’m the witty guy...But I think now I allow myself to learn, to learn from others and that’s a *big* thing, and I’m growing from others” (*ibid*:58).

From an authoritarian model where correct answers flow from experts, development is now conceptualised as a reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationship between project facilitators and participants.

One way Naym tracks his own growth as a leader is through the way he prepares for projects and training workshops. As he no longer needs to know all the answers to questions learners may have, he now spends less overall time in preparation and his project facilitation is easier. His planning focuses more on being creative, “coming up with the innovative ideas, getting people involved with the training” (*ibid*).

The result is that Naym steps back from a leadership role in his workshops:

“Now it doesn’t have to come from me...I am more comfortable, they are more comfortable, there are more questions, dialogue, and I see them as adults with prior knowledge” (*ibid*).

While he “must always be aware...how to get the most out of it, the training session,” his trajectory as a leader in development finds him increasingly relaxed with, and open to, project beneficiaries. Their interactions are mutually edifying and “transformative,” according to Naym.

Nicky takes a similar pedagogical approach in the Health Department at the college. Rather than assuming her audience will know nothing about the health issues the college covers in its life skills programmes, Nicky consciously creates an environment of give and take where participants are on equal footing with her as the facilitator:

“When you go to a school and do training on TB, how do you know if they know about TB? I believe also to make that interaction between you in front and the group, for them to be involved in the discussions, you don’t dictate to them, it is a two-way discussion” (*ibid*:63).

Like Naym, she directly links these interactions with her own development, saying she finds the work to be a “healing process” for herself. She processes her own crises and areas of insecurity through her relationships with project beneficiaries (*ibid*:62-63).

In contrast, shift tolerance is greatly reduced by a fear of making mistakes with adult learners. When project leaders are reluctant to discuss potentially sensitive topics with learners, they close themselves to opportunities for personal and professional growth stimulated by these interactions. Edwin, for example, deliberately moves discussion away from issues he feels incapable of handling, saying “They ask me something I cannot answer, I cannot deal with, that’s scary for me...I’m scared to disappoint them” (*ibid*:35). Echoing Naym’s past belief, Edwin

continues to believe that as a development facilitator “you need to be the master in the class at all times for them to trust you” (*ibid*:32).

Edwin is in a catch-22: he moves away from learners’ personal development issues that arise, while acknowledging that these same unresolved issues influence the effectiveness of the college’s skills training (*ibid*). He speaks of “unpacking” adult learners in order to build on their existing knowledge and previous experiences to improve his facilitation, but finds he cannot do this without running the risk of “being more negative than positive” (*ibid*:31). Rather than encourage learners to achieve their educational goals, he is afraid his inadequate facilitation skills may actually discourage them in their efforts.

In his interview, Edwin’s awareness of these contradictions grew to the point that he claimed:

“I really don’t see myself as a facilitator because I lack all those other skills. I need to become more integrated, integrated in other areas, like problem solving, conflict management, negotiation, how to unpack all this, all those layers. ...as long as it is not that serious, then I can cope with it, but the moment *it gets on a higher level*, then that is where I withdraw, and steer it in the opposite direction, and that is what I need to work on. And to become a good facilitator you need that” (*ibid*:34, emphasis added).

The “higher level” Edwin speaks of relates to different levels of shift tolerance. Verbalising these thoughts for the first time, he instinctively grasps that the development process requires increasing openness and flexibility. As leaders and beneficiaries move further along the development path, there is greater likelihood of experiencing deeper personal transformation and healing. Those experiences, however, can be difficult and painful. Some project leaders are unable or unwilling to embrace them, preferring to inhabit the traditional role of authority in the leader-learner hierarchy while treading the familiar ground of a course curriculum.

Gauging shift tolerance explores the nature of the shifting process from leaders’ perspectives, indicating how they conceptualise development and what kind of pedagogical approach they take. Shift tolerance at the point of interaction can be measured by the extent to which project leaders privilege learners’ experience and knowledge in designing and implementing development projects. Naym would call this getting “started in moving from where the learners are” (*ibid*:56). Other dimensions include the desire to learn from learners, an awareness that successful

social development processes usually require examination of difficult personal issues, the willingness to explore those issues, and the concomitant ability to do so.

While interdependent shifting occurs whenever leaders and beneficiaries interact, the quality of that process can vary widely according to the degree to which leaders are actively seeking, or are receptive to, opportunities for personal growth and development, for themselves and for their clients.

When development is conceptualised as a top-down process where leaders act as repositories of specific life-enhancing information or skills for project beneficiaries, leaders are less likely to respond to, or be aware of, learners' previous knowledge and experience as well as sensitive personal issues possibly inhibiting the development process from moving forward. In this case, shift tolerance would be low or minimal.

When development is conceptualised as a reciprocal relationship between leader and learner—where the leader is also a learner, and the learner a leader in terms of focusing the process on what is important to him or her—interdependent shifting moves to a higher level. Both participating units can experience growth and development here. The development process is no longer undertaken for “others,” but for both actors. This indicates a greater tolerance for shifting from an existing state to a different, unknown one.

Because the unknown state could encompass physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously, it is not surprising that some leaders in development demonstrate low tolerance for moving through this complexity. They choose to take a more conservative course with beneficiaries, like Edwin, who prefers not to “deal with it: I steer them in the direction of the known” (*ibid*:32).

Moving from the immediate context of interaction between leaders and beneficiaries, shift tolerance is influenced by the broader realm within which interdependent shifting occurs. It is both stimulated and impeded by conditions in the college environment and by the national framework constructed by South Africa's history and socio-economic realities.

At the E.C.C., the mission to change people's lives is an urgent one. Over half the project leaders interviewed were born and raised in or near the Elgin Valley and were motivated by the material poverty of their surroundings to pursue work in the development sector. The college environment promotes the enthusiastic expression of this purpose, with the director and the project leaders creating opportunities to interact

with the community as well as receiving unsolicited requests to lead projects from outside donors. At times, however, it can all be too much.

“Sometimes it’s a problem, frustrating, and sometimes it’s challenging, because the organisation is very dynamic, almost organic, it changes weekly with regard to priorities and deadlines with things that come to the college or E.L.F. [Elgin Learning Foundation] that we never even thought of, that is [sic] just arriving on our plate...there’s not a lot of structure” (*ibid*:74).

This description of the college environment suggests shift tolerance is *too* great at times in the local context. Without some kind of manageable rhythm to the work schedule and an adequate structure for handling numerous project requests, the college runs the risk of opening leaders to levels of interdependent shifting for which they are unprepared.

The college director is well-aware of the phenomenon as it relates to himself, but does not acknowledge in his interview that it may be deleterious or frustrating to staff.

“So it’s dangerous for me at the moment. Personally. One needs space to reflect, to integrate, to evaluate, to re-plan, re-strategise on a continuous basis. But that needs time and space that is not available at the moment, so I get back to running by the seat of my pants again” (*ibid*:48).

In this honest appraisal of his management approach, the director exposes a practically unlimited scope for shifting processes at the college. Mark’s example for the other project leaders at the E.C.C.—running by the seat of his pants—demonstrates that conscious awareness of development practise is not a main concern. That he does not prioritise continuous reflection on lessons learned at the college perhaps explains why the reflection inspired by the interview process came as a revelation to many staff.

Over half the project leaders allude to time pressures, but do not make any explicit correlation of these pressures or constraints to the quality of their interactions with project beneficiaries. Rather, the window of reflection opened by the interview itself reveals that there may be value in pausing to assess one’s performance and motivation.

“This interview makes you think, makes you actually see what the importance is for you to be here. I mean, you sit in your office, you do your job, but you don’t always get the chance to sit, like sitting here talking with you, but just let your mind go and see what you are dealing with. ...Reflection will help you, put you on a path, I would say, on how you are

actually going to turn the negative into positive, or how you are actually going to deal with certain situations” (*ibid*:69;71).

“Talking to you made me realise that I at the moment might be a bit of a jack of all trades here, and I’m doing a lot of things and I might not be doing all those things well. Due to the nature of the beast, we are called upon to be multi-skilled, all of us actually, and we’re in that process of getting there” (*ibid*:74).

In their respective interviews, Nita and Veronica awaken to an understanding that reflection of this nature can be useful. It gives them the space to conceptualise their work at the college from different perspectives and to evaluate their contributions with beneficiaries. Actively managing and reflecting on interdependent shifting processes can help calibrate shift tolerance to a comfortable and workable level, for both the project leader and the beneficiaries.

Reflective practise is the first dimension of shift tolerance at the level of the organisation. When systematic reflection on experiences and lessons learned with project beneficiaries is prioritised by a development organisation, central questions relating to strategic planning and effectiveness can be addressed. When systematic reflection is not in place, however, it results in frustration, stress, and uncertainty for leaders. Interviews suggest staff at the E.C.C. wish for a work rhythm or structure that provides opportunities for reflection, believing it would improve their understanding of their roles and impact at the college. This translates into raising the quality of interdependent shifting as the strengthening of the leadership axis can positively influence the beneficiary axis.

The concept of collegial support is another dimension of shift tolerance at the organisational level. With staff working together toward a common goal, an enabling environment is created where project leaders feel safe to make mistakes, learn from each other, take initiative, and assume responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. In other words, the local context is one that allows leaders to really lead their projects and determine how to interact with beneficiaries most successfully.

The college’s enabling environment is so taken for granted that there is little mention of the professional hierarchy. For example, when explicit reference is made to the college director, it is in relation to his creative facilitation in a small business workshop (Naym), courage to give constructive feedback (Nicky), openness to career planning (Edwin), support of personal growth (Nita), and his connectedness to

principles of grassroots development (Veronica). Project leaders freely discuss their mistakes and insecurities and how their personal and professional development has been enhanced through their interactions with the director.

Perhaps the strongest testimony to Mark's leadership example comes from Veronica who struggled with the relevance of her work in education before coming to the college:

“[U.C.T.] is quite a refined environment, academically speaking, so maybe I felt there was something I was missing in my career, I'm not making much of a difference, I'm teaching a couple of students, going out to research centres. So when I came here I really felt *this is it*, especially since Mark has been here. Before that it was only a potential, a shell, to change people's lives. Ever since he's been here, it has really been happening...” (*ibid:75*).

With the director displaying an unusually high degree of shift tolerance, both in his interactions with staff and in his personal work ethic as noted earlier, project leaders are empowered to pursue steeper trajectories of shifting within themselves. Their increased confidence, in turn, increases the scope of their interactions with beneficiaries and inspires even greater shift tolerance.

It is notable that, while the local college environment reflects South Africa's multi-cultural diversity, there is only one reference to this in the data: as a “learning curve for everybody here” (*ibid:76*). Rather, the country's social context influences interdependent shifting through the way history is interwoven into the biographies of the project leaders, both as a limiting and as a motivating force.

Edwin was passionate about pharmacy as a teenager. His course of study had to shift due to national funding allocations:

“When I started with my B.Sc., I was more into pharmacy, to be a pharmacist. But due to financial, to bursary...because at the moment the State was only giving bursaries to teachers, I changed to education, but loved it ever since” (*ibid:34*).

Edwin taught as a high school science teacher for twelve years before his employment at the E.C.C. With the change in national government, he began pursuing a Master's degree in agriculture and initially joined the college staff in the agricultural department. Now he has project responsibilities with both the A.B.E.T. (adult basic education and training) and agricultural programmes, with future career plans that include working for the national department of agriculture. Though he is

pragmatic about the impact of government control over his earlier career choices, Edwin's dream remains unfulfilled:

"I've deviated from pharmacy, but that feeling when I started with my studies, the love for that is still there. But I've made up my mind, it is something I cannot do anything about anymore, a goal I cannot reach, so I set myself a new one now, to get into agriculture, but pharmacy is still there" (*ibid*).

Henry's path to the college serves as a counterpoint to Edwin's. Coming from an economically advantaged commercial farming family in Grabouw, Henry sought employment in social development when the deciduous fruit industry collapsed in the early 1990s. Bringing valuable business experience and a deep knowledge of agriculture, he realises he now has the opportunity to redress some of the social system's ill-effects:

"I'm having an incredible amount of fun, working harder than I've ever worked before because I'm doing what I should have been doing years ago, when I was in business [as a commercial farmer]: adding value to other persons, especially in the areas of assisting them to become financially independent through having their own business skills" (*ibid*:36).

The lives of Henry and Edwin were significantly affected by the national policy framework, but in very different ways. While racial classification initially limited each to certain socially acceptable life courses, they both demonstrate a high degree of shift tolerance with regard to their personal trajectories over time. They chose to respond to changes in the national context in such a way that their respective career paths brought them to the same point, the community college in Elgin.

A high degree of shift tolerance at the intra-personal level, however, does not necessarily translate into a similar degree of shift tolerance at the inter-personal level, that is, when interacting with development beneficiaries. Edwin's conservative conceptualisation of development as expert-driven renders his pedagogical approach equally conservative. His reluctance to engage deeply with clients reflects a low degree of tolerance for exploring unknown territory and possibly shifting into new levels of understanding and personal awareness.

Henry, on the other hand, gives staff and learners in the S.M.M.E. department at the college wide latitude to make and learn from their own mistakes. Conceptualising his work as "servant leadership," Henry believes the key to successful interaction with staff under his tutelage and beneficiaries in the various projects handled by the department is to "strike the balance," "allow them to lead you

so that you can lead them” (*ibid*:37). He celebrates “being an agent, being a part of allowing that opportunity to discover who they are. To learn is most rewarding.” Coming into this job at a time when many commercial farmers are considering retirement, Henry exhibits a remarkable degree of shift tolerance as he navigates a new career located within a new national context.

South Africa’s socio-economic context narrowed the parameters within which Edwin and Henry developed in their early education and careers, but ultimately influences them in very different ways in processes of interdependent shifting, as evidenced by their divergent approaches and responses to learners at the college. In addition to limiting individual choice, the national policy context also serves to motivate leaders’ professional choices, that is, to work with people living in rural areas who still experience physical hardship, psychological oppression or economic disadvantage of some kind.

For some project leaders from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, the desire to work in social development relates directly to their own experiences under apartheid. They feel compelled to share their insights and experiences with others. Keith, for example, is astonished by what he calls his “tunnel vision,” when he “didn’t even know about apartheid”:

“I’ve been a second grade citizen for 20 years of my life. I understand people working on farms are like robots, being told what to do, what not to do, to just do the job. I would love for them to be transformed from being told what to do. It becomes very emotional for me because I’ve been there” (*ibid*:43).

Keith’s defining moment came as an undergraduate student at the University of the Western Cape when he had to pass two “white” universities each day. He began to question his own identity in relation to racial separation and white authority. After reaching career prominence in agricultural management and viticulture for Anglo-American, Keith’s questions led him back to rural communities to work with black and coloured emerging farmers. He discovered, however, that the average farmer “can’t see he is oppressed at the moment...he still clings to, is loyal to, almost like a slave to his master, to his employer” (*ibid*:44). Keith’s challenge is to help them become “first grade citizens, proud of themselves” through intensive agricultural learnerships.

Mercy's motivation to work with small business development at the college also stems from her personal experience of apartheid. Following her parents to the apple orchards of Elgin, she gained her teaching certification and now feels "obliged to change peoples' lives, not only by giving skills, but by changing their mentality, from who they are to the future person or the brighter person" (*ibid*:50):

"I'm coming from the Eastern Cape, from very poor rural areas where they're waiting for their family to send money to them. There is no work, there is no hope that there will *be* work. Everyone is moving to urban areas. My thinking is you can make money wherever you are; if you have knowledge and skills, you have power" (*ibid*:51).

Like Keith, Mercy is positively motivated by South Africa's harsh socio-economic realities to engage in development processes with college learners. A junior staff member, she exhibits openness to learning from adult learners who attend her business training sessions. An example of this is her central role in designing and facilitating the participatory action research implemented during the first phase of this study. When the linen project participants easily grasped the P.A.R. workshop's purpose, enthusiastically participated, and later promoted the exercises with their peer group, Mercy readily conceded her earlier scepticism was unnecessary (see Chapter 3).

In South Africa, the national social context directly influences choices leaders in development make in their professional careers. By virtue of the decision to enter challenging developmental processes of interdependent shifting, shift tolerance is demonstrated. When leaders seek to test their own personal assumptions regarding "poor" people's capabilities and to work through their frustrations with project beneficiaries, shift tolerance is found in large measure.

All but one of the previously disadvantaged project leaders at the college spontaneously reflected on how the apartheid system impacted his or her personal and professional development. Two of the three white project leaders also mention the pivotal role the social system played in their lives, but again in very different ways. While Mark participated in the liberation movement, Veronica moved with her family to Namibia to get away from the increasing tensions in South Africa.

Mark's deep sense of responsibility prompted him to give up a successful corporate career in the automotive industry to move into non-governmental social development:

“I think as a white person in post-apartheid South African society, having been conscientised and educated by black activists and allowed into the process of building a new South Africa, I find just being given that chance is something I don’t want to respond to lightly. ...I find the disparity between lives in disadvantaged communities and lives in advantaged communities something I just can’t accept, I have to do something about it” (*ibid*:46).

Veronica wants to experience for herself the country’s socio-economic realities:

“So I think that is actually what I was looking for when I came here, to get down to the real South Africa from which I’ve been isolated for quite a long time. Some days I feel that God, do I really want to go into this? It is very depressing; I’ve got this major guilt thing. I was a mature person in the apartheid years before we left [for Namibia], and I just lived my life without doing much about it” (*ibid*:76).

Apartheid South Africa motivated Veronica to move away from the country; post-apartheid South Africa motivated her to do precisely the opposite, to move as close as possible to fellow citizens for the first time in her life. Though initially having a limiting influence on her life and identity, the national context later had a motivating influence. Veronica decided to take up a new career and to “reinvent” herself, perhaps exhibiting the greatest shift tolerance in the study.

Shift tolerance is a key indicator for the process of interdependent shifting. As the degree of shift tolerance increases, leaders expand their capacity to interact with beneficiaries to achieve a variety of personal and social development goals. If the degree of shift tolerance is too great, it can manifest as a lack of structure or rhythm in organisational processes, and is exacerbated when periodic reflection is not systematised. When the degree of shift tolerance is low, leaders curb interdependent shifting processes; the possibilities for optimising personal or professional growth, for beneficiaries and for themselves, are diminished. As there is no evidence for a leader demonstrating very little or no shift tolerance, it may be assumed that individuals without some degree of shift tolerance do not gravitate to leadership positions in social development.

The dimensions of shift tolerance inhabit three conceptual levels: interpersonal, organisational, and national. At the interpersonal level, leaders’ conceptualisations of development inform their attitudes toward beneficiaries and their pedagogical approaches. When leaders conceptualise development as expert-driven, they move away from learner-centred facilitation methods and restrict interactions with beneficiaries. When leaders conceptualise development as

reciprocal relationship where both participating units lead and learn in the process, they are more apt to follow a model of learner- or people-centred development and expand opportunities for interdependent shifting.

At the organisational level, absence of systematic reflection on organisational structure and dynamics can result in leaders becoming frustrated or unfocused which may have negative repercussions for interdependent shifting. This is mitigated when the organisational environment is an enabling one where project leaders feel safe to make and learn from mistakes and can speak openly with the director. When the local environment is conducive to personal and professional growth, the quality of interdependent shifting increases.

At the national level, policy frameworks and socio-economic conditions influence choices that leaders make regarding their education and subsequent career paths. While during the apartheid years in South Africa these conditions disadvantaged coloured and black leaders and advantaged white leaders, both groups were motivated by their respective experiences to enter challenging careers in social development. Thus, when considering the broader social context within which leaders live and work to understand the aptitude for interdependent shifting, the determining factor is choice. Leaders' constructive responses to their social milieu, whether that is experienced or interpreted as positive or negative, is indicative of greater shift tolerance, and consequently greater success in processes of interdependent shifting.

Personal choice highlights the existence of a fourth conceptual level at which shift tolerance manifests, that is, the intrapersonal context. Relationship with self filters through as an implicit theme in the project leaders' interview dialogues. In my provisional theory, I have conceptualised this level as plotting identity coordinates, the second main property elaborating the core variable of interdependent shifting.

### *C. Elaborating the Core Phenomenon of Interdependent Shifting: Plotting Identity Coordinates*

Identity coordinates are the markers by which leaders subjectively conceptualise change within themselves. Because personal development, like social development, is a perpetual process, plotting existential shift points allows leaders to make sense of ever-changing circumstances as identity evolves. When leaders isolate pivotal moments or stages in their own personal growth and development, they

temporarily surface processes that are happening—mainly unconsciously—to enlarge on or to refine their overt self-conceptualisation. In this way, leaders not only assert emerging personal characteristics or new choices, they also track the changing course of their life stories. This, in turn, influences the dyadic relationship between leaders and beneficiaries as well as the quality of interdependent shifting processes.

There are two primary ways to understand identity coordinates: as before and after stages, and as transformation thresholds. Whereas before and after stages delineate and make coherent two or more periods in leaders' personal and professional development, transformation thresholds crystallise specific moments or experiences that are particularly powerful in propelling leaders along a given trajectory. Often a personal crisis becomes, or precipitates the crossing of, a transformation threshold. Both kinds of identity coordinates are retrospective in nature and employ time to enhance meaning and understanding in leaders' lives.

Identity coordinates highlighting before and after stages manifest in leaders' internal and external realities. For some leaders, an attitudinal change or shift in philosophical orientation precedes and prompts a career change; for others, professional changes or challenges stimulate new thinking about themselves and their beliefs. The transition from one stage to the next is usually gradual. Only on reflection do the project leaders realise that there has been substantive personal change or growth.

Naym, for example, experiences the transition as becoming more himself:

“I’m opening myself. It’s been for the last three to four years that I’ve changed my attitude. It is now almost like a weight that is lifted off myself, I can just be me, I don’t have to pretend to be something, and that influences the process of facilitation *big time*” (*ibid*:58).

In accepting that he doesn’t have to be “the man” (*ibid*:55) or “all-knowing” (*ibid*:56) or the “witty guy” (*ibid*:58), Naym is now opening himself to learning from others. As a consequence, his professional orientation has changed dramatically, from a vertical, authoritarian association with learners to a relatively horizontal, mutually transformative relationship. But for Naym it is “not just the methodology, it’s the way you think and the way you see life, the way you see people” (*ibid*:55). His professional goal now is to give people the tools to realise their individuality, “to give them enough to be independent, or interdependent” (*ibid*).

Naym's corresponding personal journey reflects this new proclivity for seeing people and life differently. In his interview, he relates various incidents that propelled him more squarely into the "after" stage of his personal transformation. One, in particular, prompted deep questioning of his values:

"In Somerset West, I was on my way to work one morning, it was raining, and here was a guy in the back of the bakkie in front of me. I was not in a good mood. I have a car, a house, a refrigerator, and here I sit being angry and in a bad mood while the rain is dropping in his face and he is *laughing* with his friend! I thought to myself that *he* should be feeling like me, he is probably on his way to a building site, where he'll be out in the rain...and I'm going to my office where it's comfortable with a heater. So, why am I not happy like him? And those are the things that really raised the question of what was important for me" (*ibid*:60).

Acknowledging personal change "didn't happen overnight" and that he needed to remind himself of "certain things" as he moved away from old thinking patterns (*ibid*:59), Naym emphasises the gradual nature of plotting new identity coordinates. His own before and after developmental stages give him a new perspective on project beneficiaries and the process of interdependent shifting at the college. Citing Paulo Freire's tenet that "transformation is not something you can do for someone else" (*ibid*:56)," Naym respects that different clients will experience the development process in myriad ways over various periods of time, as he has done. The one-size-fits-all model of social development has no place in Naym's new way of moving through the world.

Other project leaders at the E.C.C. also reference major developmental shifts in their own personal and professional lives. Like Naym, Mark's passage to a new stage was girded by deep questioning of his fundamental life purpose:

"I was in a successful corporate position and amongst many other things, there was a recurring question and vision that took me to the end of life, to the end of my life, to the point of death, and made me turn around at that point, and the recurring question was, and still is, 'What do you want to see?'" (*ibid*:49).

Deciding he wanted to see "a change in the world," Mark eventually left his corporate career to embark on a path of social development. After entering the Anglican ministry and serving in the Cape Flats as a pastor, he began yet a new stage in his life trajectory when taking on the director's position at the community college in Elgin. While he remains passionate about wanting to change the world, Mark believes he

must accept the “second prize,” a smaller vision of himself as a “pebble in a pond” that “somehow...does have an impact” (*ibid*:47).

Mark’s career choices reflect a changing internal identity as he repositions himself vis-à-vis the external world. Clearly demarcating significant life stages, his identity coordinates swing widely from successful corporate executive to humble community servant, from a man driven by financial gain to a man driven by a need to eradicate “poverty and all forms of oppression” (*ibid*:48). Interactions with college staff and beneficiaries are deeply influenced by these new identity coordinates. With staff, he allows them to “pretty much run with their own agendas...to achieve their potential” (*ibid*:47). With community members, Mark sees his strengths as “energising, challenging, and encouraging them” to achieve their dreams (*ibid*). The deep identity shifts within him, that is, within the axis of the project leader, have a direct bearing on the interdependent shifting taking place in the realm of social development.

The before and after stages articulated by Veronica and Henry correspond with South Africa’s new dispensation after 1994. After returning from Namibia and deciding not to “just be again in some sort of cotton-wool situation” and “to see if I fit into the real South African environment” (*ibid*:76), Veronica used her experience supporting disadvantaged students in the university setting as a stepping stone to working with rural communities in the Elgin Valley. Her professional choice was motivated by a desire to confront her personal history as a white Afrikaans-speaking person in apartheid South Africa:

“My children asked me how could I not do or say anything. I say to them, ‘The brainwashing was complete, in school, church, because Afrikaners are very bound to the Calvinist, conservative background, through your parents and family, through the norms.’ So that is all I can say” (*ibid*).

Consciously moving into a new stage of her personal growth and development, Veronica’s overt strategy has been to “reinvent myself and unlearn” (*ibid*:75). Pointing out that she is the oldest member of staff and encounters a lot of ageism in South Africa, she nevertheless speaks positively about her new position at the college, specifically teaching modules for the agricultural learnerships and interacting with farm workers: “I really felt I learned more from teaching that group than all my years in lecturing in university...it really opened my mind to the potential of these people” (*ibid*).

Hence, one of the most challenging aspects of plotting a new identity coordinate for Veronica is fitting into the college's multi-cultural work environment:

“If you talk to a person like Dora in the kitchen, or Joy, there is such a lot to learn from those people and previously you wouldn't have actually spoken” (ibid:76).

Similarly, Henry ties his personal development to his interactions with colleagues and beneficiaries at the college. It is a daily process for him requiring sensitivity to and awareness of the way people are relating to him, including how he is greeted each morning on arrival to work (ibid:39). Coming to the college with no prior experience of social development, Henry is also having to reinvent himself, from being a white commercial farmer “baas” in the local community to being the mentor and small-business partner of those same community members.

Though, like Mark, the external career change was a dramatic one, Henry stresses that it is difficult to isolate specific turning points in the process of development, for himself and for others (ibid:37). Rather, it is an unpredictable, experiential flow where “you spot changes, you spot you do things differently, you react differently, you spot the mistakes you are making...are becoming less and less serious” (ibid:39). This gradation from negative experiences or ineffectual choices to less volatile and more skilfully executed work and social processes is how Henry tracks before-and-after stages in his personal growth and development.

Henry's identity stages are also mirrored in college learners' growth and development. Xhosa-speaking trainees selected for the E.C.C.'s large linen project, having the goal of manufacturing export-quality pillows and tablecloths, reflect Henry's own positive trajectory at the college:

“When they started in April last year, Mercy and I interviewed them. We asked them certain key questions: ‘What are your dreams? Where do you want to be in five years?’ A lot of them just cried, for a man to ask them where would you like to be in five years, an unthinkable question, and it just released a lot of pent up frustration, pent up tears, a lot of women just cried if you asked them. So you had these women—if I may use the word now, oppressed, relatively, from that environment, or repressed is probably a better word—just coming here, sitting here. You watch how the smile wrinkles start forming where they weren't beforehand. You watch a person lighten up, the expression changes, the personality changes, as they become more self-confident, learn more, become better in some of the skills” (ibid:39).

Henry's dream is to integrate his commercial thinking within a paradigm of people-centred development. This will ensure emerging farmers and rural communities have access to, and derive benefit from, local and international markets. On the other side of the equation, project beneficiaries must discover how to adapt and respond to a learning environment that values their dreams and potential to transform their life circumstances. In the process of interdependent shifting where plotting new identity coordinates helps to define developmental stages, Henry and the linen ladies work in symbiosis to move away from their respective, unfulfilling "before" stages toward their desired "after" stages.

Just as Henry uses his experiences with college learners to reflect on his own development, so too Nita's relationship with Molly, described above, shows how evolving identity is intimately linked with the process of interdependent shifting. Nita not only realises her own personal growth trajectory is similar to Molly's, she also reconceptualises her relationship with Molly from trainer-trainee to learning partner. Reflecting on how she has changed and grown while working in social development, Nita recalls her previous nail biting and hunched shoulders, her tendency to cry and get depressed (*ibid*:71). Through the opportunity afforded by the college to "deal with different people and learn to cope with certain things," however, she has transformed herself from a person who "was rrrrrr and now aaahhh," from a sensitive, unsure junior staff member to a competent, self-assured manager at the college (*ibid*). Like her colleagues, Nita defines her personal and professional development in terms of clear before and after stages, plotting new identity coordinates to measure and to mark her own progress.

Nita's story exemplifies the three key dimensions of before and after stages: fluid time, personal progress, and relating differently to others. Identity evolves gradually over time, similar to the ebb and flow of an ocean current. Rather than coming as a result of a plan or specific intention, a new stage in personal growth and development occurs when the force of the tide becomes inescapable and a new, usually positive change in identity arrives on the shore of awareness. On reflection, project leaders assign varying lengths of time to their before stages, but uniformly describe their after stages as an advance of some kind.

Progress can occur in leaders' internal and external realities and can take many forms. From the examples given by the Elgin staff, internal progress might be found in increased self-awareness, confidence or motivation, in discarding

undesirable attitudes or personality traits, and in greater understanding of development processes within themselves and others. External progress could be reflected in more meaningful employment or fulfilling career path, in greater capacity to facilitate development work, or to contextualise it practically within the broader social environment. There is no indication from the findings of this study that either internal or external change necessarily occurs first. A progressive shift in one reality influences the other, in whatever order it may happen.

Finally, before and after stages can be dimensionalised by the new ways in which a leader relates to others, particularly college learners and project beneficiaries. In all instances, leaders note improved ability to communicate and interact, reassessing the gap between perceived educational or cultural differences and finding greater possibilities for interdependent shifting. When identity coordinates are repositioned to allow for more common ground between leaders and project beneficiaries, development processes unfold in unanticipated directions and life stories enlarge to contain experiences of relationship that lead to further personal and professional growth.

Whereas retrospective formulation of developmental stages is the primary tool with which project leaders construct meaningful life stories out of fundamental identity shifts, transformation thresholds serve to isolate vital moments or experiences that propel leaders along a given trajectory. Transition from one developmental stage to another happens over a number of years, specific examples given by project leaders ranging from eighteen months to four years. Conversely, transformation thresholds are crossed definitively, the experience frozen in time, even if the actual crossing is not instantaneous. Usually, it is not.

While it may be logical to assume that the transformation threshold caps one developmental stage and precedes another, this does not emerge from the interviews. Rather, transformation thresholds work as catalysts *within* a developmental stage, crystallising a key facet of identity and clarifying the path ahead. The current developmental stage continues to evolve until thinking or life circumstances change substantially and a new, distinct phase begins in the leader's life.

Once the threshold is crossed, there seems to be no return to an earlier self-conceptualisation, perhaps because crossing a transformation threshold is usually prompted by a personal upheaval or a psychological trauma. Without being asked a specific question about personal or professional crises, all leaders interviewed for this

study mentioned various kinds of crises or transformative experiences. Six of the project leaders overtly address these experiences; the remaining three leaders make oblique or passing references in order to elucidate a different point. Not surprisingly, many of these transformation thresholds have surfaced in earlier parts of this paper.

For both Mercy and Veronica, the transformation threshold was a physical relocation. Mercy left behind a background in rural Eastern Cape where “there is no work, there is no hope that there will be work” (*ibid*:51). Her move to the Western Cape signalled an opportunity to break free not only from environmental constraints, but from psychological ones as well. She completed her teaching certificate in Adult Basic Education and Training and quickly found employment at the community college in Elgin where “now that I’m in the field doing it, my mind has changed totally from the way I was in the school, in college” (*ibid*). Though the move itself was a major catalyst for Mercy’s personal and professional development, it was only a few years later that she identifies the beginning of a new way of thinking and new stage in her life.

Similarly, the impact on Veronica’s life of her move to Namibia is plainly revealed in the interview: from the point she begins speaking of this experience, the interview becomes deeply personal and no further prompts are necessary to stimulate reflection. Relocating to Namibia is a pivotal experience in Veronica’s life, not only literally reflecting a move away from her South African home and personal roots, but also symbolising a significant psychological step toward a new identity now being refined years later in the Elgin fires.

Naym shares a number of small and large edifying experiences that he uses to plot the course of his evolving identity. From the labourer on the back of the bakkie laughing with a friend on a wet, wintry day, to learning “from a man who left school in Standard 3” (*ibid*:55), from instructive and sometimes emotionally painful exercises put to him by a psychologist (*ibid*:58-59), to a child the same age as his own son living in a flooded squatter camp “with a bare bum, bare feet and running nose and he looked *happy*” (*ibid*), Naym tracks his own growth and development through diverse transformation thresholds. These various turning points challenged Naym’s assumptions about the purpose and meaning of his life, prompting him to question his life trajectory:

“So if you think that [a warm house, clothes, car] is supposed to be life, all those nice things, then so many people don’t have it. And where do you, how do you measure happiness anyway? Do you measure it with material stuff? And I realised not” (*ibid:59*).

In opening himself to this kind of reflection on his beliefs and values, Naym not only shows awareness of how his external environment is impacting his thinking, but also demonstrates how these crystallised moments, when taken together, can result in a significant shift in life orientation.

Naym’s own personal and professional growth directly influences the process of interdependent shifting with college beneficiaries. When discussing the reasons why he chose to leave a high school teaching position to enter a career in social development at the E.C.C., Naym stresses that Freire’s concept of conscientisation, or “conscious awareness” as he himself prefers to call it, is the only way people can find some form of genuine satisfaction in life. Education and development, for Naym, are about giving people the tools to take responsibility for their lives and to change their environment (*ibid:56*).

“But then the crossroad came: do I go into I.T. [information technology] full-time? I like computers, I love working with it; if I can spend my whole day working with it I will. But then the question is: Who is going to benefit out of it? Especially in Grabouw, because I was born here, I see too much poverty, suffering and pain, and I just can’t ignore that. And it’s true, I’ve experienced it” (*ibid:59*).

Wanting to create opportunities for college learners to experience transformative development processes toward greater “conscious awareness,” Naym highlights the fundamental role of identity coordinates in tracking and measuring development’s evolutionary spiral.

For other leaders at the E.C.C., transformation thresholds are experienced more specifically as crises. For Keith, it was passing “white” universities every day on his way to college and realising as a 20-year-old that he was a “second-class citizen” in his own country. For Mark, it was visualising his own physical demise and discovering that his profession held no meaning for him. For Edwin, it was confronting obstacles to academic funding imposed by apartheid policy and being forced to abandon his passion for pharmacy. For Henry, it was experiencing South Africa’s devastating economic downturn in the deciduous fruit industry and having to move away from a family tradition of commercial farming in the Elgin Valley. These

crises were critical turning points for each leader. After they crossed the transformation threshold, a significant facet of their identities had changed and their lived realities would no longer be the same.

While Nita and Nicky do not specify the nature of their personal crises, each makes reference to difficult psychological situations. Not wanting to “go into detail about where I came from,” Nita alludes to wanting to be a social worker in school, but being unable “due to factors,” being looked down upon based on her circumstances, and working with a “person who would try to crack you down” (*ibid*:69-71). She views her employment at the community college as a “stepping stone,” the point at which she became aware that she could leave that painful past behind and seize the “opportunity...and run with it, like I am going to allow you to run with it, to the best of your ability, and go with it” (*ibid*:72). Four years later, she acknowledges that she indeed has “grown in terms of the kind of person I am now and I became a stronger person” (*ibid*:71). Nita began the process of forging this new identity coordinate when she crossed the transformation threshold offered by employment at the college.

Of all leaders interviewed, Nicky most explicitly discusses the usefulness of exploring personal crises, her own and others’ (*ibid*:63). As the head of the E.C.C. Health Department, Nicky is responsible for training programme staff in this area and facilitating community workshops. Apart from saying that a crisis “feels as if you are sitting in a very deep, dark hole,” however, Nicky does not reveal a particular experience in her life that serves as a transformative threshold for her evolving identity. Rather, she conceptualises transformation thresholds generally as “changing the negative into positive, to be honest with yourself” (*ibid*:62), because “there might be a little light, and always when there is a light, there is hope, and a future” (*ibid*:63). The transformation threshold for Nicky is where resistance to change is abandoned and the acceptance of an altered personal reality is put into practise.

The leaders at the E.C.C. make it remarkably clear that transformation thresholds are an integral part of development. The crises and pivotal experiences they elaborate play a critical role in determining their own career paths, influencing their philosophical and pedagogical orientations, and refining their sense of what development really means. For most, increased compassion or empathy for others appears to result directly from their transformative experiences. For themselves and for the clients with whom they interact, therefore, consciously plotting new identity

coordinates when crossing transformation thresholds is an essential step in measuring developmental progress.

In summary, transformation thresholds have three defining features or dimensions: they are time-bound, they involve a crisis or personal upheaval, and they require a choice to change. A transformation threshold is a temporal marker indicating the point from which a major change in perception or identity occurs. Frozen in time, the transformation threshold becomes a point of no return, that is, the change to the leader's identity or awareness is so significant that no return to the former state is possible. Whereas successive before and after stages can be understood as distinct identity periods comprising a lifetime, transformation thresholds can be understood as the prime events within those periods that inform leaders how to navigate the ongoing process of intra-personal development and interdependent shifting.

Personal crisis or upheaval infuses the leaders' transformation thresholds. Associated with intensely disturbing or challenging circumstances that force leaders to change a basic facet of identity, transformation thresholds are usually painful experiences and become etched deeply in the memory. As a result, leaders begin to alter or move differently along their own life trajectory, constructing new meaning for familiar phenomena and changing the nature of their participation in interdependent shifting processes.

While the emotional and psychological trauma linked with personal crisis may place serious pressure on leaders to change an aspect of identity, they will only be able to cross the transformation threshold if a corresponding change in perception or awareness also occurs. In other words, while the opportunity to experience a transformation threshold may arise with difficult or painful circumstances, the actual crossing requires a conscious choice by the individual to do so. Though leaders suggest they are not always fully aware of the longer-term consequences of these choices, they nonetheless opt to embark on a new, less certain path, to "reinvent" themselves without the benefit of a known mould. Perhaps this is why they want to encourage college beneficiaries to do the same, to risk following their dreams and to dare seek a different future:

"It's a challenging thing because you can influence the person to change, but it is his or her choice to change" (*ibid*:50).

As this research shows, Mercy's simple statement applies equally to leaders at the E.C.C.

That project leaders are continuously adopting and refining new identity coordinates suggests that their relationships with themselves are an inextricable, and largely underestimated, part of the tapestry of social development. Whether through gradually moving through different life stages or through choosing to cross transformation thresholds, leaders greatly influence processes of interdependent shifting as they themselves grow and change.

This provisional theory for leadership in social development conceptualises identity coordinates and shift tolerance as the primary levers with which leaders guide and impact development project implementation. My analysis suggests this is happening largely unconsciously. A leader may be aware, to varying degrees, of changes in his or her own perceptions and understanding, motivations and goals, but the direct connection between the evolution of the *intra*-personal relationship, that is, the relationship with self, to the interdependent shifting processes that constitute social development is mainly absent. This may explain why data collected for this study reveal two clear axes of shifting in social development, that is, project leaders and beneficiaries, but does not provide much insight into the nature of the actual interrelationship: how shifting is practically operationalised, between those two axes.

To demonstrate how shifting within the leadership axis is conceptualised in this provisional theory, I have created the diagram below (see Page 89). The diagram shows that project leaders and beneficiaries in development occupy two, vertically oriented, parallel lines moving in regular increments toward each other. Progressively narrowing horizontal lines running between leaders and beneficiaries represent the process of interdependent shifting where shift tolerance must be greater as relationship between project leaders and beneficiaries becomes closer. This also correlates with an ability to tolerate more intense *intra*-personal growth and development on the part of the project leader.

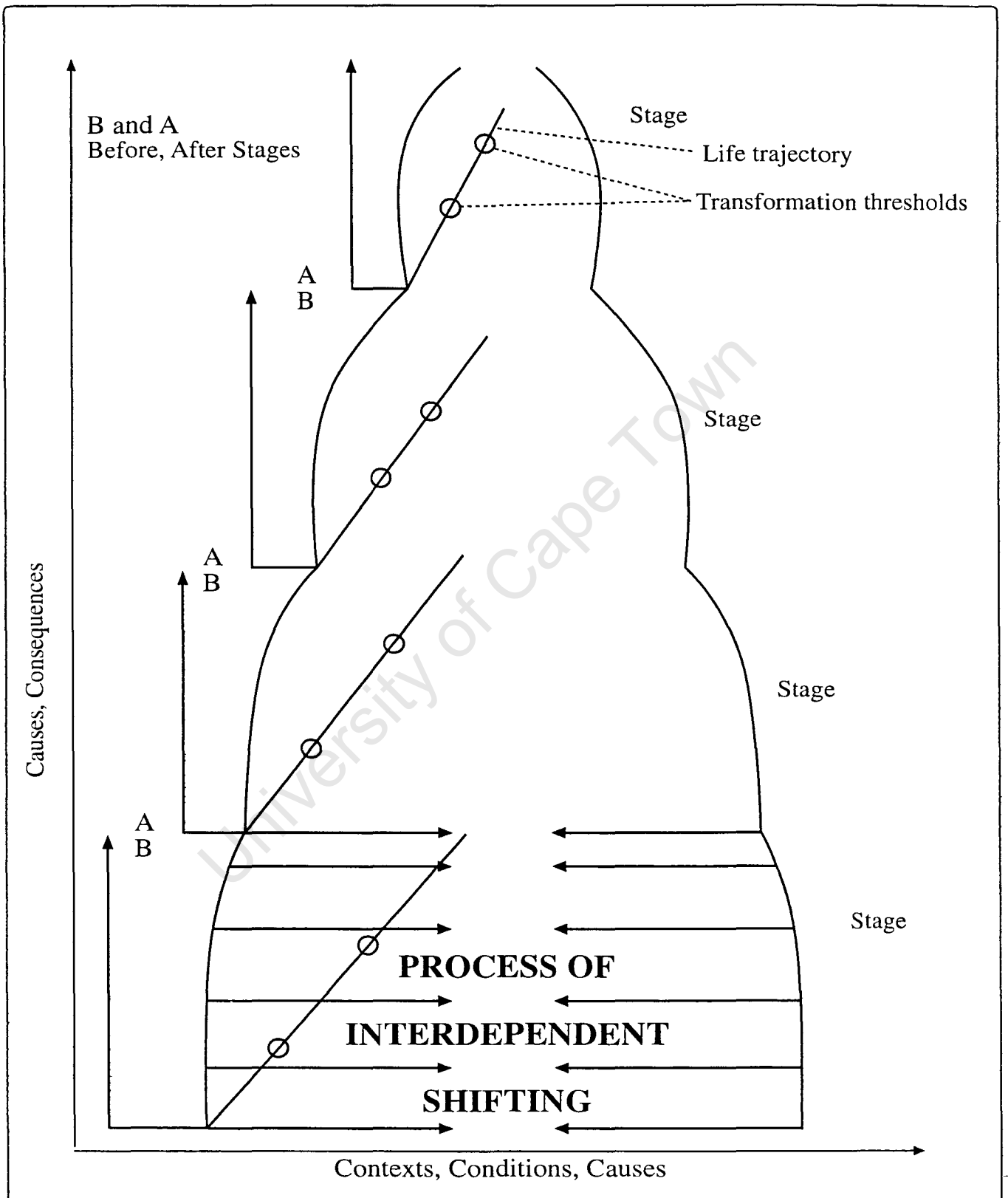
The diagram also depicts different stages of interdependent shifting demarcated by before (B) and after (A) identity coordinates. With each successful transition made between before and after stages, leaders progress toward their own goals and alter the way they interact with project beneficiaries. The life trajectory is kept in forward motion by the crossing of transformation thresholds, shown as points plotted on a diagonal line positioned at a 45-degree angle at the first stage of the

project leader axis. As the project leader moves through before and after life stages and transformation thresholds, he or she more consciously embraces processes of interdependent shifting and the life trajectory becomes steeper.

The x- and y-axes framing the model correlate to the various causes, conditions, and consequences of interdependent shifting. The x-axis embodies both cause and consequence. The cause here can be a steady move over time to new self-expression or some kind of personal crisis that prompts the project leader to change an aspect of his or her identity, to plot a new coordinate of self-awareness while facilitating social development processes. The consequence is a better understanding of self and other, that is, a relative opening of relationship with project beneficiaries to mutual transformation, and movement toward improved quality of life for both.

The y-axis represents the interpersonal, organisational and national contexts in which interdependent shifting occurs. From these contexts, the various conditions that impact on development processes arise. As discussed above, these conditions include a project leader's conceptualisation of development and related pedagogical approaches, the degrees to which collegial support creates an enabling local environment and systematic reflection is prioritised, and in what ways national policy frameworks and socio-economic factors either foster or frustrate personal and professional goals. In some circumstances, these conditions may also serve as causes, or catalysts, that spark different patterns of interdependent shifting between development leaders and beneficiaries.

In the next chapter, I contextualise my provisional theory in a review of relevant development literature, focusing primarily on the work of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef and South African development practitioner Allan Kaplan. Both authors claim interdependence should characterise working relationships formed to promote genuine development, but engage the concept of interdependence in very different ways in their theories. I explore how their ideas can bring greater understanding to my own analysis. I also suggest that the process of interdependent shifting outlined above actually takes the work of Kaplan and Max-Neef, as well as the ideas of Chambers, Long, and Stirrat, a step further in focusing more explicitly on the personal growth of project leaders in social development.



Graphic illustration: Process of Interdependent Shifting

## **VI. The Analysis in Context: Exploring the Concept of Interdependence in the Development Literature**

The idea of phased progress, and the related concepts of dependence and independence, is common to theories of development. Modernisation theory, for example, suggests dependent, “developing” countries must move through consecutive stages of economic growth before achieving “take off,” or independence from “developed” countries (Rostow 1964). This idea overtly influenced economic and social policy formation in the decades following World War II when the United States was enthusiastically implementing the Marshall Plan. It was assumed by most international development organisations and many “first world” governments that huge transfers of technology and skills and massive capital infusions would create the road “developing” countries must travel to reach independence. Rather than constructing a superhighway to economic independence, however, policies and programmes guided by modernisation theory have driven many “developing” countries more deeply into debt and socio-economic crisis.

While investigating the history of international development policy and programme implementation is well beyond the scope of this paper, the enduring concepts of dependence and independence provide the point of departure for the following literature review. Drawing from the work of Chambers, Kaplan, and Max-Neef, I contextualise my provisional theory for leadership within a brief discussion of current thinking on these concepts, and their synthesis: interdependence. I conclude the chapter by summarising the modest contributions my research makes to existing development literature and social development.

### *A. Chambers: Role Reversals*

The answer to the problem of dependence, according to some development thinkers, is to reverse power relations between so-called experts from “developed” countries and the poor of “developing” countries. Chambers, for example, turned traditional development practise on its head in the 1980s when he advocated “putting the last first,” thus championing the superior local knowledge and experience of developing rural communities when formulating long-term growth strategies (1983). As mentioned above in Chapter 2, he believes this vertical role change between dominant “uppers” and marginal “lowers” is actually more important than the

methods used to advance development processes and limits the role of the external project consultant to one of convening meetings, initiating projects, and facilitating implementation (1995:38). The desired outcome is former project leaders depending on beneficiaries for most components of the development cycle, including “appraisal, analysis, planning, experimenting, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation” (*ibid*:37).

What Chambers proposes with his framework for participatory development would require, according to my provisional theory for leadership, an extremely high degree of shift tolerance within the dominant “uppers,” or external project leaders. While he implicitly recognises a key dimension of gauging shift tolerance, that is, a pedagogical approach valuing beneficiaries’ prior knowledge and experience, he does not address the fundamental intrapersonal shifts necessary for project leaders to make a major role reversal possible. Instead, he maintains that project leaders—“uppers”—will not find it too difficult to give up their traditional dominance in development because of the “many satisfactions and non-material rewards” that ensue (*ibid*:42). This idea also finds no support in my provisional theory: the ability and choice to plot new identity coordinates usually come as a result of deep personal or professional crisis. Not only does Chambers underestimate the importance of shift tolerance and identity coordinates, he misses the inherent interdependent shifting taking place at all times in development processes between project leaders and beneficiaries, whatever their orientation to the polarities of power might be.

Long and Stirrat also focus on power relations between development practitioners and beneficiaries. They suggest a less extreme, but no less challenging, approach to moving beneficiaries in “developing” countries from a position of dependence on international assistance to one of independence and authentic participation in development programmes. To do this, project leaders must carefully analyse, negotiate, and adapt horizontal interactions between development actors. For Long, this will lead to the “transformation of meaning” required in the social development field (2001:64); for Stirrat, to bridging the asymmetries of power between the “west” and the “rest” (2000:31). Accenting the horizontal association between development practitioners and their clients and the value of a mutual negotiation of meaning as a project unfolds, Long and Stirrat move closer than Chambers to acknowledging the interdependent nature of the development relationship, but do not characterise it as such. They also fail to consider leader-

beneficiary interactions in light of the powerful intrapersonal processes that, according to my provisional theory, inevitably impact the direction and quality of social development.

Rather, the perspectives of Chambers, Long and Stirrat regarding dependency focus on the external professional behaviours of project leaders and foreign consultants in order to equalise or maximise the involvement, and guarantee the empowerment, of local community counterparts as they evolve toward independence. In starker words, the development process is characterised by the powerful, independent project leader and the powerless, dependent beneficiary trying to reverse their positions or to negotiate a new developmental space where both can be powerful and independent. While their ideas have challenged the traditional, expert-driven development paradigm and have increased awareness of the importance of power dynamics in a project, they have limited relevance to my conceptualisation of leadership in development as a process of managing interdependent shifting.

#### *B. Allan Kaplan: Dependence, Independence and Interdependence*

Allan Kaplan, a well-known interrogator of traditional development thinking and practice in South Africa, also bases his work on the concept of development phases. Unlike Chambers, Long and Stirrat, however, he focuses on interdependence as the goal toward which development practitioners should be moving when working with individuals and organisations. Whereas dependence reflects a relatively unconscious, uncritical acceptance of the status quo and independence reflects movement toward greater personal power, task differentiation, and critical consciousness, interdependence, for Kaplan, means integration of the two (1996:81):

“Subsequent development phases incorporate previous ones rather than rejecting them. Interdependence cannot be achieved without moving through, and retaining—albeit in a transformed state—the phases of dependence and independence” (*ibid*:21).

Kaplan further describes interdependence as “a form of three-fold thinking” that requires the ability to “stay awake, alive, supple and creative” (*ibid*:81), preventing the development facilitator from falling back into the previous polarities of dependence and independence (*ibid*:78). Ultimately, however, the state of interdependent consciousness cannot be maintained. Life continues to present

obstacles that challenge habitual patterns of thinking and behaving, sparking the development impulse toward even greater consciousness (*ibid*:29):

“We can never maintain a state of interdependence; we move back to dependence, reassert our independence, achieve interdependence once more. And while we may have attained a particular phase of development in one sphere of life, we are at different phases in others” (*ibid*:21).

Development processes, for Kaplan, are progressive as well as discontinuous. The job of the development leader is to assist individuals and organisations in increasing their power and consciousness (*ibid*:102).

There are three fundamental similarities in Kaplan’s thinking and my provisional theory for leadership in development. First, Kaplan acknowledges that successful development facilitation requires leaders to maintain a high degree of reflexivity, an openness to assessing their own personal development vis-à-vis the processes they guide. This requirement he calls “disciplined flexibility” (*ibid*:102). Though he does not explain how the skill of “honest self-reflection” is cultivated to break down boundaries between developmental phases (*ibid*:56), he does assert that “self-development processes are the most important form of practitioner training” (*ibid*:120). This idea relates to my analysis in two ways: it underscores the dual foci of development processes, that is, on beneficiaries and leaders, and it speaks to the first dimension of gauging shift tolerance at the level of the organisation. When reflective practise is systematically prioritised by a development organisation, the strengthening of the leadership axis can positively influence the beneficiary axis, thus increasing the quality of interdependent shifting (see above, p.70).

The role of crisis is the second parallel between Kaplan’s work and my own. We both argue that some kind of professional crisis or personal upheaval often lies behind a development actor’s choice to change. Leaders, clients, and organisations alike are motivated to explore alternative attitudes, behaviours and conceptualisations of development. Where Kaplan believes pain or conflict will move individuals and organisations into a *new* developmental phase (1996:20-21), however, I believe crises prompt the crossing of a transformation threshold *within* a developmental stage, crystallising a key facet of identity and clarifying a particular trajectory of personal development (see above, p.86). Transformation thresholds—defined by a time-bound crisis and the consequent personal choice to act—function together with evolving life

stages to encourage development leaders and beneficiaries to plot new identity coordinates, thus opening new personal spaces for interdependent shifting.

Finally, Kaplan maintains interdependent consciousness relies on holding creative tension (*ibid*:74). Without the tension inherent in the polarities—of dependence and independence, of freedom and responsibility, of individualism and collectivism, of principle and expedience—the phase of interdependence cannot be reached (*ibid*:82). This is similar to the idea of gauging shift tolerance, that is, identifying the degree to which leaders actively embrace dynamic interaction with project beneficiaries and learners. Both concepts, gauging shift tolerance and balancing the tension between seeming contradictions, are associated with the qualities of elasticity, open-mindedness, and creativity on the part of development practitioners. And both, when positively situated, permit greater latitude for facilitating development processes.

Surprisingly, it is with the core concept of interdependence itself that Kaplan and I diverge most widely. For Kaplan, it is a desired end-state of consciousness, a required intellectual orientation for facilitating useful development processes, something to be actively sought. For me, interdependence characterises the shifting patterns of interaction between leaders and beneficiaries *at all times*, and explains the nature of development itself. We both conclude that greater consciousness can lead to optimising development opportunities, that is, for realising some kind of qualitative improvement in life circumstances for both leaders and their clients. Yet, rather than Kaplan's progressive movement toward a new, enlightened stance on development, I propose that understanding processes of interdependent shifting is akin to removing the lid from the pot and observing its contents: whether or not we like or can recognise the taste, interdependence is the core ingredient of the development stew.

I believe our differing perspectives on the concept of interdependence are, for the most part, complementary rather than contradictory; it is a case of “and-and,” not “either-or” (Eyben 2000:13). I can now consider the various before and after stages illustrated in my interviews in light of Kaplan's dependence, independence, interdependence cycle, and perhaps Kaplan might explore how actively gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates with development leaders can foster habits of self-reflection and conscious development. Though our respective conceptualisations of interdependence are fundamentally different, there are enough similar applications to warrant deeper investigation into the current work produced by

Kaplan and the Community Development Resource Association (C.D.R.A., now known as the Centre for Development Practise), the South African N.G.O. founded by him in 1987 that works locally and globally with organisation development.

For example, the C.D.R.A. Annual Report from 1994/1995 states that relationships between development facilitators and clients:

“All to often...come to an end or decline at the point at which they should be changing. This happens because they cannot find the way of shifting relationship or the strategies which inform the relationship” (C.D.R.A. 1995:15)

The emphasis on dynamic shifting within development relationships corresponds with Kaplan's belief that, “People-centred development demands *interpenetration*...the development organisation must be open to being effected (sic) by those whom it hopes to affect” (1996:118, emphasis added). Similarly, in highlights of a development project Kaplan intersperses among the chapters of his *Development Practitioner's Handbook*, he also alludes to (what I would term) processes of interdependent shifting he himself experienced as a young community development worker in Wupperthal, an impoverished rural area in the Cedarberg Mountains 300 kilometres north of Cape Town. Though Kaplan explicitly uses the concept of interdependence differently, some awareness of continuous interdependent shifting in leader-beneficiary interactions seems to be present in his work.

### C. Max-Neef and Human Scale Development: Organic Articulations

With Human Scale Development, Max-Neef places the concept of interdependence at the centre of his theory, but does not employ the actual word. He explains the three pillars of development on a human scale:

“Such development is focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and on the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and technology, of global processes with local activity, of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy and of civil society with the state” (1991:8).

And where is interdependence? It is found in a footnote giving the meaning of “organic articulations” as “the construction of coherent and consistent relations of balanced interdependence among given elements” (*ibid*). Specifically, the articulation between personal development and social development underscores Max-

Neef's premise that a healthy society, while prioritising development of the "whole person," adopts comprehensive strategies to achieve both simultaneously (*ibid*:60). This contrasts sharply with prevailing development models of economic efficiency where the personal and the social realms are considered to be separate, if not incompatible.

While the organic articulations listed by Max-Neef do not speak directly to my conceptualisation of interdependent shifting between project leaders and beneficiaries, delving into the practical application of his theory reveals that the ongoing process of human needs' satisfaction strongly mirrors the processes outlined in my provisional theory. As reviewed briefly above (see Chapter 3), Max-Neef uses a new language to discuss development: human needs are finite and classifiable, fluidly and constantly shifting along the continuum of deprivation and potential, and are the same across all cultures and for all people; satisfiers of those needs, however, are different across cultures and change over time (*ibid*:18-28). He proposes that the relatively few fundamental, axiological needs (such as Subsistence, Protection, Freedom, Participation, Creation, Identity, Idleness, Understanding, Affection) must be understood according to their existential dimensions (that is, Being, Having, Doing, Interacting) in order to target appropriate satisfiers. With his Matrix of Needs and Satisfiers (*ibid*:32-33; see also Appendix C.), Max-Neef dramatically broadens the spectrum of approaches to social development and demonstrates how the constant interplay of needs and satisfiers directly addresses the symbiotic relationship between development leader and beneficiary.

Perhaps because Max-Neef's primary audience with Human Scale Development in the 1980s was Latin American national governments—he formulated the theory as an alternative to their heavily monetaristic economic policies—we are not given a clear picture from him what actual interdependence looks like between human beings on a daily basis. A functioning articulation between the micro and macro levels, he suggests, is built "from the bottom upwards": individuals, families, communities and smaller social groups will negotiate needs' satisfaction in a more democratic, efficient, and less bureaucratic way. In the context of my analysis of leadership in development—as a process of managing the interdependent shifting taking place at all times with project beneficiaries and clients—this translates into increasing consciousness of what exactly is shifting. This includes understanding the

different ways and means of satisfying shared, fundamental needs, and an increasing ability to facilitate the process.

Two examples drawn from the Matrix of Needs and Satisfiers will serve to illustrate its applicability to my hypotheses. First, the fundamental need for Identity is isolated as one of the few that all humans possess. This need can be existentially dimensionalised as a sense of belonging and self-esteem (Being); language, values, and norms (Having); knowing and actualising self (Doing); and social settings and maturation stages (Interacting) (*ibid*). There is clear, immediate correspondence here with the concept of shifting identity as leaders and beneficiaries move through life phases and cross transformation thresholds. But, more generally, identity encompasses the various relative points of satisfaction of *all* the fundamental human needs along the deprivation-potential continuum. As the satisfaction status of single or multiple needs shifts, leaders and beneficiaries plot different identity coordinates, thus propelling development trajectories in particular directions. In other words, because identity comprises the varying degrees to which all needs are being realised, interdependent shifting—at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels—can be conceived as a joint effort to move this process toward an improved life quality, however the individuals define that for themselves and from whatever point they elect to start.

Improving one's quality of life is inherently a transformative process and is the aim of development according to this paper's definition and to the theory of Human Scale Development (*ibid*:16). Not only does a specific need or aspect of a need move further away from deprivation and toward potential on Max-Neef's continuum, a corresponding shift in consciousness occurs. This is the second significant parallel between Human Scale Development and processes of interdependent shifting. Max-Neef states the ultimate aim of Human Scale Development is "to generate transformation through greater self-reliance, conceived as horizontal interdependence at local, regional and national levels (*ibid*:58). Self-reliance is not projected as autonomy or independence, but an increasing awareness that mutually participative needs' satisfaction, or interdependent shifting, is the crux of personal and social development. The existential category of Interaction, which functions simultaneously across all nine fundamental human needs, further emphasises the shared, reciprocal nature of development processes. As I have outlined in my analysis, leaders becoming more consciousness of their own

empowering development processes are more inclined to recognize and to nurture the same development potential in clients.

Max-Neef's perspective, though dipping into local realities to breathe life into his theory for development on a human scale, is a global one. He reminds us that, like every living system, "societies are increasingly interconnected and interdependent in everything that is positive and everything that is negative" (*ibid*:110). So why does global poverty, both in the material sense and with fundamental needs' satisfaction moving toward deprivation generally, continue to increase? In a word, stupidity:

"...due to the human attribute of stupidity, we fail to take advantage of the conditions of interdependence and interconnectedness to give solidarity a chance to display its synergic possibilities for overcoming our grave predicament. We still seem to favour the economic efficiency of greed and the political dynamics of paranoia" (*ibid*).

Like Kaplan's call for "honest self-reflection" and my suggestion that systematic reflection by leaders and within development organisations leads to greater latitude for interdependent shifting to take place, Max-Neef also stresses the importance of building the capacity for reflection (*ibid*). However, he stops short of suggesting (1) that individuals reflect on and negotiate synergic needs' satisfaction with each other, or (2) that before social development projects begin, leaders assess their own needs and how they may or may not be satisfied with the processes initiated. While he advocates for the highest possible levels of consciousness and introspection with his transdisciplinary theory for development, Max-Neef leaves to his readers the practical challenge of connecting a broad human needs' matrix to the actual personal and professional strategies leaders, and beneficiaries, can use to meet the demands of their personal and social development.

#### *D. Taking the Next Step: Interdependent Shifting*

This is the modest contribution of my provisional theory for leadership in development: understanding the phenomenon of interdependent shifting and its primary levers, gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates, will help project leaders move toward greater specificity regarding *how* to increase the consciousness of process in social development. Bringing the necessary focus to interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships acknowledges that processes of

interdependent shifting constitute the core of development. Debating the merits of authoritarian, trickle-down development or of grass roots, bottom-up development misses the point that some kind of development is already occurring in interactions at every level, regardless of the nature of the political system, the success of a country's economic policy, or its philosophy guiding development efforts. The defining element, therefore, is conscious awareness of this opportunity and how to exploit its potential to improve quality of life.

Leaders who are aware of their own developmental progress through evaluating their personal histories are more inclined to recognise a similar process and potential in their clients than those leaders whose focus is predominantly on changing the beneficiary or learner. If a leader's overt self-conceptualisation has improved through the experiences of before and after life stages or through choosing to cross difficult transformation thresholds, then he or she has some awareness—even if not fully coherent—that plotting new identity coordinates is possible for everyone, including those whose lives are to be changed. As the tolerance for interdependent dialogue, development, and change grows, leaders are more likely to step back consciously from their traditional positions of dominance and assume a more horizontal, interactive relationship with colleagues and project beneficiaries. When shift tolerance is low, however, leaders remain locked in an illusory paradigm of separation. They fail to realise that every contact within a development project is part of a continuous process of “realizing, experiencing or actualising needs through time and space” (Max-Neef 1991:24).

For the tremendous positive potential of development projects to be unleashed, project leaders must champion, articulate, and translate processes of interdependent shifting. By champion, I mean leaders must be forthright with themselves, their colleagues, and their clients about their own personal development needs and agendas. In this way, the fluid reality of interdependent shifting becomes a conscious, open process characterised by mutually agreed, and mutually reinforcing, objectives. By articulate, I suggest that leaders begin to learn a new language, one that specifically serves the phenomenon of interdependent shifting and its two primary mechanisms, gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates. That my interviews with the E.C.C. project leaders was a rare occasion to reflect about themselves and their work suggests that opportunities are sorely lacking for learning to perceive and to express what is “really happening” behind project inputs and

impact, deliverables and deadlines. Finally, by translate I mean that leaders explore the myriad ways the properties of gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates can be dimensionalised to bring greater awareness to interdependent shifting processes. While I have explained a number of dimensions that emerged from my case study in Elgin, there are undoubtedly many others that will provide traction for development processes to move forward in a more transparent, cooperative, and, perhaps most importantly, realistic way.

The common denominator of these recommendations, surfacing from my analysis of leadership in development, is the leader's continuously expanding consciousness of process, both as necessary ingredient prior to launching a development project and as sought-after goal. Systematic reflection is the only way to maintain a critical consciousness. On this point, Kaplan, Max-Neef and I concur.

University of Cape Town

## VII. Theory and Practise: Pinning Down Leadership in Development

To conclude this dissertation, I offer final thoughts on how the emerging theory demystifies some of the difficulty and uncertainty surrounding leadership in development. In showing how this theory constructively participates in an ongoing quest to improve human management of complex social processes, I hope to have accomplished the goal I set for myself with this research: to contribute some understanding to how the challenges facing leaders in various development contexts might be addressed.

In keeping with the importance of systematic reflection, I also consider some ways to strengthen the provisional theory that has emerged from my research thus far. I discuss how I am currently taking the research forward in order to confirm my hypotheses, as well as to fill gaps in my understanding of interdependent shifting processes. Interviewing a wider sample of leaders in development beyond the boundaries of the Western Cape Province is proposed.

### A. *Concluding Thoughts*

“I think I would want to stay true to the vision we...came up with and that is that we try to change lives through education and service in—and we work in—poor and disadvantaged communities. ...We as an organisation try to improve life for them, but ultimately for us all, quality of life” (Appendix B.1.:46).”

Attempting to explain his work at the Elgin Community College, the director unconsciously employs the concept of interdependence. Successfully improving quality of life for everyone—project leaders and beneficiaries—requires greater consciousness about the potential change processes to which these co-participants submit when interacting in the development arena. More specifically, if leaders acknowledge and embrace development’s inherent opportunities for interpersonal and intrapersonal progress, new formulae for viable working relationships may result. This, in turn, may remove some of the mystery surrounding “what makes development work,” and bring broader social development objectives within easier reach.

Leadership in development seems so elusive because development is indeed a constantly moving target inhabiting a transitional space. When development is

characterised as incessant, largely unconscious interpersonal shifting between—and intrapersonal shifting within—leaders and beneficiaries, the interdependent nature of the development relationship is quickly appreciated. Improving quality of life “ultimately for us all” is built on a very particular foundation, a foundation composed of multitudinous, interdependent development relationships and experiences where the actors strive to fulfil more of their potential. The scope of people-centred development expands to include the project leaders and consultants *working* in development as well as the targeted project beneficiaries. This may explain why, even when the development industry is demonstrably failing to achieve its stated aims worldwide, development seems not only “to persist, but...continuously to be expanding its reach and scope” (Crush 1995:4). Perhaps, as Crush suggests, what development “says it is doing, and what we believe it to be doing, are simply not what is actually happening” (*ibid*).

In gauging their shift tolerance—determining how, and the degree to which, they actively embrace dynamic interaction with project beneficiaries and learners—leaders can measure an increasing openness, flexibility, and creativity within themselves and in their relationships. An inclination to embrace the dynamics of interdependent shifting, rather than to control and maintain traditional models of leader-beneficiary interaction, suggests the fullest spectrum of desirable growth and change can be accessed in the development project.

In plotting new identity coordinates—defining pivotal moments or stages in their own personal growth and development to enlarge their overt self-conceptualisation—leaders make the development process tangible. Purposeful recognition of the incremental changes happening within themselves and in their interpersonal relationships highlights an increasing awareness of the ongoing, immediate, often painful nature of development.

In turn, leaders can actively encourage project beneficiaries in these same processes, consciously opening the door to horizontal relationship and learning; to transparent, meaningful dialogue about intrapersonal processes impacting, and often impeding, improved quality of life; and to continued progress toward development aims long after the project is over. The chronic frustration surrounding lack of sustainability in many social development initiatives suggests that something fundamental is being overlooked. Could it be that the interdependent shifting experienced by leaders and beneficiaries, and not the project itself, is actually the

“privileged particle of the development process”? (Hirschman 1967, in Porter 1991:96).

The core phenomenon of interdependent shifting not only explains patterns in development processes used and experienced by project leaders: interdependent shifting itself is a dimension of the difficulties leaders face and accounts for variation in their problematic behaviour within the development context (Glaser 1992:96-97). Understanding how the process of interdependent shifting is inextricably woven into the fabric of social development sheds light on a number of questions related to my research: Why is development nebulous? Why are the dynamics of leaders’ performances considered so complex? Why do leaders themselves have difficulty explaining what they do? Greater consciousness of the intrapersonal and interpersonal development processes outlined in my emerging theory, therefore, seems to be a prerequisite for leaders in social development if they want to positively guide and accurately assess efforts to improve quality of life.

Just as Dewey’s criticism of traditional education was not its focus on the objective part of that reality, but on its inattention to the internal factors influencing students’ experience in education (Dewey 1938), I have discovered that the problem with leadership in development lies not with the mandate to meet stated development goals with the communities served. Rather, what undermines successful leadership in development is incomprehension that the quality of relationship with targeted beneficiaries is the first, and most important, criterion in facilitating development processes. In order for any relationship to be viable, in social development and in all realms of human endeavour, genuine self-knowledge must be present. If improving quality of life can be interpreted as the inevitable progression toward realising human potential, then self-knowledge must be actively sought and consciously tested throughout a lifetime.

Social development, and the broader discipline of sociology within which I have oriented my study, enjoy a legacy of critical inquiry, the relevance of which still inspires today. Whether it be Dewey’s call for the dynamic principles of interaction and continuity to meet in “intelligent activity” to guide social processes (*ibid*:69), or Mills’ logic that sociologists develop a certain “quality of mind” to understand what is happening in the world and within themselves (Mills 1959:5), the underlying message relates to assuming responsibility for improving the plight of humankind. This is precisely what leaders in development have chosen to do. And this is why my

research aims to improve social development practise, and to continue expanding the sociological imagination.

### *B. Moving Forward with the Theory*

Because development purports to be focused on “others”—project beneficiaries, the impoverished in “developing” countries, disadvantaged communities, people who are “dependent” in some way—I had the unacknowledged expectation that my interviews with project leaders primarily would be about those “others,” or about associated project outcomes. The core phenomenon that emerged, however, found leaders at the centre of development processes, engaging with their learners and clients in a compelling, if not perfectly understood, dyadic relationship.

To ascertain whether this phenomenon was particular to the Elgin Community College, and perhaps arose because the college does not prioritise systematic organisational and personal reflection, I undertook additional interviews with the C.D.R.A. in April 2005. This organisation is well known in South African development circles, and increasingly with international development agencies, for dedicating one week of every month to critical reflection and internal development exercises. Called “home week,” this period constitutes the core of a reflective, professional development practise advocated by C.D.R.A. to its own clients (C.D.R.A. 2004:8-9).

While the language used by the six leaders, or project consultants, at C.D.R.A. to describe and explain their work is generally more sophisticated than that of their Elgin counterparts, the substance of their interviews corroborated the viability of my provisional theory. Preliminary analysis of this new data set suggests I have correctly isolated the two main properties of interdependent shifting, gauging shift tolerance and plotting identity coordinates, but need to crystallise further how they are dimensionalised and articulated in various development contexts.

Perhaps more importantly, all C.D.R.A. project leaders gave considerable, unsolicited thought to *development relationship*. Their greater focus on concrete interactions between development leaders and clients confirms this critical hinge for interdependent shifting. In better understanding how interrelationships between the two development axes are practically operationalised, a gap in my research identified earlier (see Chapter 5), I can further develop the theory, fully saturating the core

category of interdependent shifting and strengthening the explanatory power of my hypotheses.

Moving firmly beyond the necessarily confined local context of a case study, I will now complete analysis of the C.D.R.A. interviews as well as undertake additional, more structured interviews with development leaders working in other provinces of South Africa and, resources permitting, internationally. I will use the Grounded Theory methods of theoretical sampling and selective coding to concentrate my inquiry specifically on the categories and properties of the emerging theory. To uncover other possible strategies in support of, as well as constraints to, leaders constructively exploiting the interdependent shifting processes inherent to their professional work, I must explore the larger national and international structures of development within which leadership agency is rooted. To help development research in general contribute to a new discourse for development, my own research agenda must strive to increase the “relevance, realism and choice” for those working in the social development field (Booth 1993:68).

To that end, I also intend to facilitate workshops with various groups of development leaders to ascertain the appropriateness and utility of the theory to their work experiences. Their feedback and suggestions for practical application will serve as invaluable inputs for refining my theory and for ensuring that the research subjects themselves have the opportunity to benefit from the research. Thus, I would hope to pass the “acid test” of participatory action research: ensuring the “subjects of the research...become more able to develop themselves as a result of participating in the exercise” (Edwards 1993:89).

This also is consistent with the tradition of “action science,” championed by Dewey and Lewin, Mills and Habermas. While I trust my theory is a worthy addition to scholarship in development studies generally, the great pressure on the social development sector to perform optimally demands that academic research targeting problems of leadership reach a broader audience. Using my theory to influence leader selection criteria, to reconceptualise training programmes for project leaders, and to support leaders with tools to improve their professional practise, I will move closer to making a substantial contribution to the working field of development. If a grounded theory’s credibility is “won by its integration, relevance and workability” (Glaser 1992:134), then its usefulness is measured by its uptake and use in the actual social group under observation.

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University of Cape Town

## **A.1. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH STAFF AT E.C.C.**

### **Friday, 4 October 2002 (11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.): First visit**

Bernie de Jongh, Programme Coordinator from I.D.T., asked me to accompany him to the Elgin Community College to talk about the development of the college's S.M.M.E. strategy and some challenges they are facing. A few months ago I told Bernie about my research in the S.M.M.E. sector under the Eastern Cape Spatial Development Initiative (S.D.I.) in 1997-98. I wasn't sure what exactly he had in mind with this introduction, but I was flattered by the invitation and looked forward to learning about development in the apple orchards of Elgin.

We left Cape Town at 10:30 and arrived for our scheduled meeting to discover that the director, Mark Walker, and staff had been delayed by prolonged training in Kleinmond. The director's secretary, Adrienne, tried to reach various staff members and the training organisers in Kleinmond via cell phone. While waiting, I spoke briefly to the local government "Gesondheit" staff member while helping her carry coffee pots and cups from her car to the large kitchen at the back of the college's main building. As part of a community outreach programme, she had arranged a tea in the community. Unfortunately, she was in a hurry so I was unable to find out much about this programme.

After Adrienne's unsuccessful efforts to find out when the staff were returning to the college, she gave us a brief tour, showing us the training rooms for the women's linen project and the carpentry shop where one trainee was busy making a lamp base from apple tree wood. The facilities presently used by the college were part of the fruit-producing estate--owned by Gerald and Hazel Wright and deeded to the community--as a hostel for the farm workers. The college buildings are in good condition and would seem to be an excellent venue for training. Rooms are large, airy and bright and have basic materials and equipment relating to the specific training needs, but nothing "luxurious," apart from the pool in the front yard. The ladies bathroom was not well-maintained and lacked paper products. The college was deserted save for the lone carpenter and the 2 administrative staff at the front desk.

Adrienne said she would ask Mark to phone us upon his return, which he did. His messages were waiting for us in Cape Town.

### **Saturday, 5 October 2002 (3:15 - 3:40 p.m.): Telephonic contact**

As agreed, Mark Walker phoned me at home to find out more about my development background and research interests. It was clear from the start that there were synergies between our approaches to development: Mark averred that last week's staff training at the Grail Centre in Kleinmond focused on people-centred development and was based on the work of Paulo Freire and Manfred Max-Neef. He then shared general information about the new orientation to small business project planning recently adopted by the college. The new strategy hinges primarily on first exploring potential and existing markets, then organising training courses to supply products in demand. He said this strategy was formulated out of the frustrations of the past year. Community members, after attending college training courses, were

unable to find jobs or create viable small businesses due to a lack of demand for their skills. Mark made various references to “learning from our mistakes” and “trying to develop a new paradigm” for development.

I must admit that this “new paradigm” was an irresistible hook for me. It was refreshing to speak to Mark, hear his enthusiasm about development (especially when so many practitioners are jaded), and learn that college staff are consciously wrestling with implementing principles of people-centred development. The rather odd experience of having driven all the way to Elgin for nothing on Friday faded and I confirmed to Mark that I would be willing to support the college’s new model for development in some way. He said interest in the college had been growing steadily and they did not need another researcher wanting “to do research on” the college, but one who would align with the college’s priorities: anything new coming in “must add value.” Mark said he would discuss this on Monday with his staff, mentioning Henry, Mercy, and Naym, get their ideas about specific issues we might explore, and call me that afternoon. If they agree, then I will come to the college on Tuesday morning. (Mark phoned on Monday afternoon to confirm our meeting for Tuesday.)

**Tuesday, 8 October 2002 (9:00 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.): Introductions and brainstorming**

My visit began with introductions to a number of staff in the office area, everyone very friendly, welcoming. They said they would test my memory of their names, so I was careful to remember each. I was taken to Mark’s office where he, Mercy and I spoke briefly about the linen project, then went over to the training area for the project to observe some of the samples of the work and speak in detail about the project. No introductions to local women were made. The women sitting around the tables did not express much interest in our being in the room, but were focused on their conversations, some women stitching fabric, and all waiting for the trainer to arrive. There seemed to be an “expectant” energy in the room

Mercy, the project coordinator for the linen project (one of 4 S.M.M.E. training programmes being run by the college), informed me that the 85 women chosen for the linen project come from the local community. Criteria for selection included unemployed, disadvantaged under Apartheid, mothers of school-aged children, and clear need. The women were all interviewed by Mercy; none came with sewing and painting experience. Most of the women are Xhosa-speakers (though the Elgin-Grabouw area is predominantly Afrikaans-speaking), having migrated from Eastern Cape in search of employment and/or to be with family. Some women have lived in the area for many years (and according to Mark some are second generation) depending on the seasonal fruit employment. Mercy said she is having to manage their expectations relating to income from the linen project because the stipend they receive monthly to attend the training is far less than what they can earn on the farms.

At 9:20, Mark, Mercy and I returned to Mark’s office. Other staff members joined us when their schedules allowed. Initially, Veronica was with us. She is working and studying at UCT and comes out to the college weekly to assist with the literacy programme, the library, and wherever her skills are needed. She has just begun her Ph.D. and wants to focus on ways community communication and information

structures impact on development. At 9:30, Henry and Naym joined the circle and discussion. Henry is the college's project manager with oversight responsibilities for S.M.M.E. development, and Naym is the coordinator for the woodworking project. Mercy had to leave for about 20 minutes for a meeting with a group of learners who had lost their homes recently in the devastating fire which had razed a total of 2000 homes. The group discussion lasted approximately one hour, during which time we had tea. When the group dispersed at 10:40, Keith, coordinator of the agricultural training project, came to chat with me informally for about 20 minutes. His colleague on the project, Edwin, also came in briefly, but left to attend other business.

Mark explained the purpose of my visit and asked staff to brainstorm various ideas for a useful research "mini-project" for the college. He stated up front that he wanted Mercy to be involved with the research. I gave the staff a very brief orientation to my work in development and then focused on the utility of P.A.R., suggesting the best approach would be to consider an issue or problem they find particularly compelling so that the research could contribute directly to their work.

#### *Transcript of Group Discussion*

Mark: [Continuing the exchange regarding the linen project...] We're facing the historical background of damage done by Apartheid, of internalised oppression. Single parents who are unemployed for 6-8 months each year are in this situation. The challenge is to move this process of understanding very fast. We offer 12-18 months of development, economic opportunity, entrepreneurial skills so that they don't get sucked into desperate decisions. Desperate people make desperate decisions. For example, now it's harvest time and some women are talking about leaving because the pay is better on the farms. We're trying to encourage them to stick it out, consider a different future for themselves.

Kate: Is there a middle path?

Veronica: We need to work this into the equation.

Mercy: They do receive a monthly allowance, but they usually earn R300 per month picking fruit seasonally.

[Mark and Veronica disagreed with Mercy, saying no, this figure is too low, the minimum wage is about R400 per month. Mercy said this is based on her interviews with the women. Veronica asked whether this information from them is reliable.]

Veronica: There is a mix of cultures in the local community here; Mercy is working with Xhosa, Afrikaans and Sotho speakers

Mark: One way you could help us with S.M.M.E. is to help these women take a journey of 5 years into the future. I always, when starting a new project, ask people, "If you could dream, what would it be?" At the training in Kleinmond, we had an exercise based on the work of Freire called the River Code where basically we were asked, "What do we want on the other side of the river?"

Veronica: I would be very interested in the delivery of appropriate information for development. Where do they find information for everyday development needs and solutions (her area of Ph.D. research and interest).

Henry: The strategic plan is to start four S.M.M.E.s annually. This is a very conservative number as with a large project like the linen project, a number of spin-offs could happen quite rapidly. There are 4 core projects currently: wood working, linen (the largest), protective clothing, and pottery. Next year, we are identifying the possibilities of starting new S.M.M.E.s. Dutch students are investigating the potential for small business in tourism in the community (Marhil and Karin).

Naym: We meet with them (the students) every Monday and they report back to us their findings from the community. We are applying our "Listening Survey" skills learned from last week's training (general appreciative laughter).

Henry: We're doing big research on the production, distillation and marketing of essential oils and other natural products. [Mark gives examples of thyme, citrus, lavender, rosemary, etc., all of which grow in Grabouw.] Hakan (whom I met before the meeting) is finding market contacts on the Internet. This should be a partnership with our in-house agriculture department to use the growing of these plants to develop small farmers' skills and agricultural understanding. This will be linked into the nationally-accredited certification programme...we're the first to offer this.

Mark: Regarding import substitution, we are exploring the possibility of goose farming. Currently about 3.5 tons of feathers are imported from France to South Africa where they are stuffed into various products, such as anoraks. Basically we add the preliminary step of market research to a holistic approach to human development to create a new paradigm which proves to be successful where earlier attempts have failed. Through our failures, unless we radically alter our approach by fast-tracking the process of people becoming successful in small business, not being able to translate skills, in the main, into successful small business development...we're wanting to become well-known in this entrepreneurial thinking and in closing the loop...

[Mark gives the example of Mercy who is teaching English to local women through the A.B.E.T. programme. The trainees also receive health and hygiene training, specifically relating to H.I.V./A.I.D.S., through the Community Health Department. This education is given in schools and is home-based, and covers mental, physical, social and life skills.] Our dream is that our 4-5 departments are integrating this process for whole-person development. The fundamental business in the area is agriculture so it makes sense to start there, but without small business and entrepreneurial thinking, this won't go a long way.

Henry: We're providing a holistic service.

Mark: The economic aspect is the most important starting point, then we add value through other areas.

Naym: The bottom line is, if they don't have money or income, they lose hope.

Mercy: Switching minds is a long-term process.

Mark: [Gives the example of going with a staff member from the in-house agricultural department to the anorak factory and discussing with the owner the possibility of supplying feathers of high quality to his factory.] The owner responded, “I want to be part of the solution.” It would take 1 million geese to produce this amount of feathers annually, so it is no small operation. This requires a great deal of land which isn’t available at present. The land distribution issue is a critically important one (makes this point 3 times throughout session). I would like part of your dissertation to embrace this approach. [Looks to others for ideas, inputs.]

Henry: The Foundation for Contemporary Research (F.C.R.) is helping us with our markets for the apple wood products (shows me the lamp bases, they are rough, but beautiful, and a crude clothes peg board) and linen, to give us an idea of the marketing opportunities. They found that there are 40 suppliers importing and exporting similar products, of which 18 are focused on the home accessories market.

Kate: Is it possible to develop new markets? Would it be possible to target the lower income market in the country in order to increase distribution potential? Your products could replace the imported plastic variety one finds at Game and other large stores which would also have an environmental or ecological impact, removing plastic from the country, for example.

Henry: These are products targeted to the nouveau riche who like to have “different” products in their homes.

Kate: Developing cottage industries to encourage subsistence farmers to diversify, effectively multi-task the way many of us here (in the room) do in our lives.

Mark: Yes, we are exploring the idea of giving 2-3 pairs of geese to farmers to promote just this kind of cottage industry. An exciting thing is that we are registered as a “community learning centre” and are connected with 200 other centres across the province. The problem I’ve encountered through years of experience is that human beings find it difficult to grow without some external motivation. For example, farmers don’t connect to wanting to learn. We provide them an economic opportunity and then connect that with other types of learning. We give them a “reason to motivate.” Otherwise, the commitment won’t be there.

Henry: We disguise our shortcomings under “commitment” of the beneficiaries. We say we struggle to find a way to get them to make a commitment, and we’re shifting the blame to them. So it may not be a matter of their commitment, but of us learning from our mistakes.

Kate: So why aren’t they committed?

[There is a lively brief exchange as everyone wants to give an answer. They agree to each give an explanation.]

Henry: In many homes there is a male saying (to his wife), “Will you go and find some money or a job?” 70% of them are unemployed for 6 months of the years,

during the other 6 months there is a lot of work. It takes a tough person, a strong person not to slip out, to put money aside, to persevere. There may be a call for immediate cash, for school fees, books, Nikes, etc.

Naym: People (development practitioners) are not understanding the process. They come in at a certain level (stage) to get (community) people to buy in from day 1 not day 6 or 7. That's where you lose it. I was involved in planning for a school, thinking they should be glad to have this sort of thing. But I didn't get the commitment I expected. I am translating the lack of commitment as the lack of ownership.

Mark: I was attending an adult education course at U.C.T., a winter course, and we covered the steps of the development process: consciously unskilled, unconsciously skilled, consciously skilled, unconsciously unskilled. I'm sure you are familiar with this. It is the last one that is most problematic. The issue of consciousness, the Freirian principle regarding conscientisation. People are unconscious of solutions and the way the world works. Okay, I'm talking too much, but let me give you an example from my own experience.

[Mark described a training he facilitated with a group of women, asking them how did people live 6 million years ago. He moved them through time through a long, difficult process to relate to the modern exchange economy.] The "shutters began to open." It has to do with who I am, what I have. How I transact with the world around me through my skills and understanding. We assume people click with our understanding, but they are unconsciously unskilled. Life is complex. There is a whole host of integrated aspects interrelating. It's the postmodernist view of complexity. It may not be "complicated" because this has a negative connotation, but it is definitely complex.

Kate: Do the women have the view of life as complex?

Mark: Life IS intertwined. They don't perceive the same level of complexity, where they can integrate the complexities.

Kate: The crux is who can explain the way the world works.

Henry: Take for example my car servicing. This is a huge priority and concern for me, theirs may be "sugar for tonight." Both the intensity and complexity are the same.

Mark: The modern economy, globalisation, these things are complex.

Henry: Family and relationship, the extended family are extremely complex.

Mark: They may not be aware of it. I am an Anglican priest and do counseling. People come to me and I help them scratch the sand. For example, there is a lot of stuff connected to spouse abuse. The husband has personal issues contributing to the abusive situation, the woman just takes it, doesn't understand. Conscientization began in South Africa with the Steve Bikos of the world and moved to mobilization. Without this we would not have had reason to change.

Henry: It doesn't have to be politically motivated, but can focus on development (all agree).

**Mark: Our goal is to conscientize them a la Paulo Freire. The temptation for the research project is to explore the unconsciousness of process for people (my emphasis).**

Mercy: We want to change the people's minds to help them.

Mark: If they understand the way the world works, how their unemployed status and situation are related to their skills and knowledge, then we can move forward. So you and Mercy can take the ideas from here, see what you can do with it.

[The group interview ended at 10:40, with Henry and Naym leaving for other meetings and work. Mercy and I agreed to meet later in Mercy's office near the linen project training venue to discuss the direction of the research project. I asked Mark if there was some literature on the college and/or the projects which might be useful and he suggested I look at the training manual used in Kleinmond. He also gave me a copy of Max-Neef's "Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs" used at the training. He said general information about the college and projects is found in the college brochure (which I picked up on the first visit. Later I made a copy of a *Cape Times* article on the college posted on the bulletin board.) Naym then introduced me to Keith and Edwin working in the agricultural department, though I had met them earlier before the meeting started. Keith and I then struck up a conversation, abbreviated transcript follows:]

Keith: We offer 3 courses simultaneously, in irrigation, basic farm supervisor's training, and an 8-day course (through winter school) on the product cycle, from farm to marketing to delivery. Farm workers on commercial farms are permanent employees. Our current group doing a learnership is here full time for the whole year. The unemployed work alongside the people who are employed full time. I don't use a lecture style, but a problem solving one. I facilitate the process to let information come out in small groups, I re-cap and add on.

Kate: What sort of background prepares you to cover such a broad range of skills?

Keith: I come from the 1976 era. I was attending UWC studying for a teaching degree, but couldn't finish it...forced me to seek employment. I developed 2 passions: viticulture and oenology (science of wine making). So for 25 years I have worked on different commercial farms, from grassroot to managerial levels. I know what makes them tick because I've been there. I've done a lot of in-house training, paid by the company. I was production manager at Vergelegen, but they shifted me from production to human resources. 90% of the work was industrial relations, working with labour people, unions, doing wage negotiations. Another part of the HR job was doing training and development from 1995-1999. I also had to retrench 500 people when the chairman of Anglo-American decided to focus on the core business (wine making), exiting from fruit, livestock and cannery.

Kate: Since wine-making is your passion, why didn't you stay at Vergelegen?

Keith: The writing was on the wall. After going through all those staff retrenchments, I could see it was just a matter of time for me. There were others with great seniority and connections who would keep the few remaining jobs. So I've been here at the college for the last two years. The land reform issue is a critical one for us because what is the use of building agricultural opportunities for small farmers where there is no land? This is a major issue for South Africa... [Keith excused himself for a meeting and I remained in Mark's office to work on my research notes, elaborating the themes and points discussed over the previous 2+ hours.]

### *Planning with Mercy*

I went to Mercy's office at noon to exchange ideas about the S.M.M.E. research. Mercy had given some thought to the morning's discussion and said she would like to "workshop these people" (i.e., the women from the linen project) around team building, trust building, and how to build community. She suggested we would need to take about 3 hours from their "hard skills" training with Marie to do some of the exercises the staff had done in Kleinmond on the Training for Transformation. "I'm not going into details. If I take a problem-solving approach, as a facilitator I don't tell them what to do, but let them figure it out."

I asked her about the focus for the workshop, and she responded "sticking to the process" and "understanding the vision of where they want to be." This seemed to come directly from the staff training as she referred to some of the exercises they had done in Kleinmond, going into some detail about the "tree" activity (where learners draw a tree representing different facets of themselves and their lives, e.g., roots are values and beliefs, leaves are skills, fruits are achievement, etc.). She also wanted to review with them "the things they're not supposed to do" and to identify community norms and consequences for not following them.

We agreed that a manageable size for the group would be 8 women and Mercy felt she could handle a group that size, though she had never done an activity like this before. I suggested that we view this workshop as a "pilot," to determine what works and what doesn't, and to look at it as a first step in a longer-term process to "conscientize" the college community, per the morning's group discussion. The pilot will give us an idea how to apply and extend the staff training in Kleinmond. Mercy liked the idea of treating the workshop as a pilot, a term with which she was unfamiliar, and made a note to explain the concept to Mark. (This proved useful later when Mark said he wanted us to work with the entire group of 85!)

I asked Mercy to consider the best way to capture the feedback from the workshop. She said she assumed I would be taking notes. When I pointed out the language barrier, she said there was no one else in the college capable of speaking and writing Xhosa and that she would have to do. I asked her if there was someone from the local community with the skills that we could bring in to get some exposure to the type of development work we are doing and earn some money as well. The only person she knows with the ability to do this is a teacher in town who occasionally does work for the college in translating documents from English to Xhosa. She thinks he will be able to do the work because he is very bright and hardworking; I reminded her that the reporting function is a crucial one for us so that we can give full feedback to Mark and staff and that it is a skill requiring much practise to perfect. I suggested we have

a back-up system such as a cassette player just in case. Mercy agreed to make the necessary arrangements.

Mercy then shared some information about herself. She said she was acting as a translator for the white project trainer (applique and bead work) who is unable to communicate with the learners in Xhosa. In fact, Mercy is the only Xhosa-speaker on the staff at the college. Her mother is Xhosa-speaking and her father Sotho-speaking; they came to the Western Cape searching for employment and found jobs as seasonal workers on local fruit farms. She has a young daughter who views Mercy's mother as her own, rather than as a grandmother, and Mercy more as a friend or sister. Regarding her work at the college, Mercy says she dresses "appropriately" so as not to "put myself above them (the learners) though I am a trained teacher." She seemed keen to stress to me that she puts the learners first whenever she has a problem, rather than imposing her solutions and ideas, wanting them to be "self-reliant." "We need to recognise their shyness and priorities."

We reviewed the schedule for the coming 2 weeks to find the most suitable dates and times for planning and conducting the workshop. We agreed that I would return to the college on Friday morning after the staff meeting and we would spend the afternoon designing the workshop plan and facilitation guide. Mercy selected the following Tuesday morning for giving the workshop, though she said she will be extremely busy starting with a new project that week. We agreed that Mercy will brief Mark on what we had discussed and planned.

#### *Corridor chat with Naym*

When returning to Mark's office, I passed Naym in the corridor. He wanted to share a conversation he had with Henry during the training in Kleinmond which had bothered and perplexed him. Apparently, Henry had said to Naym that "70% of what is important in life is unseen." Naym could not comprehend how that was possible when everything we were doing at the college had some tangible, physical goal. And his personal life with his wife and family was clearly visible. So, what did I think? Because I was not anticipating a question of this nature, given the focus of the day's discussions, I responded intuitively by saying that, for me, 95% of what is important in life is unseen, and I hoped I wasn't really throwing Naym for a loop! He said he wasn't expecting that response and would I explain what this means. To pose the question differently, I asked him to consider the degree to which his identity, values and beliefs are found in his physical body and in the "things" he possesses. He said he didn't identify much at all with his body and started to understand what is meant by "unseen," but would have to think about it some more.

#### *Farewell and thanks to Mark*

When I stopped by Mark's office, he seemed to be having a tough day. He expressed his frustration at "spending 60% of my time on survival issues...the funding process is terrible. No project, if you're dealing with human beings, can work in a year" (the funding period). He also referred to political constraints at the local community level, giving the example of the local counselors because "the Council is now run by neo-liberal, white people." I asked him if that description would include us? Mark responded that it depends where your identity lies. He said, "Culturally and identity speaking, I would consider myself coloured." I made some encouraging remarks

about his current challenges and confirmed I would return on Friday to work with Mercy on the research plan.

University of Cape Town

## **A.2. PILOT WORKSHOP PLANNING SESSIONS WITH MERCY**

**Friday, 11 October 2002 (11:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.)**

*11:45 a.m. - 12:00 noon*

After arriving at the college, Mercy and I met with Mark in his office to confirm our schedule for the day and for next Tuesday, the date on which Mercy scheduled the workshop. Based on Mercy's briefing, Mark was satisfied with the direction we were taking with the "tree" and "community norms" exercises. He suggested we also include the "river code" activity they had used in the staff training in Kleinmond. Mercy expressed initial reservation based on time constraints, but said we would consider it.

*12:00 noon - 1:10 p.m.*

Working from Mercy's office, our initial dialogue focused on a "big problem" Mercy was having with the women from the second group because of the change in the training schedule. Rather than attending training four days each week, Monday - Thursday, Mercy had changed the schedule to include Fridays as well because of her concern that production goals for Nedcor would not be met. Although she had told the women at the beginning of the training that they were paid for 5 days of training (but gave them Fridays off initially), a number of women in the second group were very upset about this change, saying they had personal problems and couldn't come on Fridays.

Mercy and I discussed this for 45 minutes. She was disinclined to see why the women would resist this change since she made it so clear in the beginning of training that it may be necessary to work on Fridays again. I asked her if having that extra one day per week might contribute to the women's needs satisfaction in some way, considering Max-Neef's matrix of human needs and satisfiers she recently studied. For example, the needs of Leisure and Creation and possibly Participation in community activities might carry more importance for the learners than the fifth training day. Mercy at this point saw no need to move beyond a traditional view of the five-day work week.

Trying a different approach, I then gave the example of parents telling the children what time to go to bed, then allowing them to stay up later, then reinforcing the rule, and the difficulties around that. Mercy appreciated this concept, but still focused on how the women needed to "change their minds" about working, and how important it is that they understand production schedules and the realities of the working world. I elaborated on her earlier example saying that when parents and children participate together in the decision about the best time to go to bed, then children are more likely to "follow the rule" because they themselves had made it.

There was a sudden shift in Mercy when she remembered a profound experience she had earlier in the year where she had learned how important it was to involve the women in decision making processes. She proceeded to share an experience with the first training group. A small group of 6 women were selected to do bead work on pillows for the wife of the college director, Michelle, who wanted to sell them in New York. Mercy and Marie, the trainer, decided that no consultation with the women was necessary as everything had been arranged by Michelle. When the project ended,

Mercy followed Michelle's instructions and paid the women R20 each while the others looked on; later, the others came and asked why they weren't given the choice of participating. They insisted they should also be given some money since it was not by their choice they didn't work on the cushions. Mercy said she had learned a big lesson from this experience and understood how she should always consult the learners before making decisions.

After exploring this useful tangent--which served to make our commitment to the learners' needs paramount--the conversation turned back to the workshop preparations and Mercy suggested we might want to draw into our workshop people from other projects, like carpentry and pottery. We decided it may be easier to work with women from the linen project for the pilot workshop to get a sense of how they relate to the exercises. Then, if it goes well, we may broaden the group to introduce more diversity.

Mark had wondered during our brief meeting this morning whether we might also introduce the "river code" exercise from their training in Kleinmond. Mercy explained this exercise to me, illustrating the difference for development practitioners between being a "teacher" and being a "facilitator." (The "teacher" tries to carry the people across the river; the "facilitator" helps the people work together to get across the river using their own resources and wits.) On reflection, she thought this exercise did not have a place in the type of workshop we had conceptualised for the trainees at this point in their learning.

We exchanged ideas about ice breakers, mine asking each person to share a question you always wished someone would ask you, Mercy with apple in neck and writing their names with their bodies... We decided that the tree exercise itself was an ice breaker in that it was very personal and would encourage the participants to speak freely about themselves.

I asked Mercy how she thought we should select the 8 participants and explained the concept of random sampling (e.g., choosing every 10<sup>th</sup> women from the list of 85 linen project members) to remove any bias from our selection. Recalling her earlier story about the cushion project, I suggested she may prefer to have them volunteer. She said she would think about it and would decide on Monday after introducing the idea of the workshop to the group.

*1:10 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.*

Xolani joined us and we discussed the role of the recorder with him. He said he was very skilled in translation and note taking and would not have any problem with the workshop. Mercy said it was better taking notes in Xhosa, his home language, because he won't have the time to think of the best English translation while trying to capture everything said by the participants. In addition, Xhosa can't be shortened, so he would be obliged to right down exactly what they say. Xolani agreed this point, but said his written English is far stronger than his Xhosa and said he would be careful to capture everything in English. Mercy and Xolani argued this point for about 10 minutes, Mercy (without any prompting from me) insisting Xolani record a verbatim account of the participants' feedback. Xolani said he would do his best.

He then asked me if there was another day of the week when I could come for the workshop. I responded that Tuesday was the best day for me because I had the entire day free, but that I could also come out on Monday afternoon. Mercy said she had confirmed our Tuesday date with Xolani and said we will hold the workshop, as planned, on Tuesday. Xolani said he was scheduled to be in Cape Town for the week taking his driver's license lessons; I said I could be flexible, but Mercy was a bit irritated that Xolani wanted to change the date, and that she was unable to schedule the workshop for Monday. We agreed to meet at the College at 8:30 on Tuesday morning to organise ourselves and prepare the venue.

Before breaking for lunch, Mercy and Xolani reminisced about how they met at the college (being the only black professional staff) and how impressed Xolani was with Mercy's skill in all she does. Mercy told the story of when she first started at the college. She was the first black person ever hired on as staff, and had (low) expectations of how she was going to be treated. But rather than feeling at a "lower" status than the white and coloured staff, she felt like she was on an equal basis. All of the staff were very supportive and respectful of her. The only irritation she expressed was with the use of Afrikaans in meetings and conversations, which effectively blocks her participation. She said she must remind other staff often to switch to English.

*2:35 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

After lunch, Mercy and I resumed work on the workshop strategy and plan. I suggested she review for my benefit the "tree" and "community norms" exercises they covered in Kleinmond so that we could determine how they might be tailored to suit our workshop with the women. Mercy dug out her personal papers from the staff training to recall the various steps of the exercises. She gained increasing confidence as she presented the information to me, remembering how much she enjoyed the training herself and then imagining herself as the workshop facilitator rather than participant. When she moved to the "community norms" exercise, she started spontaneously translating the instructions and terms into Xhosa, using her English-Xhosa dictionary for some concepts she was not accustomed to, such as "norms" (*izithethe/imithetho/yasekuhlaleni*) and "blossoming" (*ukudubula*).

We then went methodically through each step of the two exercises, Mercy practising what she wanted to say and I writing this into the workshop plan, asking her for points of clarification, and sometimes making suggestions. Most of the content for the workshop came directly from Mercy and she was very quick in visualising how she wanted to interact with the women. Most of my observations focused on not needing to explain so overtly the purpose of the workshop and exercises or to be prescriptive, rather allowing the women to take the journey and discover for themselves what the exercises might mean. Mercy was receptive to this and the final workshop plan reflected a more learner-centred approach. We agreed to call the pilot workshop, "Ukudubula ko mthi," or "Blossoming of the tree," to reflect this process.

By Monday, 14 October, Mercy agreed to arrange the venue, collect papers, buy coloured pencils, choose the workshop participants from the training groups, and practise the facilitation guide.

We made copies of the plan for Mark's feedback and suggestions and for ourselves to rehearse over the weekend (see Workshop Facilitation Guide).

### A.3. “UKUDUBULA KO MTHI” WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDE

#### **Introductions** (10 minutes)

Good morning, Friends. How was your day yesterday? I wasn't here last week because the entire staff was on the Training for Transformation in Kleinmond. This training helped the staff at the College to support the new ways of development that we are busy with here. I was very excited about the information coming out of those sessions because I thought the information was quite fruitful and I wanted to share some of what we did with you and other learners. In a community, we share what we learn, isn't it? So, thank you for volunteering to take part in this workshop. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Please tell us your names and the reasons why you have come to E.C.C.

#### **Session I: Ingcambu zo mthi** (roots of the tree) (70 minutes)

Our first session today will allow us to show our talents by drawing something beautiful from nature, a tree. It will be an opportunity to express our creativity and share a bit about ourselves. I will explain how we do this as we go along. (Distribute paper and pencils; Kate keeps time at 4 minutes for each part of the tree, or 30 minutes in total)

##### *Roots=beliefs, values*

What are your most important personal beliefs and values (e.g. Mercy grew up believing in respecting elders, and in the ancestors)

##### *Trunk=reputation*

How does your home community view you? (e.g., Mercy likes people to think of her as a hard worker, helpful)

##### *Branches=connections with friends, church, hobbies; relationships with people and organisations*

What do you like to do in your free time and what kinds of people and groups do you associate with? (Mercy is a church goer and sings in the choir; hobbies would be reading and singing)

##### *Leaves=kind of work are you doing now, activities to help yourself and others*

What kind of work are you doing now (e.g., here at the E.C.C.)? Is there any way you help others in the community? (Mercy refers to her job here and she likes to empower unemployed women.)

##### *Buds=dreams*

What is your hope for yourself in the future? (Mercy would like to have her own business and get married.)

##### *Fruits=achievement*

What have you already achieved in your life that makes you proud of yourself? (Mercy finished her studies and got my driver's license.)

### *Facilitated Discussion*

Mercy will facilitate a discussion among the group around each of the six parts of the tree, asking for different group members to present what they specified at each level. She will ensure that all 8 ladies participate, even the shy ones. Then Mercy will ask for 1 or 2 volunteers to present their trees in entirety standing in front of the group. She will finish by asking the group to write at the top of the paper (a) what kind of tree they would like to be (e.g., apple, banana, pine tree, etc.) and (b) to say why.

### *Concluding Questions for Session I*

What did you discover about yourselves from this exercise?

What did you discover about each other from this exercise?

Do activities like this help build trust within the group? Why or why not?

### **Session II: Ukula ko mthi** (growing the tree) (60 minutes)

This second activity builds on the first. In other words, now that we have planted the roots of understanding a bit more about ourselves and each other, we are going to look at the environment in which the tree grows, or community. In this session we will briefly discuss what kind of community we would like to grow here at Elgin Community College. Would you please turn to your neighbour and work in pairs, so there will be 4 pairs of ladies sharing ideas about the norms (izithethe/imithetho/yasekuhlaleni) important to them. (Distribute paper and pencil to each group; give them 15 minutes to discuss.)

Mercy will facilitate the feedback session with the ladies, each group sharing the norms they agreed were most important. (Mercy will be writing the norms on the white board/flip chart.)

### *Concluding Questions for Session II*

What are the necessary ingredients/factors (sun, clean air, water, fertilizer) for ensuring that the entire Elgin Community College embraces these norms?

How would you recommend we as a community “root these norms in our ground”?

### **Closure: Thanks and workshop objective**

Why did we think this workshop would be interesting for you? We thought this would help us build trust among ourselves as a community, to know each other better, and to encourage everyone to take responsibility for creating the type of environment in which we are all learning together.

### *General feedback on the workshop*

How was this experience valuable to you?

Do you think we should invite other College members to participate in our **Ukudubula ko mthi** (blossoming of the tree) workshop?

#### **A.4. “UKUDUBULA KO MTHI” WORKSHOP TRANSCRIPT**

**Tuesday, 15 October 2002 (8:10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)**

Mercy and I discussed workshop preparations, how she had practised the facilitation guide in front of the mirror over the weekend, the help she received from her mother on some tricky expressions and words in Xhosa, and how she selected the group of participants. She said it worked very well asking for volunteers because 4 women from each of the 2 groups showed interest. This way the others won't feel that they were deprived of an opportunity, like they did when for the cushion-making project (reference Friday's notes).

Mercy started to organise herself to draw a large tree as an example for the participants to follow. Based on her experience at the training in Kleinmond, she believed they might not know where to begin with drawing a tree. I suggested that they may copy Mercy's tree out of a desire to please her rather than create their own, and expressed confidence in their abilities to draw a tree from their life experience. Mercy expressed some reluctance at this idea, saying that she and others felt hesitant at the staff training in Kleinmond to begin drawing their trees. She agreed, however, to see how the workshop participants would get on without an example.

Xolani did not arrive for our scheduled meeting at 8:30 a.m., so Mercy and I carried on preparing the workshop without him and arranged and tested the mini-cassette player as a back-up recording strategy. Mercy had already organised the necessary materials (papers, flipcharts, pencils, crayons, markers, press-stick) and we set up the training venue.

##### **Pilot Workshop: Ukudubula ko mthi (blossoming of the tree)**

The workshop began promptly at 9:00 with the ladies coming into the room. Mercy asked them to remove 2 tables from the group of tables in the training hall so that we could all sit closer together. The recorder, Xolani, still had not arrived and Mercy opened the workshop with formal greetings using the cassette player. Xolani came in at 9:05 and began taking notes, but very, very slowly. His notes will have to be supplemented with the recorded information.

Mercy's introduction: "How was your day yesterday? I am so happy for the fact that you volunteered yourselves to come to the workshop. Xolani is going to take notes. Whatever we are saying he will write down. Kate is going to observe. I will give you pencils, crayons, and papers and there is nothing much we need. The reason I am here is because I went to Kleinmond two weeks ago on a training for transformation. This means it is to influence a person to change to a good thing. I want to share this now immediately because if I wait I will forget about it. The training took about a week. I didn't have time immediately upon my return to share this with you, so we are doing it today. I hope there is understanding and cooperation between us, if you have questions please ask.

“We will have to introduce ourselves and explain why we are here at the college. I will begin by introducing myself in English and continue in Xhosa. My name is Mercy and I am here as a project coordinator at the college. This is Kate...”

Kate: “Hi, my name is Kate and I am a student in Cape Town trying to learn how to do research in communities. Mercy is helping me with this project and I want to thank all of you for helping me to understand how to work with communities.”

(Mercy translated in Xhosa.)

Xolani: “I am Xolani, and I am here at the college as a translator of documents from English to Xhosa.

Nobulele Ntenthó: “I am here because I don’t have a job.”

Thandiswa Zitha: “I am here to make linen.”

Nondumiso Padi: “I am here to learn linen making and am designing, embroidering, painting, and making flowers.”

Nontuthuzelo Balakisi: “I am here to learn about linen.”

Nomasamariya Sololo: “I have learned about painting and embroidery and I would like to learn more about speaking English.”

Julia Maphempeni: “I am here to learn sewing, make linen, design fabric, to do small business.”

Thandy Veleman: “I am here at the college to learn about linen, sewing, designing.”

Nomthe Myathaza: “I am here to learn painting, needlework, to make cushions, sheets and other interesting products here at the college.”

Mercy: “How do you feel after this introduction? Do you have any questions?”

Participant: “What is the meaning of ‘workshop’?” Thus the very first step with the learners at the workshop served to reveal to us that “we don’t know what we don’t know.” Both Mercy and I were clearly caught off guard by the question, though Mercy answered that it was an opportunity to share ideas, to learn and have some fun together.

### **Session I: Ingcambu zo mthi (roots of the tree)**

Mercy: “The first section will show you about your talents and how creative you are. We will start designing a tree. A tree is a very beautiful thing from nature. Kate is going to be our time keeper. We will draw a tree starting from the roots up to the fruits. So you will get about 4 minutes to describe each part of the tree.” Before Mercy had explained the specific steps to the exercise, about half of the women had begun to draw trees on their papers. They put down their pencils when Mercy explained the 6 parts of the tree, but immediately took them upon again when she had finished (after 10 minutes). They were eager to draw! They used the erasers a lot in the beginning, some because Mercy asked them to draw the tree on the paper turned vertically when they had started with the paper turned horizontally.

The women worked quietly and individually for 30 minutes. Mercy asked them if anyone needed help with any aspect of the tree or writing about themselves. They all said they were fine. After 5 more minutes, 2 women asked for further explanation about different parts of the tree, specifically about the meaning of the trunk (how people perceive you) and the leaves (how you help others, work you are doing now).

At 10:00, Mercy asked the ladies to share their trees with the group (a few women were not finished) by holding them up. In giving an example for drawing the trees, Mercy had specified the “normal” colours for the tree parts, which I thought might limit their choice of design, but this did not turn out to be the case. The trees were multi-coloured and some were quite abstract! They were all very beautiful and we applauded their efforts. Then, starting with the roots (values and beliefs), the ladies shared what they had written and drawn. We got through roots, trunk, and branches before going for a 15 minute coffee break at 10:15.

Mercy, Xolani and I looked at the trees when the ladies had left the room, remarking on the ladies’ creativity in expressing themselves. I pointed out that one lady had drawn a huge root system (values and beliefs) while another had drawn large blossoms (achievements) relative to the others. I asked them whether this might be a conscious or unconscious decision...

While in the kitchen during the break, Mercy and Xolani told me I should take the original drawings and give the copies to the ladies. They said it might be important for the research project for me to be able to show the actual drawings because they were so interesting and colourful. I responded that the women have put a lot of effort, thought and feeling into their drawings and would take inspiration from their artwork, which is the first purpose of the workshop. It seemed to come as a revelation to Mercy and Xolani that I was prioritising the women’s experience over my own “research” needs.

At 10:30, we resumed the sharing session with the ladies discussing the leaves (activities and work), buds (dreams, aspirations), and fruits/flowers (some achievements). (All but one lady returned on time; she came in at 10:35.) Everyone was *actively* participating in a relaxed way, all respectful, allowing each lady to finish sharing before communicating their own ideas. By the time we reached the top of the trees, i.e., buds and fruits, the ladies were looking up a lot more, looking directly at each other, conversing among themselves while pointing out specific aspects of their trees.

*Roots=beliefs, values*

Ingcombu (roots), inkolelozakho (values): What are your most important personal beliefs and values?

L1: Ufundiswe ukuba nembkeho, komncincinci no mdala, nba fundiswa ukuhamba icowe

L1: Respect the elderly and the young

L2: Ndifundiswe ukuba ndiholnipse, umntuomdala nokuba ngowuphina

L2: Attend church, respect all parents (elders) irrespectively

L3: Ufundiswe ukuba agale acoce ikhay, phambi kokuba ayokudlala

L3: Clean the house before I go play

L4: Ndifundiswe ukwabelana naganye abantu

L4: To share everything I have with others

L5: Ukholelwa ezinyanyeni

L5: Believe in our ancestors (“If I dream of slaughtering a cow, I should do so; if not, I will be sick”)

*Trunk=reputation*

Isiqu (trunk), indlela abantu abakubonanzayo ekuhlaleni: How does your home community view you?

L1: Umntu onobubele obathandayo abantu

L1: As a generous person

L2: Bakubona ungumntu othanda ukusebenza

L2: Person who likes to work

L3: Othanda ukucebisa

L3: Person who likes to advise

L4: Okwaziyo ukunceda ongaphakamanga

L4: Helping person

L5: Uluncedo ekuhlaleni akuzipha kamsanga

L5: Help in the community

L6: Othanda ukuhlelisa

L6: Person with humour

*Branches=connections with friends, church, hobbies; relationships with people and organisations*

Masebe (branches), unxulumelwano onalo nabontu, e.g., ecaweni, ekuhlaleni, etc.: What do you like to do in your free time and what kinds of people and groups do you associate with?

L1: Umubhalana ecaweni/umculi

L1: Church secretary and singer

L2: Ufundisa abantu ibhayibile ecaweni

L2: Teach people about the Bible at church and advise

L3: Ungena indlu ngendlu ashumayeze ngo Thixo

L3: Go door to door and preach, especially to disabled to give them hope

L4: Uvula umthandazo kamasincwabane

L4: Open burial organisation with a prayer

L5: Umgcini mali

L5: Treasurer at the church

L6: Uyi group leader opha eCollege

L6: Group leader at the College, conveying messages

L7: Ujongela abantu imisebenzi

L7: Organise work for people

*Leaves=kind of work are you doing now, activities to help yourself and others*

Amugzebi (leaves), ucedo olwenzayo ukunceda abantu ekuhlaleni e college: What kind of work are you doing now (e.g., here at the E.C.C.)? Is there any way you help others in the community?

L1: Ubonisana nabantu ngezempilo

L1: Advise people with health problems

L2: Unceda ekucozeni icommunity

L2: Cleaning the community/environment

L3: Unceda abahluli bajoyine

L3: Encourage people to join linen project

L4: Ucebisa abantu bangadivorsi

L4: Advise people to solve marital problems and not to divorce

- L5: Indlela yokathetha/nokuziphathi
- L5: Helping with communication skills and self conduct
- L6: Abazali bangaba hlukumezi abantwana
- L6: Advise parents not to give education to children, not abuse them

*Buds=dreams*

Ukudbula (buds): amaphupha/izinto ofuna ukuziphumelela (dreams): What is your hope for yourself in the future?

- L1: Unqwena ukuvelisa ilinen ekumgangatho ophezulu
- L1: To produce high quality linen
- L2: Unqwenela ukuba ngusomashishi aphambili
- L2: To be a successful business woman
- L3: Ukufundisa abantwana bakhe
- L3: To give my children good education
- L4: Ubomi obumnandi, imoto entle
- L4: To live a luxurious life with car, house
- L5: Unqwenela ukuthetha iEnglish
- L5: To speak English
- L6: Achieve my diploma and become a businesswoman

*Fruits=achievement*

Izighamo (fruits/blossoms): izinto usele uziphumelele (achievements): What have you already achieved in your life that makes you proud of yourself?

- L1: Utshatile/wonwabile nosapho wakhe
- L1: Happily married with family
- L2: Wakhe umzi wakhe
- L2: Built a house and am engaged
- L3: Wakhe usapho wakhe esakube engenamyeni
- L3: Built a house without a help of a spouse
- L4: Ukwazile ukufundisa umntwane wakhe aphumelele ibanga lesibini
- L4: My child passed grade four without help from husband
- L5: Ukwazile ukukhulisa umntwana wake wade waba meninyaka elishumi elinesine
- L5: My son is 14 years old and still behaves
- L6: Ukwazile ukufundisa umntwana kasis wakhe wade waphumelela ibonga leshumi
- L6: Helped my sister's child until he passe matric

[Mercy asked they everyone give a round of applause for each other. I asked permission to draw a visual representation on the whiteboard of what I was hearing the ladies say. I quickly put a tree on the board showing the energy drawn from the roots (their values and beliefs) moving up through the trunk and branches nourishing the leaves, buds and fruits. The fruits, like the children and other achievements they mentioned, then drop to the earth to further nourish the tree. Mercy and the ladies appreciated this idea and said they had not seen it this way before.]

*What kinds of trees would you be and why?*

Mercy asked the ladies what kind of trees they would like to be and why. The ladies thought this was an amusing idea and immediately started to answer with very thoughtful responses (see transcript).

- L1: Orange tree, to give bright future to other people, to be a good example even if a person doesn't know me
- L2: Peach tree, it is juicy and sweet, when I look at it flows happiness and success
- L3: Apple tree, it is tasty, I can give this taste and healthy fruit to others
- L4: Plum tree, everything has its season, this season is helping me to plan my time
- L5: Gum tree, a big tree for shade
- L6: Pine tree, to produce beds, furniture that will be helpful to people
- L7: Peach tree, remember Christmas with this tree

### *Feedback from Session I*

When all of the feedback had been given and written on the whiteboard by Mercy, she asked the ladies what they learned from this exercise. They responded one by one in random order (i.e., not as they were sitting around the table) and Mercy translated what they said for me:

“You must have dreams and goals”

“This activity helps me to believe in myself, to understand and love myself better”

“I understand myself and others better”

“I learned how to view life and my dreams, how to understand them; it gives me a chance to see what kind of achievements we've made”

“This is teaching me to be an example, a beautiful example for the community”

“I learned to trust myself and my family and to be proud of my family”

“This helps me to understand what people like”

“I learned that good roots are leading to success”

Then Mercy asked the ladies what they discovered about each other from the exercise:

“I will go for resolution to my colleague who gives advice”

“This helps us to know the other better”

“I will invite my colleague to come to my home and teach me about the Bible”

“Nontuthu as a divorcee has a lot of experience”

### *Building trust*

Then Mercy, following the facilitation guide, asked the ladies to discuss whether this activity helps to build trust within the group. In an open discussion, the ladies exchanged ideas with each other (Mercy translated for me):

“It helps us to understand where we can get help, for example the lady sitting next to me gives marital counseling, another (at the opposite end) helps in reading the Bible, so we can go to these women to get needed information, building trust among ourselves. This kind of activity builds trust inside of us because we take advice from each other, we can learn from each other based on our different experiences. In the community one is looking at you as a bad or unhelpful person (relating to the trunk of the tree), so you can change that around from what we have learned in this exercise. I am happy for the fact that there are people sitting around this table who are helpful.”

## Session II: Ukula ko mthi (growing the tree)

Mercy introduced the second activity at 11:10. The ladies divided into 2 groups to discuss the kind of environment needed here at the college to grow a healthy community (trees). The groups were given approximately 30 minutes to list the norms (izithethe) they think are important to the college on the flip chart paper.

### *First group presentation*

1. Xa sifika apha ecollege kufanele sivule ngomthandazo naxa sigoduka kuvalwe ngomthandazo (we should begin and end with prayer at the college)
2. Masihloniphane omdala nomncinci (respect between the older and the younger)
3. Ngase ku bekho imonitor kwi klasi nganye (there must be a monitor in each classroom)
4. Kufuneka sibe ne disciplinary committee (we must have a disciplinary committee)
5. Si cela igumbi lokugcinela abantwana (we must have a place here at the college and a person who can look after our children because the ones doing it in the community are busy looking for work now that fruit season is coming; also they aren't keeping the children as clean as they could because the children are often sick)
6. Si cela basongeze nge grocery phezu kwale R100 ngoba ayonelanga (we also want to get groceries from the college; Mercy explained to them that this isn't a norm, it is something they want others to do for them. There was a brief exchange about the meaning of "norm," then the women understood what exactly Mercy meant with searching for "Izithethe.")
7. Kufuneka siqhekezelane isonka ukuba omnye akanaso (we must share bread/food if one doesn't have it)

### *Second group presentation*

1. Kufuneka sikhonze (we must pray together)
2. Sithobelane sivane omncinci nomdala (me must be obedient to the rules)
3. Sibenenkathalo kuyo yonke into esiyenzayo (be responsible for our behaviour)
4. Sicoceke (cleanliness)
5. Sibonisane omnye nomnye xa kukho omnye ongaqondiyo (let one understand if she doesn't)
6. Yonke into esiyenzayo siyenze ngexesha elifanelekile yo (everything we do according to schedule)
7. Sifike ngexesha elifanelekileyo (arrive punctually to E.C.C.)
8. Sithembane (trust each other)
9. Siwukhuthalele umsebenzi wethu (be reliable)
10. Sithandane (love each other)
11. Kufuneka sonyule umnto ozakuthi xa sinengxaki okanye kukho into esiyifunayo asithethele (elect a representative)
12. Sibahloniphe abaphathi bethu (respect our leaders)
13. Sibenebhongo neqhayiya ngayo yonke into esiyenzayo (be proud of everything)
14. Ukuba kukho umntu ongeziyo esikolweni iiveki zide zibentathu kufuneka acinywe ukuba akanasizathu (if a person is not attending for about 3 weeks without a valid reason, she should be canceled from the project)
15. Ukuba akuzanga nokuba lusuku olunye kufuneka ube nephepha elichaza lendawo ubuye kuyo (if you don't attend you should submit a valid proof)

### *Concluding Questions for Session II*

What are the necessary ingredients/factors (sun, clean air, water, fertilizer) for ensuring that the entire Elgin Community College embraces these norms? How would you recommend we as a community “root these norms in our ground”?

In an open discussion, the ladies exchanged ideas with each other (Mercy translated for me):

“In order for a tree to grow, it needs sunshine and water. If the tree doesn't get sunshine, the tree is going to die. So, if one trainee doesn't attend a course and does not bring valid proof, she is killing the community. We should then deduct money from her wage.”

Mercy: “If someone doesn't understand this, what should be done if this happens?”

“If a tree is growing somewhere, we must remove the weeds and add fertilizer. Another ingredient to nurture the tree is prayer. We should pray together as a community, then that prayer will feed our community tree. If there is trust amongst us, there will be growth.” An incident relating to trust was shared. A group of learners from the linen project wanted to discuss a contentious issue with Mercy and agreed among themselves the points they would make. When actually meeting with Mercy, however, the group lost its cohesion and dominant members raised points important to them. This was seen as a big disappointment and as undermining trust in the group. Workshop participants then said, “We should stop searching for money only. ‘Backbone’ is the most important thing. What will the future hold if there is no trust and no backbone? We should reach understanding and agreement on everything.”

Kate: “May I ask you a question? How many different trees do we have in the room? Given this wonderful diversity, I wonder if it is possible or even desirable to agree on everything. The fruit salad you make when coming together is perhaps tastier than a salad comprising only one or two fruits.”

“Yes, we are not all the same, so therefore some should not be dominant. There is cultural diversity in our group and sometimes one cannot understand well. We should stand united in order to build relationships. One root cannot produce many fruits. I have learnt at this workshop that there are different trees here and I should accept other people's tastes and differences. In Xhosa there is a saying, ‘Inja ikhonkotha imoto ehambayo,’ which means, ‘A moving object is always followed by dogs.’ In other words, a person who is progressing is always criticised by people. This is a problem, as soon as a person starts to make a bit of progress, others want to pull that person down.”

[When Mercy translated this to me, I was taken aback. This was precisely the theme being discussed and debated by callers to the radio station I was listening to on my way to Grabouw this morning. The talk show host, Tim Modiswe, noted this phenomenon as being particularly troublesome in the African community and I was hearing precisely the same thing from this group of women.]

Mercy: “I agree that we should not criticise one another. We can be different, but we can work together. How do you think we should implement this?”

“Charity begins at home. I will teach my family these things step by step, as if by crawling. Yes, I was taught these things at my home and I must stick to my beliefs. As a parent, I should change my ways and give more time to my children.”

Mercy: “What can we do to help others at the college understand what we’ve learnt at this workshop?”

“We can use the tree as an example. We will share with the other women what we have learned. We should trust ourselves. The ways of charities (?) are different; even if you didn’t grow up well (have a positive childhood experience?), still we should work together and the division should stop.”

*Feedback on the workshop generally (what did you learn):*

“Recalling that perseverance in a task until it is completed is important”

“At home I grew up not learning to share, but through this workshop I see the importance of sharing in the community for it to grow”

“As we have different kinds of fruit we want to eat, we must accept each others tastes, i.e., differences, in order to be a community”

“I learned about sharing and that it’s not important to be dominant over those who are not successful; this helps them to be successful too”

“I learned about the tree and this lesson is helping me to see the different parts of the tree as it relates to my own development”

“By developing our community norms, we can negotiate with each other about things, this will help us in discussing and agreeing about things that matter to us here”

“The way I’m teaching my children, this tree is going to help me to do that and to add what I learned to their lessons; if you want a tree to have good fruit you must have good roots”

“I built relationships with the ladies here and the tree has built trust between us”

Mercy: “I have learnt so much from this group, from all of you. Thank you for your contributions and for volunteering to participate in the workshop. I think your presentations were fantastic, I’m so impressed.”

Kate: “May I ask you if you are friends or neighbours in the local community?” (Response was no, they did not know each other outside of the linen project training they had recently begun.) “The way you have shared your insights and interacted with each other, I thought you were long-standing friends! Thank you for making this workshop an especially interesting and fruitful experience for me. I have learned so much from you and I wish you well with the linen project and with all of the dreams and aspirations you have expressed.”

The workshop ended at 12:15 with thanks and appreciation extended by Mercy and Kate, and returned by the participants.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Completing the workshop transcript, internal processing**

I congratulated Mercy on a job well done with the workshop facilitation and said no one would have guessed this was the first time she had assumed that role. Xolani also expressed praise and admiration for Mercy's skills. We briefly exchanged ideas and impressions from the workshop, mainly concerning how the level of the learners' feedback and outputs was far higher than expected, before taking a 45-minute lunch break.

At 1:15, I resumed work on the transcript. Xolani arrived 15 minutes late and said he was going to apologise but noticed that Mercy also had not come back to the venue. He said that all Africans are habitually late. When Mercy arrived, we discussed this idea and she passionately denied that this was the case, saying that she herself tries to be very punctual (circumstances permitting) and professional. I suggested we think about tardiness and Xolani's missing the agreed 8:30 workshop preparation meeting in the context of "predicting the future" by keeping one's word (e.g., building credibility occurs when we do exactly what we say we are going to do, commitment impacts on the team dynamic, etc.). It was an interesting discussion which we all enjoyed, giving us renewed energy for completing the workshop transcript.

We worked nearly 2 hours using Xolani's notes in English, the white board notes in Xhosa made by Mercy, and the women's flip charts. Taken together, these sources provided a fairly complete record of the workshop proceedings and feedback.

A few times during the course of the workshop, I asked Xolani to write extremely fast and not to think about the dialogue in order to take down what each of the participants was saying. In reviewing Xolani's notes afterwards, it was clear that his data capturing ability improved markedly from the first to the second session. The feedback outlined above from Session I drew heavily from Mercy's whiteboard lists (in Xhosa) and the continuous translation she provided me; Xolani's English notes contained substantial gaps as he was only providing brief and partial summaries of participant feedback. His notes from Session II, however, captured the flow (if not all parts) of the open exchange among participants facilitated by Mercy. After this experience, Xolani said he appreciated the reporting function is very different from his work as a translator for the college. He had not realised how challenging it was to write so quickly, without breaks, and complained that his hand was sore!

At 3:30, Xolani left for an appointment. I paid him (R50) and thanked him for his work, commending him on his improvement and willingness to learn the difficult and vital skill of reporting. He left his notebook with me so that I could complete the integration of his notes with the final transcript.

Mercy and I then continued work on the transcript using the mini-cassette recording and our recall to complete the workshop notes. Mercy kept expressing amazement at how well the women did with the two exercises and how they exceeded her expectations regarding the output. Commenting on their quick understanding and ability to move into deeper discussions on trust building and community norms, Mercy realised she no longer had to assume "their minds need changing" or they lack the ability to organise themselves. With little prompting from her, they took the discussion in many useful directions and came up with ideas she herself had not

thought of. She concluded that raising awareness of learners at the college (i.e., Mark's emphasis on Freire's "conscientization") was only a matter of providing the opportunity, or the space and time within the schedule. Mercy said she wanted to do this workshop with all the women from the linen project as well as the learners working in other projects. We noted the additional time required by the first session--nearly one hour longer than anticipated due to the learners' desire to put a lot of effort into drawing their trees and writing about each part--and agreed Mercy's first estimation of 3 hours for the workshop was a good one.

Mercy was very eager to listen to the recording and hear how she came across as a facilitator. She seemed satisfied with her performance and the amount of direction she had given the women (i.e, not too much, not too little) and was glad she had not drawn an example of a tree for the women. She said she wanted to listen to the recording at home and take more time to think about the workshop experience; unfortunately, some parts of the recording were difficult to hear because of the distance of the mini-cassette player from some participants.

At 5:00, Mercy's ride home was waiting and we agreed that I would complete the workshop transcript and include it in my final research report to Mark and the staff. Ideally, an additional session with Mercy would help crystallize her thinking about the participants' perspectives and give her the opportunity to consider what people-centred development (a la Max-Neef et al.) means for the college and the type of learning environment it wants to create. Recalling the staff's brainstorming (from last Tuesday) around this issue, I will propose we create this opportunity as a way to move further with internal development stemming from the Kleinmond training.

Mercy and I proposed to Mark that Mercy give an overview of the workshop experience to colleagues at the Friday morning staff meeting (8:30 a.m.) and that I be available to answer questions relating to participatory action research, the specific methods we chose, and my project generally. Mercy asked that I arrive early (8:00 a.m.) on Friday to review what she was going to share with her colleagues.



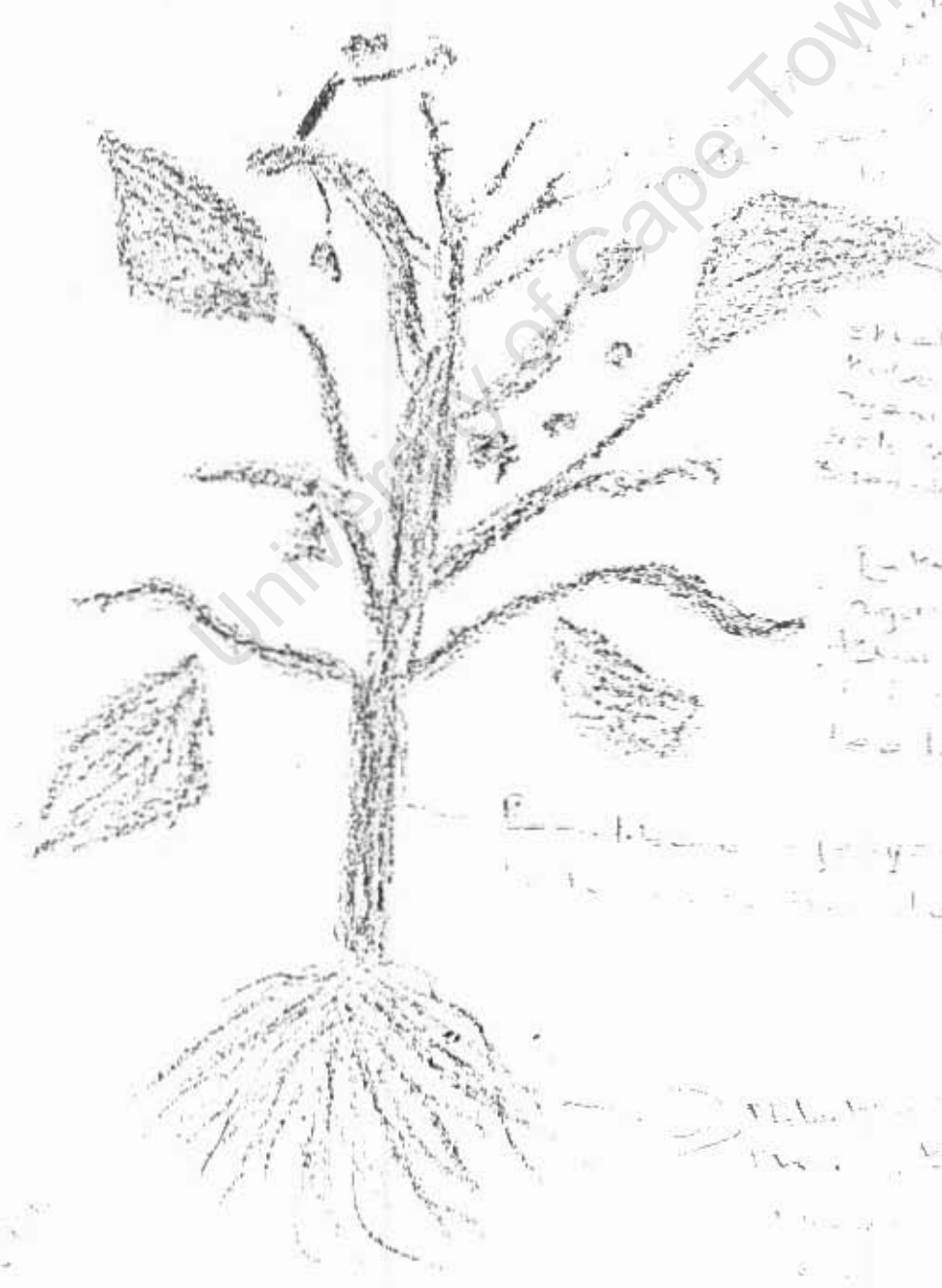
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*Antennaria* Blakisii  
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This is a pencil drawing of a plant, likely *Antennaria blakisii*. The drawing shows the root system, stem, leaves, and flowering stalks. The leaves are ovate with serrated margins. The stem is branched, and the upper branches bear small flowers or fruits. The root system is fibrous and spreads out horizontally.

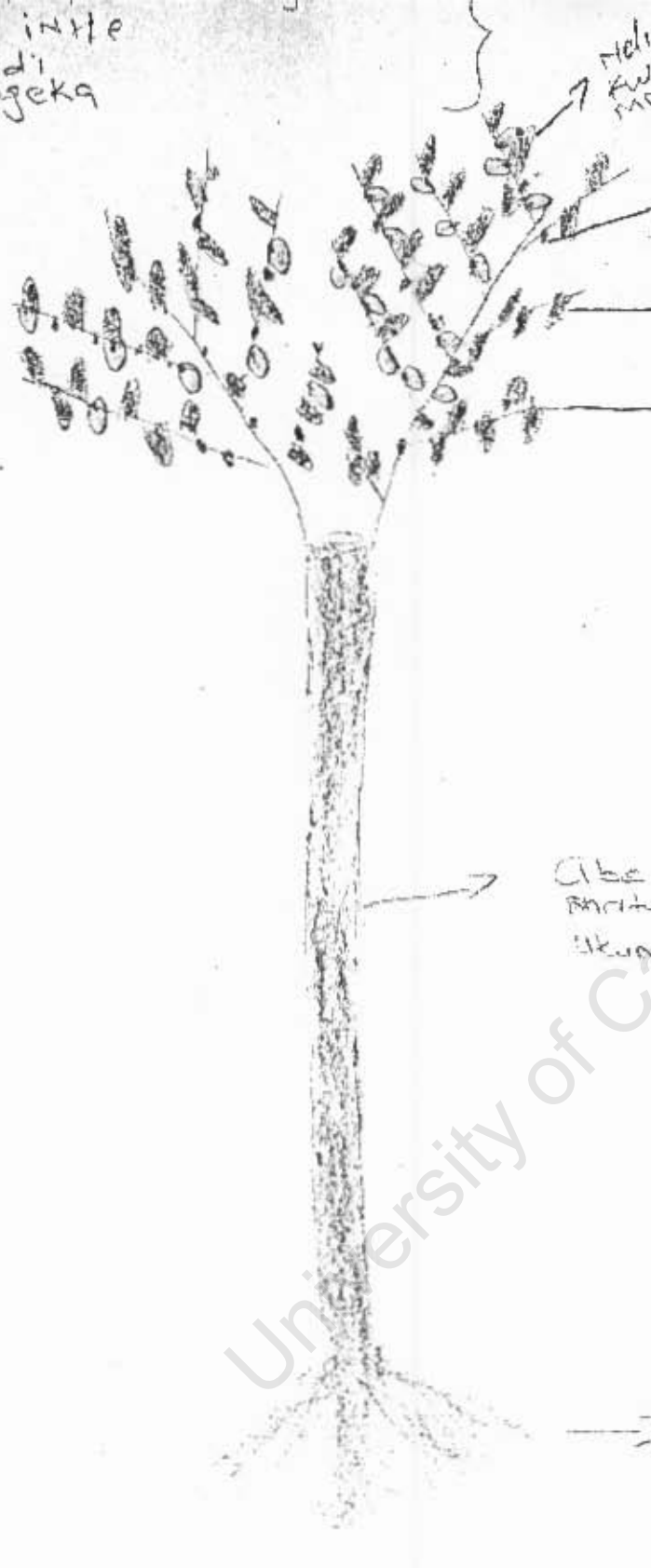
Description of the plant's morphology and its characteristics.

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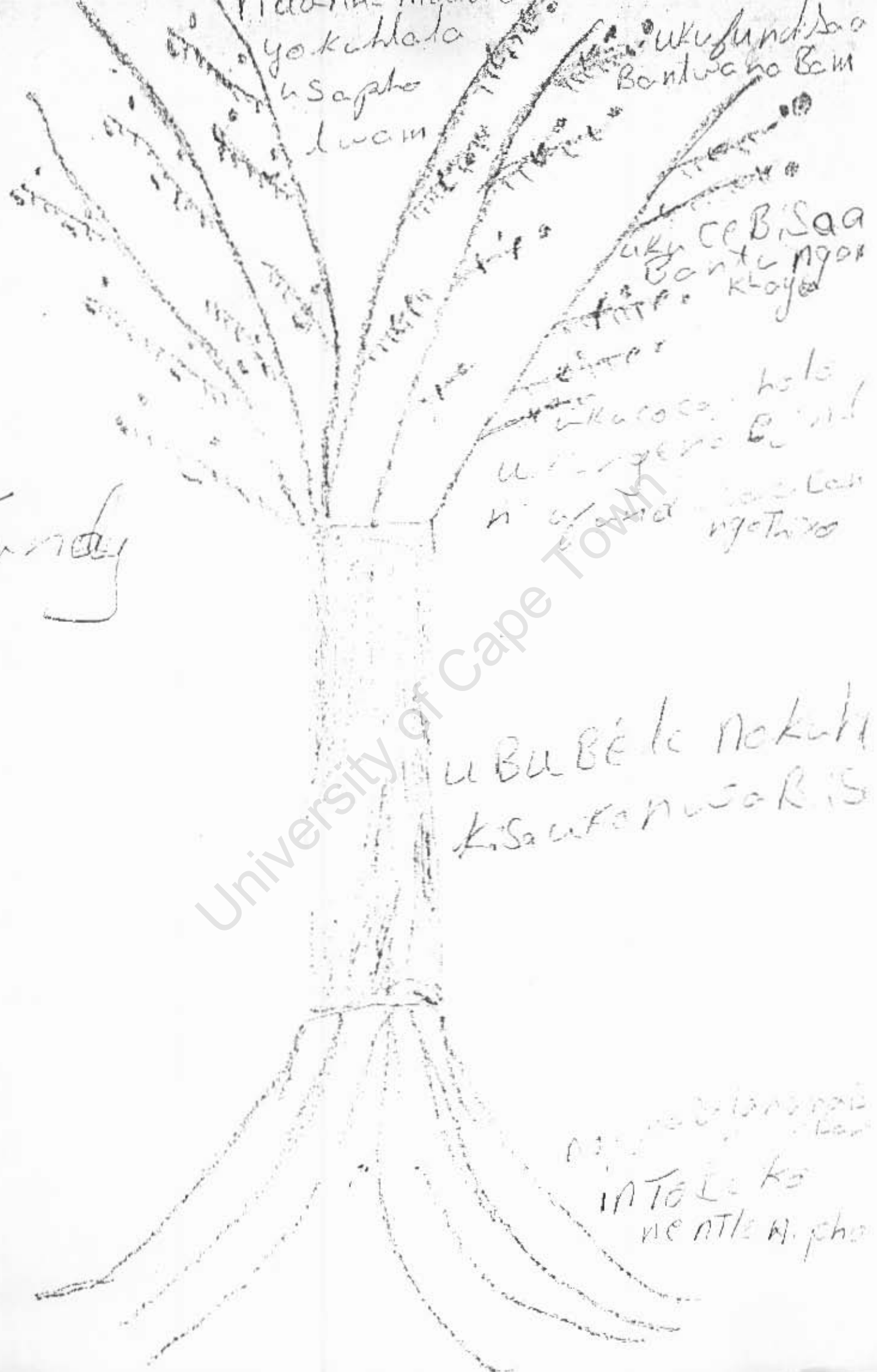
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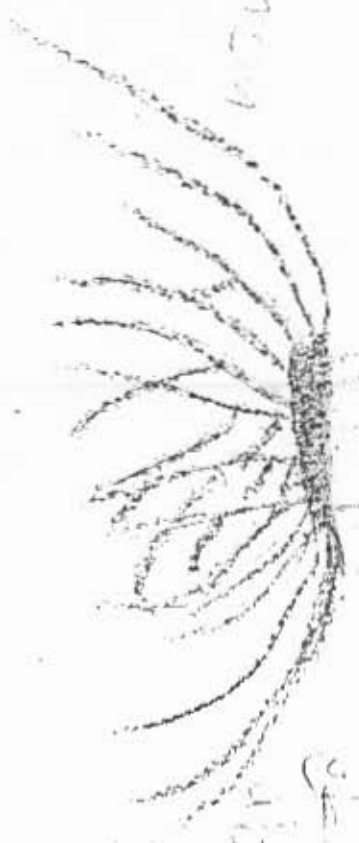
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University of Cape Town

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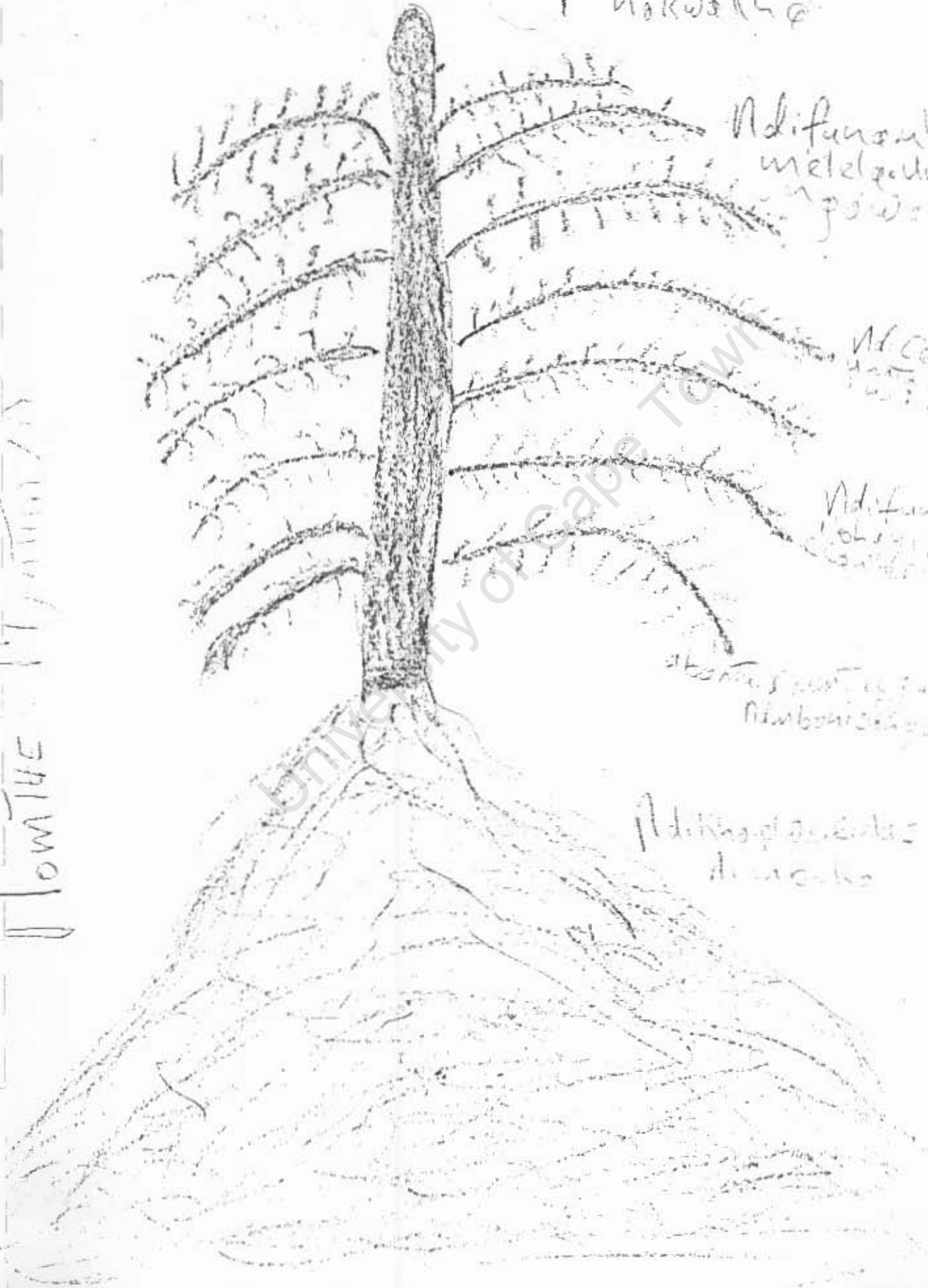
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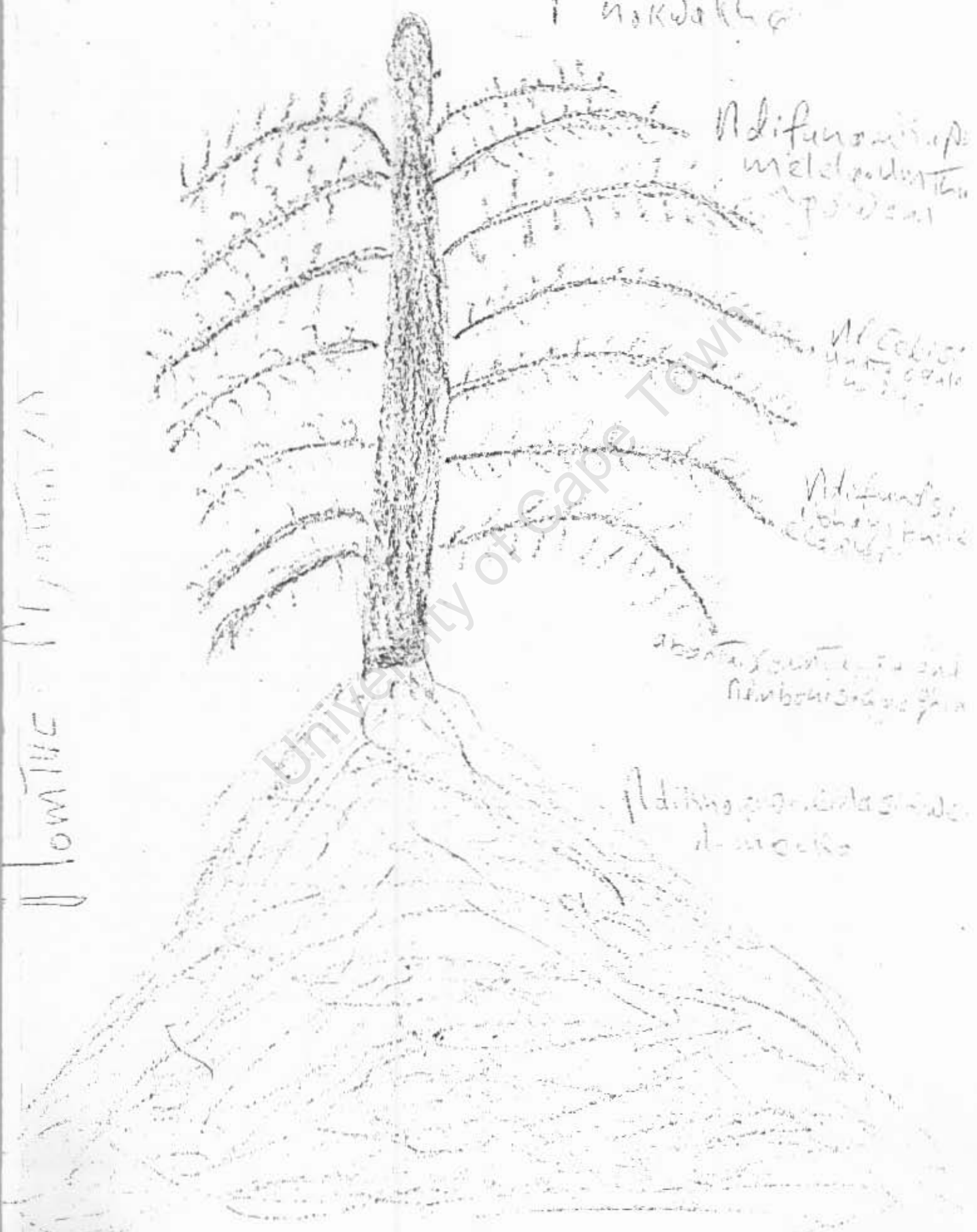
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## A.6. PRESENTATION OF WORKSHOP FINDINGS TO STAFF

Friday, 18 October 2002 (8:00 - 11:00 a.m.)

I was greeted by an excited Mercy who the day before had observed some of the workshop participants doing the tree exercise with other ladies from the linen project. They had asked her for some paper and pencils and, during their lunch hour, worked with colleagues on the trust-building activity. Mercy couldn't believe how they had taken initiative so quickly. Apparently they were also making plans to elect a representative for the group who would be responsible for developing the community norms.

Before the staff meeting, Mercy and I reviewed her presentation to the staff on the workshop process and feedback. Because of the limited time available to us at the staff meeting, we agreed to keep it focused on the lessons we learned about the "conscientization" process (apropos of the first staff brainstorming session held on 8 October) rather than providing a step by step account of what transpired at the workshop. Mercy was a bit nervous about what she should say to the staff and I recommended that she give the information in the form of a story, building up their interest by relating what surprised her and why, like thinking she needed to draw the tree for the learners then realising how imaginative they were in expressing these new and rather complex aspects of themselves. Of course the best part of the story would be what she had shared with me earlier, i.e., the ripple effect within the group and how receptive they were to the "blossoming of the tree" workshop.

At the staff meeting, Mark suggested the other departments give their presentations first, then Mercy and I would share our experience with the workshop. The dynamic of the staff interaction was relaxed, yet professional. Each staff member came prepared with a succinct outline of current priorities, problems, and needs. Mark's facilitation was efficient and low key; he has a knack for knowing when to make the humorous or the serious ("boss"-type) remark, always in a constructive way. Other staff felt comfortable questioning and engaging in dialogue on the various presentations.

Mercy, apparently from nervousness, shared only about half of the information she had prepared concerning the workshop. Though her energy and enthusiasm give her the appearance of confidence, she is a junior member of the staff and will defer to her older colleagues (this also occurred in the initial brainstorming session when her input was relatively minor compared to the others, in spite of the fact that she had some strong opinions and good ideas which she shared later when creating the workshop facilitation guide). Mercy shared her surprise at how easily the learners grasped the meaning and purpose of the two exercises and how her expectations for their participation were greatly exceeded. She concluded her remarks by recommending that they actively pursue an implementation strategy with all college learners in the various training programmes. Staff received Mercy's report very positively and commended her on implementing so quickly what they had learned at the Kleinmond training. They agreed they would like to try this with the learners in their respective projects.

Mark asked me to give some insights about participatory action research and how this approach might contribute to the people-centred development model he wanted the college to follow. I responded by thanking the staff for their time and ideas in helping formulate the research question Mercy and I took up in the pilot workshop, i.e., exploring the “unconsciousness of process” of learners with regard to their skills and knowledge and how these relate to their training. I explained that Mercy, bringing insights and skills, from their staff training in Kleinmond to the workshop planning and implementation, clearly demonstrated that this type of workshop can “conscientize” both staff and learners to realising potential and moving toward greater self-reliance, which is the goal of development for Max-Neef.

Perhaps the greatest revelation for us was that the women already had a great deal of awareness at their fingertips, so to speak, but had not had the opportunity to access and apply it to themselves and their training. This, I emphasised, was one of the strengths of participatory methods which legitimize the knowledge and the experience of “marginalised” groups. There is a role reversal where the outsiders, or usual power-holders, listen and learn. This seems consistent with the “listening survey” approach they learned at their training in Kleinmond. Other advantages of action research I shared with the staff included the generation of usable knowledge (it doesn’t get hidden away in a report on some dusty shelf) that is easily understood by the participants because they themselves are discussing and ascribing meaning to their experiences, decisions, and understanding. In this way action research is also process-oriented; over time, cycles of action research can contribute to increasing the ability of participants to take conscious responsibility for creating a different future.

I then mentioned a couple of limitations of participatory research, namely the “relations of power” that went unexplored, and the reluctance some participants might feel to share deeper feelings and less popular opinions in a public forum such as the workshop. In order for staff and learners to engage meaningfully about college programmes, norms and its future as a learning organisation, it might be useful to consider ways a people-centred approach can be applied consistently across all aspects of college life. Based on our interviews, casual discussions, and the experience with the pilot workshop, I suggested that the necessary ingredients for creating their new paradigm for development here at the college are in place and commended the staff on their dedication to this goal. My brief presentation was intended as preliminary feedback on the research project, to be followed by submission of a full report (and formal presentation, if requested) to the director and staff.

Edwin (agriculture department, usually shy) asked, given the tight training schedule, how he might incorporate this type of exercise into the daily programme. He was keen to do it and realised its importance from the staff development week (Training for Transformation) in Kleinmond. Would it be better to take a half or full day to do this kind of workshop, or might he introduce these ideas a bit each day? He said on the first day of the training course, he shared some of the people-centred development ideas, but that there was no ongoing focus on personal development and awareness. I responded that a brief session at the beginning of each day of the course might serve to contextualise that day’s training with the learners within the people-centred paradigm. Different applications and insights would arise throughout the training to

keep linking the ideas back to the learners. Nicky, from the health programme, said this was the way she approached her activities and recommended it to Edwin.

Naym asked whether these small efforts would contribute to any substantive change? To really make a difference, wouldn't a more intensive approach be required? I suggested if we want to implement the ideas of Max-Neef and Freire at the college, we can take these small steps and appreciate that they would support a longer-term process individual to each learner. This relates directly to the process, rather than product, orientation of action research. This also appears consistent with the goal of creating a learning organisation at the college in which we are all involved with considering our fundamental needs, their various synergic satisfiers, and how we can cooperate with each other in this open-ended process. For Max-Neef, the satisfaction of needs moves us incrementally along the continuum from deprivation to potential, it is not usually "all or nothing."

Mark thanked Mercy and me for organising the participatory research programme and said it gave inspiration to the staff to move forward with applying their own training in their work at the college. The results gave hope that it wouldn't be as difficult as they anticipated.

After the staff meeting, I asked Naym what his latest thoughts were about the unseen aspects of life. With a big smile, he said he had discussed this with his wife and together they had come to the conclusion that 99.99% of what is important in life is unseen. When considering their children, for example, it was the memory of a first step taken or other special occasions or of their close relationships that were most important to them as a family. While all the trappings of success, like the cell phone, the car, things in the house, seemed important at one time, Naym realised those were not the things that really brought meaning to his life. "This changed my definition of life, and I see a relationship between 'happiness' and 'happening' in that it is what happens in life that brings happiness rather than what I can see." He said as a result of their conversations about this that his wife was thrilled to have "the man she married" back. I thought this was a particularly strong testimony to the potential influence the college environment can have on its own staff.

## **B.1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH E.C.C. STAFF**

### **P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development**

Interviewee: Edwin  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Thursday, 24 April 2003  
Time: 9:37 - 10:42  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]  
Teaching someone skills, agricultural skills. Can we talk ABET as well? Agricultural as well? As well as personal development in terms of their shortcomings, or personal abilities, what they can do and what they can't do. This is how I see it. Especially adults, especially adults. I try to develop people. To develop their interest in something because for them to be here in the college they show some interest in gaining knowledge and I try to fulfill that interest or gap, what they need in their lives. But develop people, that's it.

[How do you do what you do?]  
Through facilitating programmes, already existing programmes, that address their needs. Is it literacy, is it communication, is it any skills through facilitation of programmes.

[How do you facilitate?]  
By firstly drawing on their experience, what they knew, and then build on that. And then try to put in some new things, learn them new skills, new knowledge. It's a combination of new things plus developing the experience they already have in their life. But for them to be here there is a need in their life and I try to address that need with new skills, or knowledge, or things, but never forget that past experience that they have and then build on that as well.

[This interview process is like peeling back the layers of an onion, we're getting into more and more detail. If someone wants to understand how you facilitate, what is in your mind when you do this, what is the process...]  
It quite fits into my view point. For me to unpack those layers in an adult then I need some different skills. What if I unpack something that I can't handle? Can I cope? Talking about the learners, or the adults, with all their experience and circumstances and normally they are older than the facilitator, and if I unpack all of that and there is something I can't handle. So to do that I need a lot of different skills than just facilitating. And that makes it scary for me to do, you see.

[Which skills might you need?]  
Coming from a teaching background, okay, it is just teaching, banking. But now you need to build on experience, so it's a different kind of facilitating. To unpack you need to be kinda of social worker, I don't know how to say it, but not just facilitating, a social worker, unpacker...Kate, you need to know how to get that learner to open up because you want to find out what they knew, what their... Not negotiation, but like unpacking the skills of the learner and that makes it difficult for the facilitator if he doesn't have those skills other than facilitator. Because you can be more negative to

that person than positive by unpacking all those experience. And that has happened. Especially when you talk about life orientation or life skills, from experiences in the past. They start crying and say that can't handle that, so how do I handle that as a facilitator? I need to draw on different expertise to handle that. So we need not just facilitators here, but all-around facilitators, integrated facilitators to handle all of our... How will they view me in the future, because you are facilitator you need to be the master in the class at all times for them to trust you, not, not...yes, trust, but for them to see you as someone ...that can handle them, that they can open up.

In a daytime school, there is no past experience with the kids. But with adults there is a lot of experience and we need to know how to handle it. Because my view point is the moment you can't cope with something, they experience it as negative, and not a positive. They won't open again, because I'm not that experienced I can't handle that at all. [Pause.]

[It seems to be tricky and sticky...]

This is my concern about Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire talking about the whole person, you're training the whole person. Where does this leave me as a facilitator. This means I can't be a specialist in a certain direction, I need to be more flexible, more open, more integrated. For me to handle those learners, especially those adult learners. But training, acquiring more skills, being a more integrated facilitator, and that makes it more difficult now, you cannot specialise in one area, become a specialist in one area, like agriculture. You need to have a life orientation as well, a health trainer, you need to know how to handle it, the moment they start opening up...so its very crucial to select your facilitator. The moment you use the Paulo Freire methods, you need to select your facilitator very carefully, or it can be more negative than positive. And for most of us, we're not that integrated as facilitators, so it's easy for us to steer that adult learner to something that is known to me, agriculture circumstances. Kate, in agriculture it's quite easy, because it is skills based, but the moment you are talking about anything further than agriculture...a whole programme, a whole programme means there are others skills, like personal development, and that is where the negative comes in, if the facilitator is not skilled... So we tend...not to ignore, but to get away from the personal development issues that arise. And those personal development issues influence the skills training.

[How do they influence the skills training?]

It has an effect on the skills. Let's say there are unresolved issues that effect their ability to concentrate, their skills, their ability to be part of the group, especially when there are unresolved issues. [Pause.]

[What balance do you strike?]

I don't deal with it, I steer them in the direction of the known. The moment a personal issue comes up, we steer it in another direction. Because I know my abilities and I know I can't handle the personal problem of an adult learner, so I steer it in a different direction, taking the easy way out, not getting involved.

[What led you to development?]

I'm not, I'm not ...to be honest with you, Kate, I'm not into development at the moment. I'm not into development, I'm into training, education and training. Training has a bit of development, but I'm not fully into it, into development. And,

and...my, my future plans, goals are not into development at all. You see, I started training, facilitating ABET classes about 1996, I started training adults and learners since then and that was quite a different shift for me, from teaching kids to teaching adults. And as I go along I built up the interest in training--I call it training--adults, because I see my core business as educating adults and address their needs in terms of education, their literacy and communication abilities. My core business to get them to read and write, to attain their senior certification. For personal development they need to attend other facilitators, other classes. I'm into training and education. That's the honest truth.

[You mentioned future plans...unless that's a secret?]

No, not a secret. Just this morning, Mark and myself were having a chat about me being in two departments, agriculture department and ABET department. And quite for some time now I realised for me to do a proper job I need to specialise in one area, I need to do either ABET or the agriculture, because at the moment I'm doing half of both and it's not working for me. Because I set myself a goal, and I need to reach that goal at a certain time, and I see at the moment I won't be able to reach the goals I set for myself in terms of agriculture and in terms of ABET. I love doing both, but for me to judge myself...to judge myself in terms of 5 years, I need to specialise in one of those two areas. I came to the conclusion last night: there was agriculture training, I need to go to Worcester for an ABET training, and in the morning there was an adult learner ?? in CT, and it was quite hectic, and I'm not wholehearted in one area. I need to do training, and my mind is on ABET and all the other things. Because personally...that is why I'm talking about specialised facilitators, and not integrated facilitators. My future plans are definitely to be in the agricultural department, national agricultural department, my future goals, my future plans. At the moment I am deviating from those plans to do a proper job in ABET, so I decided to stick with ABET to develop our ABET system at the college because it is an integrated part of what we do here at the ECC. If that is in place, then I'm going back to agriculture. I'm clear. After school, I got a science degree at UWC, a B.Sc., and then I was teaching for 12 years, and while I was teaching I was doing my ABET courses and agricultural courses and facilitating an ABET course in the evenings. And then when I was teaching, I did my agriculture master's at Stellenbosch as well. At the moment I'm busy doing my financial course at UNISA, all in the direction of ABET and agriculture, but that is not working for me at the moment. Because I need to reach my goal at a specific time and at the moment...my indicators along the way...I'm not reaching my indicators. I need to focus on one area.

[And your own development?]

I've changed quite a bit. [Pause.] Kate, for me...don't type this. I need to think. [Pause.] All of my goals are around studying, education-wise, obtaining this, obtaining that certification, so in terms of my personal development it's more in the education and training area. Let me think...I always think of myself as a more open person, personality-wise I can get along with everyone and I think that is a strong point because it is the way I facilitate my class as well, especially with adults, but all of my indicators, in terms of education certificates... But person-wise, but personal development, I thought that *was* personal development [laugh]... In terms of negotiating skills, in terms of conflict resolution, I see that as an area I'm lacking in terms of personal development. Like the negotiating skills, problem solving skills, that's lacking, I see that now, while we are busy talking. So I need to work in that

area, especially if I want to develop adults, especially if I want to develop adults I need to work in those areas. I'm done. [Pause.]

I really don't see myself as a facilitator because I lack all those other skills. I need to become more integrated, integrated in other areas, like problem solving, conflict management, negotiation, how to unpack all this, all those layers. But the moment it gets more serious...as long as it is not that serious, then I can cope with it, but the moment it gets on a higher level, then that is where I withdraw, but steer it in the opposite direction, and that is what I need to work on. And to become a good facilitator you need that.

[How do you know when you've changed your position or perspective on that?]

The moment I'm not withdrawing, the moment I'm starting to engage with it. The moment I'm asking them questions, to explain more, that's... And right now as long as I'm not that serious, then I'm asking for more explanation, and getting involved. But the moment I'm getting to that higher level, I withdraw: "It's not my problem." But I can't forget it. It's like an unresolved issue, I keep on remembering it. But I'm not giving attention to it, I'm not trying to solve it. Hope it will disappear and go away. [Pause.]

[What called you into education?]

Education was not my first priority, or first love, as I changed my mind at university. When I started with my B.Sc. I was more into pharmacy, to be a pharmacist. But due to financial, to bursary...because at the moment the State was only giving bursaries to teachers, I changed to education, but loved it ever since. And since 1996 I'm into adult training and development and loved it ever since. But I never loose that passion for pharmacy, it's still there, it's still there. When I'm teaching, the shift to agriculture came. There was no agriculture teacher, and me with my B.Sc. and ever since the whole agriculture influence started and I'm into agriculture all the way, 100 percent. Even with ABET, I'm into agriculture training. The passion for agriculture is there, and will be right to the end.

[Are pharmacy and agriculture joined?]

No, I've deviated from pharmacy, but that feeling is still there, that feeling when I start with my studies the love for that is still there. But I've made up my mind, it is something I cannot do anything more, I goal I cannot reach, so I set myself a new one now, to get into agriculture, but pharmacy is still there.

[Why pharmacy?]

Why pharmacy, Kate? I have no idea why pharmacy. I really have no idea why...something I was interested in, because I was a science person all the way, physical science, mathematics, science all the way. From school I was interested in pharmacy, I don't know what happened in the past, what *geared* me toward pharmacy, I just knew I wanted to. It is an unobtainable goal.

[What's the most important thing to you about the work you do?]

Can I be straight? Dealing with adults, seeing the satisfaction on their face. Coming from school, coming from the high school, education is like a routine for the teachers, but with the adults, seeing that sense of satisfaction when they have accomplished something. To be a part of that, maybe that is the reason why I'm saying to Mark this

morning, if I have to choose between ABET and agriculture, I have to go with ABET for some time. Because of the satisfaction, seeing that on the faces of the adults, making friends with older people, calling students in my class “Auntie”...that is what I most like.

Maybe that’s the reason why I’m scared in getting involved in their personal life, getting involved in their personal problems because I’m scared to disappoint them. Maybe that’s why, the reason I say I’m deviating from that higher level. They ask me something I cannot answer, I cannot deal with, that’s scary...for me. Because for...he first time I start teaching the agriculture class, I said to the students, no answer to a question is wrong. All you need to do is explain why you say that is the answer to the question. For me as a facilitator I need to look at your explanation, maybe it’s an angle I’m not aware of, that you understand. And they didn’t believe me, they didn’t believe me, I think they were brought up with there is a right or a wrong answer to a question. And they were surprised, but now I think I taught them something, too. Whenever there is an answer to a question, you need to explain what are your reasons for saying that.

[How do you think your learners would describe you?]

Oh...[Pause]...I think they would describe me as an open person, like to engage in conversation, especially reasoning about issues, the topic, and like to differ from what they said, and I would like them to differ from what I said so that we can engage in the discussion about the topic, or about the problem, or about anything. As long as it’s not on that personal (pointing to heart), inner self from the learners and then I tend to close down. I can’t handle that...I cannot handle that. Especially as an open person, someone that they feel free to talk to, yeah.

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Henry  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Monday, 14 April 2003  
Time: 9:45 - 11:15  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]  
I have always tried...I'm having an incredible amount of fun, working harder than I've ever worked before because I'm doing what I should have been doing years ago, when I was in business, adding value to other persons, especially in the area of assisting them to become financially independent through having their own business skills. I believe in something called servant leadership which means my responsibility is to make Naym and Mercy the best project facilitators in ...around [sweeping gesture]. And I must enable them to do this

[Drawing diagramme with organisational leadership at bottom of pyramid and learners at top.]

In all the management literature and in all the organisation structure if you ask to see an organogram you always have the head of the org at the top. The things that work for us are not things that are normal business principles...no, normal business methods. Principles stay the same.

Traditionally an organisation works like that from the top down, in this case it is the SMME department [at the college]. You could say it is my responsibility to be at the top [in the traditional organogram]. I would like us to turn this right upside down and put me right at the bottom and my job is to assist, to enable, to do whatever is necessary to make Mercy and Naym experts at good project facilitation so that they can make their trainees exceptionally good entrepreneurs so that they can become successful members of the community. It starts down here ...starts from the bottom...whereas in common or normal thinking, people like to think they start at the top. Who are we putting first? We're putting our trainees and members of community first, to serve them, hence the word servant leadership.

[How do you operationalise this?]

I start off with writing the proposal. For example, we're doing one at the moment for Nedcor. I'm responsible for putting it together, one that it makes business senses, but I must acknowledge Naym and Mercy and put together the training and the philosophy here is that you have to run this organisation like a business for the simple reason that any organisation, like a church, if your expenditure exceeds your income, then you will fail: "no margin, no mission." So the only thing this college has to sell is knowledge through training and floor space through venues. It's the only products this company has for sale. So we have to turn everything we do into training and venue space to make this place sustainable. For example, Mercy says we'll do life skills training. Well, how many hours, how many people, we put a price to it, how many rands per person, a hundred? It's about making this place sustainable. It has no other product for sale.

So I suppose that's my main function. And also putting business principles into place because in many ways development and business don't mix easily. Development means allowing a freedom, allowing people to express themselves. Sooner or later business means routine disciplines. For example, we're finding in the beginning with the linen ladies, or with any project, you have to apply development principles which is so nice when you're using someone else's money. It doesn't make sense in terms of business principles, when the concern is how long does it take to make that article, how many can be made per day, what would you like to earn, how would you like to earn by making what you do?

[Could you elaborate on "using someone else's money"?)

Development is not in the short term profitable in terms of income vs expenditure, so you have to develop the person at a substantial cost. The moment the person starts producing goods, that's the moment the business principles start to kick in. That's the time you have to measure productivity, how long to make, how much to earn, if it's R1000 month, then that is 40 day, divided by 6 hours, is so much per hour. Are you with me? The business principles, quality control, making sure the blankets are in bundles of 10...ordinary routine systems.

[How do you strike the balance between development and business principles?]

You strike the balance in the way you operate with Mercy and Naym. You allow them to lead you so that you can lead them. They identify what they need, you don't tell them what is needed. You're just there to add value to them. At the moment, Naym has this theft problem. You click in and you decide, "can you handle this yourself, or do you have to go to the people?" He might have spent a week or days, stressing it--"Who is the criminal?"--trying to solve it, but it is not his problem. That is what I mean by business principles. Bear in mind that previous to being here, I had no development background at all.

[And your learning curve?]

It's been heavy, the learning curve in how to match the development principles with the business principles...

[How long has it taken?]

Well, I've been here 18 months, not even 18 months...

[What have been some of the critical issues, the pivotal or turning points on the learning curve?]

What I'm trying to say is I don't know. It's been a process. There's been no point that suddenly caused an about turn. As I said, I've been wanting to do this for years. I've trained people, but I've never been involved with putting them into business situations. I think what I like is...the turning point is...I suppose what I really love and what really drives me is to see the latent talent, and to see people discovering what they can do...it could be crochet, fabric design. Being an agent, being a part of allowing that opportunity to discover who they are. To learn is most rewarding. That really motivates you.

Take the pottery project, it never dove-tailed into a viable business. So we had to close it. For example, decisions would be made based on development principles, "how do we share the money, we split it 50-50, okay, minute that." That's not a

business principle, you can't make a business on development principles. Bringing the part of business into the vision, the formation, you are bringing in control of your own destiny. That's where the matter is difficult. I'm not sure after a year or 9 months or 6 months, the business principle is adequately understood: you're paying R1600 for rent, R300 for electricity, so make that R2000; R1000 trainer fees, R500 for materials. So it costs R3500 to run the show. If they share 50-50, then it takes R7,000 to breakeven at turnover. In development terms, they were asked how much they want to earn, how do you think we should split profits, or income, how should money be divided. People...one who was illiterate, had no business training, said, "Why not go 50-50?" That was accepted. In development terms, that's great. In business sense, you can not work out profit sharing this way. By sharing 50-50, when turnover varied by 1000 - 2000 rand some months, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see it's not viable. The decision was a development decision and it was good development practise to consult them, involve them, but you cannot make business decisions based on them as principles. So it is not easy to make them to match. My challenge is to find them, the point at which they do match.

[What have you learned about development since you've been here?]

Firstly, I thought we would launch one business every 3 months, and in business terms that was quite feasible. In development terms, 18 months, or 2, even 3, years is the time required. That was what I've learned. The bottom line is not so much to look after the person and his income, but the real bottom line, the real measure of success is "have you been able to change, or influence, not change necessarily, influence the way that person thinks"? The secret...that is the bottom line, can you influence the way that person thinks? And that is what we are doing, influencing the way that person thinks. For example, they are getting paid to do blanket stitching around a lap blanket for Woolworths and there are 2 aspects: how long does it take to do that blanket stitching? If you do one blanket a day, you earn R20 a day, but if you could do it in an hour you could earn R20 a day. The big problem that comes now is that those blankets are on sale for 560 rand in Woolworths and the challenge is explaining to them that the blanket is on sale in Woolworths for that. Mercy and I have to explain this. They think they are being exploited.. The development is changing at this stage, there is no one ripping them off along the way, because I intend to investigate that. How do you explain to a person that they are only making 20 rands on an item that sells for 560 rands... The challenge again is to influence the way they think, the material is manufactured in China, shipped here, landed, and other processes, cut, transported to us, blanket stitching is put on, transported again, there is an agent, client doing that who is also making money out of it, and it goes back to a company who distributed it to Woolworths and to other stores. In terms of development, we now have to train them to follow that process and the business principles coming in and that is working back from the selling price...there is probably some VAT, like 70 rand, so R490, the mark-up equals 100 percent, so therefore the cost price is 245 rands, Woolworths probably pays 200 plus 45 rand for storage, warehousing...so the cost is 200 rand for each blanket. Business training in this country is focused on the craft market, you make something and you work out material and labour, but this is a whole new concept, making them part of a chain that starts in China and ends up in a store like Woolworths, there are so many people involved.

[Do they need to understand this?]

They do need to understand this. You must remember we there are quite a few forces at work here. We train them in certain ways, in certain skills, but when they get home, they enter a whole new environment where various scenarios are enacted, where various questions are asked. They might be telling about the blankets, to a neighbour, or a relative, or a friend, saying that they earn 20 rand for stitching one blanket. And they get questions, like, "Does someone else bring it to you? Is the woman white? Do you know it is selling at Woolworths for R560? Someone is exploiting you..." We think we have succeeded in our training, and we can see this success, but we haven't. Out there, there is a whole current of thinking, so that the only way is to get each part to expose how much they are making, each part of the chain to be transparent and to encourage openness.

It happened last week and this week we have to teach the ladies and tell them they are not being exploited and we have to go to our go-between and ask them to put their cards on the table. So a lot of my responsibility is to do the mental arithmetic to explore whether someone is taking us for a ride.

I think the thing that impresses me, or that fires me up most of all, is two of the items we mentioned so far. Number one, being part of the process that allows a person to discover their latent talents, the strengths they've got, the opinions, beliefs, values already there. Although they might not be able to read or write, they are definitely not illiterate. The other fundamental part is assisting them to adapt their thinking to fit into a commercial world, to influence them. Those are the two exciting challenges.

[How do you track your own development through this process?]

Oh, you become ...I routinely sit and examine myself as to "how far have you come in the last month, the last 3 months, 6 months," in many particular ways. It could be reading. I love reading, I love studying, but not study as in exam study, through reading, and you spot changes, you spot you do things differently, you react differently, and obviously you're responsible for your own self development as well. And you also spot the mistakes you are making. They are becoming less and less serious. That's how you track your own development.

Do you mean as a manager, as an individual, or as a leader? [Whichever is relevant to you.] Oh it's something that continues daily, how people relate to you, how you relate to them, how you are greeted in the morning when walking through reception. There are various indicators the whole time that show you whether you are on the right track or not. It's a matter of being sensitive. There are a lot of indicators, thousands. From when you walk in the morning and say "hi," you know what I'm trying to say? Those ladies working in there, you get a different reaction to what you got a year ago, their expressions are different. When they started in April last year, Meercy and I interviewed them. We asked them certain key questions: "What are your dreams? Where do you want to be in 5 years?" A lot of them just cried, for a man to ask them where would you like to be in 5 years, an unthinkable question, and it just released a lot of pent up frustration, pent up tears, a lot of women just cried if you asked them... So you had these women--if I may use the word now, oppressed, relatively--from that environment--or repressed is probably a better word--just coming here, sitting, here. You watch how the smile wrinkles start forming where they weren't beforehand. You

watch a person lighten up, the expression changes, the personality changes, as they become more self-confident, learn more, become better in some of the skills.

That's the beautiful thing in the development process. Then you come to the business process, and blankets for Woolworths, and the stitches aren't perfect, there is food on the blankets... When you are actually making the articles, every--one--must--be--the--same [emphasis on each word] and every one must be good. And when there are traces of food on a blanket, in spite of the fact it can be cleaned, it is a reject. Can you see what I mean by the business principles not matching the development principles? When you start applying the business principle, it is hard for people to adapt to what you could call regimentation. That is another fact of understanding the market. You see what all of the trainees are doing, the sewing ladies... They want to make cushions, gorgeous cushions. It cost them 38 rand to make the cushion and they sell them for 15 rand. They said no, their dream would be to make something *they* could use, a 15 rand cushion in a heart shape...it was about the heart shape and the 15 rand. That's what *they* wanted...but to try to sell this to a Woolworths. Woolworths will sell it for 250 rand and it has to be perfect. There is the whole thing of adaptation of the way they think. It's the case of not many people understand if they are prepared to pay 15 rand, that is the value *they* place on the cushion. That is the outside market value.

How did I get there? We were talking about how you measure your own development by the fact that our sewing ladies no longer think in that way. We had to put into practise how to calculate what it cost, how to make a 15 rand cushion a 50 rand cushion and that is by concentrating on the finer quality aspect. So looking at the quality of something that comes out, that is a way of tracking your own development. The other way, of course, which I believe is necessary is not existing at this stage at the college, but we're hoping to get going. The whole system of governance at an institution like this should be aligned in a way so that personnel can measure their own performances. For example, in your financial system, we need financial reporting in such a way that a budget becomes a very live thing and that by the middle of February you know whether you made your made your January estimate of expenditure, or exceeded it, and if you need to adjust your business strategy. Too often a budget is given and that is it for the year. Then someone senior tells you that you have been running at a loss. Each staff member should track his performance, then congratulate or reprimand himself before this becomes a problem. And then we will pass this on to our trainees themselves, to use as an example. I believe we all have our personal milestones, to indicate our own development. Then of course how much opportunity do I get to read good books is an important measure of how I track my own development. When I don't have time to read I feel that I'm not in control. You now what the status symbol is today? Control of your own time.

Let's talk about the mistakes we've made. We've taken for granted that people have understood things they haven't really. The mistakes we've made with our sewing group, for example, is a very basic one. We went through the process of showing them the costing overall, from the materials at 17 rand, the buttons, the thread, plus, plus, plus... So those are fixed material costs. The market out there sells an overall [for workers] for 62 rand, so you've got 10 rand for labour and 10 rand for margin. And weeks later they told us they understood that *each* person was going to get 10 rand for each overall. Those are the mistakes we've made. Then the prices of

overalls dropped to 58 rand, then to 53, then to 48, and even as low as 44 rand. Then our challenge was, we hadn't prepared them well enough in advance that only margin and labour can change. We had led them to believe it doesn't matter what the cost price is, you have the right to charge that price. Now that was one of the biggest mistakes we made. They believed they have the right to charge 62 rand, to mark their overalls at 62 rand, so we had to allow them to do that and they got no orders.

[How do you deal with that as a team?]

We share responsibility for that. It doesn't matter which team member makes the mistake, we plan our way so that it doesn't happen again, as in I have done something stupid and it adds value, the 3 of us. [And the other college staff...] It gets too big to involve too many people. What other mistakes have we made? I think in terms of business, as I said, we have assumed that people have understood business and they haven't necessarily. One example, I had spent a lot of time initially and then with Naym, as a team we tried to build partnership with a crowd that makes forest type furniture and they asked if we could help them because they couldn't handle all their orders. Wanted to pay us 30 rand a chair to assemble it, and the trainees said 70 rand or nothing and we lost the order. We could blame the trainees, but we rather share the responsibility. Those are the mistakes we made.

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Keith  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Monday, 14 April 2003  
Time: 8:00 - 8:50  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you explain what you do to a person not working in your field?]  
Oh that's a difficult one. Give me another one.

[Okay. What is development to you?]

Development to me is the same as when a person comes to my door, knocks, and asks for a fish to eat because he's hungry. I wouldn't give him a fish, I would give him a fishing rod and explain to him or her that this is a long-term investment in providing fish for him on the table. However, I would go with him to the water and sit with him, next to the river, until he caught enough fish by himself, help him out, spend some time with him. So I have developed him from being dependent knocking on the door to independent by catching a fish.

Development to me is teaching the person and holding his hand through the process until he can do it on his own *I* am convinced he can do it on his own. So I've developed him from one point to another one. [Those points being...] The one point is where he's got limited skills to help himself to a point where the skills I've learnt him and taught him in that period now make him independent, make him look after himself. And also during this period one very crucial thing I like to teach him is the "why do you do this, why do you do that." I'm not developing a robot. He needs to understand the reasoning behind everything, the context he fits into, to understand he is part of a world of related systems, interacting with one another. And to create a strong chain you need to have strong links and the strength of the chain is only as strong as the weakest link, so if he is weak the link or the whole chain is going to break. So he needs to understand his position in this whole system. We can now go on depending on ourselves, we need to do something for ourselves.

Now this world of related systems that he is in, speaking specifically now about farm people, farming folk, to understand the whole farming operation and why certain things must be done at certain times, will have an effect on the product that is being produced and when this product can't compete globally--we are dealing in a global situation where our market is overseas--in the end if that process is not working properly or how it should be working, in the end he may not have a job. This is what happened in past years. The farming system has been operating, but the farmer has been shortsighted and didn't see the market needed to change, and at the end the world didn't need his product, and the farm worker ended up at a squatter camp and couldn't help himself, knocking on my door, asking for a fish and piece of bread, please. Now, I can take him, there is a need now, I can take him and say this isn't the end of the world, let's look at this thing. With a minimum help from myself, you can help yourself. So I needed to develop him from being dependent on the farm, now being an independent individual, setting up his own stuff, doing his own things, growing vegetables, raising chickens, not look at it on a small scale for the kitchen, but on a bigger, more commercial scale. So I need to give him, or expose him to, the

harsh business world and to give him the skills to survive there so he can reap the benefit from the inputs he has done on this side. So apart from giving him the skills, I need to walk the walk with him for a year, or two, or three or even longer, to get him to stand on his feet.

So I don't know where your Paulo Freire is fitting into this thing, but in my teaching, in my method of teaching, I do make use of role plays, going from the one known situation to the unknown situation and looking back again and evaluating my method and adapting it again if it's not working, constantly shaping it because people are different. The one thing that will work with the one group won't necessarily work with the other one. I need to be creative, let the creative juices flow while in the situation. So I will use very different methods in getting my point across to the group or person or individual in reaching my goal in the end because I want him to be independent in the end. I need him or her to be operating on his own without my interference or guidance, then I know I've developed him into a proud individual, looking after himself.

You must understand where I'm coming from. I mean, I've been, I grew up in the apartheid era, lived on a farm, was born on a farm. My father has been the butler of this farmer and his wife, my mother has been looking after their kids, and we were living in the servants quarters at the back of the place. We've been taught to [address white folk] as "madam" and "master." [In Afrikaans...they're British, they came here, and I realised they are more racist than the Afrikaner folk. With the Afrikaner folk you know you must go through the back door. With the British folk you may come through the front door, but he doesn't want you to go in his pool but his dog is in there swimming with him or the dog is on the front seat of the bakkie and you're in the back. I don't hate him, I just acknowledge that those things happened.] I also had to mind the consequences when I stepped out of line. When I finally got out of this situation, got married, and out into the wider world, I finally saw all the negatives of being not a first grade citizen, but a second grade citizen of South Africa. I've been a second grade citizen for 20 years of my life. I understand people working on farms are like robots, being told what to do, what not to do, to just do the job. I would love for them to be transformed from being told what to do. It becomes very emotional for me because I've been there. I had to pass... I grew up in the Franschoek valley and after matric I went to the University of Western Cape and I had to pass two universities, white universities to go to my university, Stellenbosch. We could see UCT sitting there in the mountains. I had been staying in Athlone and I had to decide not to go to certain classes at the end of the day because I had to catch a bus or train in order to go back. So I have been facing the harsh conditions of those years. I can understand the situation. For 20 years, like people with tunnel vision, I didn't even know there was apartheid. In the last few years of high school, I've been asking myself the question why do we have to pass all these schools, why are we separate, why am I being told what to do, to do certain things by white people all the time.. So that's where I came from, where I'm coming from, my roots. Now I have the opportunity of zipping up my boots and going back to those people and developing those people into first grade citizens, proud of themselves. When you can look back on what you've done, "this is me, this is what I've done", it makes you very proud.

[What is the most challenging aspect of your work?]

You know, trying to...trying to influence the individual. I can't understand why he can't see he is oppressed at the moment. He can't see it. He still clings to, is loyal to, almost like a slave to his master, to his employer. And trying to get him away from that situation, to do something for himself, trying to get him there, is the most challenging one. Because the moment after using different methods to get through to him, and he sees the picture, and he moves on, that gives me satisfaction.

[What methods do you use?]

Making examples of my own life, telling them facets of my own life, how I've been oppressed, but not calling it oppressed, telling them how I grew up and moved on. He relates to that. He can relate to that as well, he starts seeing things in a different perspective. But it takes time.

[How much time?]

Depends on the individual. Could be anything from a day or two if I have a 5-day session before he starts seeing it. Sometimes 3 days, sometimes a week. It all depends how exposed this individual is to other things, the outside world, if I may put it this way. But I only have 5 days to be with him and then he's off, so I need to hammer it in.

[Long pause, asked if we were finished for now, said he assumed we would need more sessions. I asked: Has the Training for Transformation been relevant or useful to you in any way?]

Well the first session to me was very interesting in being exposed to Max-Neef and Paulo Freire, to their thinking and their methods of doing things. It was nice to see it from their perspectives as well. And I was really, I was all psyched up about this. Then I tried to fit this into my methodology of teaching and seeing that the people I train normally come for specific things, specific hard skills, it was difficult for me to employ these skills into this method of teaching that I've got. At first it is very time consuming because I need to fit it into 3, 4 5 days, the period they came for. Maybe if I taught something else, a different subject, but teaching them specific hard skills, the person should demonstrate his mastery to do this. So I had this question, "how can I fit what we got in this first session into my teaching style. And then we went into the second one [Training for Transformation] and we are now being explained how you can do it. Then I realised, "no, this is not going to work for me. I need to teach them certain hard skills and this is not going to work." However, there are a lot of similarities in the methods being used that I do employ in my teaching. For instance, going from, making use of what they call codes, I am doing it and getting through to the people, trying to get them from always being taught what they should do to think for themselves. From the one to the other one. From dependent on the farmer, to doing it by myself. So I could employ a lot of the, the methods but I had to adapt it, to fitting it into my session of 5 days that I do have with the people. However, the hard skills they must walk out the door with, that the farmer is paying for, must be priority number one. It makes it difficult to employ the Paulo Freire style into agricultural teaching. But, as I told you, I am interested in vegetable growing and those sorts of things. It comes out that you start listening to people, setting up meetings, identifying what their needs are, identifying what their afraid of, and channel that energy into achieving the objectives. For instance, making them small scale chicken farmers or vegetable farmers on this small piece of land that has been given to them. So from that

side it works more. But in the teaching of certain skills, it becomes more difficult. The farmer sent them, he is our client and he is paying the bill.

[Can you explain how you do what you do, the process you follow?]

Right, let me see. Well, I will have to...let me get this right. If somebody wants to do what I'm doing, that's a lot. Well he needs to understand that people have different needs. And before he can satisfy those needs of the person, he first has to look at what this person has got at the moment. He needs to speak to the individual, if it is an individual, and try identify what makes them tick, why would people go to work every day for little money, struggling, when just outside of the gates there is a vast opportunity in the world out there. Why are they in that situation? Are they so sucked up into the situation that they can't get out of it? Or is it the love of farming, that they feel comfortable in farming, growing stuff, working on the land? When he establishes that, he must show him a glimpse of what can happen out there, what *is* happening out there. You know, the sky is the limit and that sort of thing? What are the opportunities he can go for? What would he like to be if the circumstances can change? Then to take him by the hand and mentor him. So that person cannot just think he can step into my boots and think he can do it. It's going to take some time. [How much time?] It took me quite a few decades to get where I am now. So it will take...he needs to...I need to workshop him and I need to mentor him and I need to evaluate him...and adapt him, otherwise he'll die. [What do you mean, die?] Well, if he is going to screw up everything, he won't be able, I'm convinced, he won't be able to transform that person into something better. Then he has failed, then he has caused some damaged.

[What might be the criteria on which you would evaluate him?]

The criteria for success of that individual is when that person [the farm worker] can stand up and say, can go about and demonstrate his business on his 2 hectares, his chickens, he's making himself this nice person, that is the criteria, when that person can stand on his own feet. That is the price that will tell me he has achieved something. [You would look at the results, then...] Yes, I wouldn't care much...yes, I would care...much about how he does it, but the result will speak, because the aim is to move the person from being dependent to independent. You're making me very "deurmekaar" now...we can continue this, can't we?

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Mark  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003  
Time: 10:20 - 11:10  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]

I think I would want to stay true to the vision we as a group of people, i.e. staff, came up with and that is that we try to do change lives through education and service in--and we work in--poor and disadvantaged communities. Whatever those needs are we try to respond. I think what is important is that we are demand-driven as development practitioners rather than supply-driven. What do I mean by that? That is, in the development world you've got a lot of experts, so-called experts, and in South Africa alone we have something like 98,000 registered non-profit organisations, all geared towards development. And with what I would regard with the lack of development happening one needs to always be sure that this is not just a creation of jobs for people in development, but that we impact peoples lives, wherever and whatever that may turn out to be. So, in describing it to somebody else, I work with the poor and disadvantaged and we as an organisation try to improve life for them, but ultimately for us all, quality of life.

[How do you do what you do?]

I think I do what I do because of who I am. I think there are a number of contributing factors that go into what I am and therefore what I do. I think as a white person in post-apartheid South society, having been conscientised and educated by black activists and allowed into the process of building a new South Africa, I find just being given that chance is something I don't want to respond to lightly. So, with...and as a white person who has lived in community with black people in disadvantaged communities, I find the disparity between lives in disadvantages communities and lives in advantaged communities something I just can't accept, I have to do something about it. And then I have an energy, an inner energy, because of who I am that I think fits with what I do and then I just love [emphasis] people. I think I see people, if I'm able to stop for a few second before I meet somebody, I always, or most of the time, am able to recognize the other person as gift. And I always, whenever I leave communities and work behind, I always recognise the ability to live and work with other people as a great privilege, a great, great privilege, because people are gifts.

Okay, so I think what happens is my energy plus the history out of which I come plus my love for people plus I think my undergirding theology that all people are created in the image of God...when all that comes together, I do what I do. ...Give me the question again.

[How do you do what you do?]

I do it by giving people hope first and foremost. I think often in communities I've worked in--on the ground, one on one which I can't do much of anymore because of the position I hold--I would always start by asking what people's dreams are. I would also start...because that unpacks, and open doors, and stays then a demand-driven, a people-driven, a people-centred development. So as an entre to all that people-

centred stuff, I ask them what their dreams are, for the way forward. Dreams, plus encouragement, plus the challenge not to give up when times get tough, and the promise I will be with them normally sets us on the road. Then I enjoy...I think that energizing people is part of the how and energising people involves challenging them, encouraging them, being able to keep holding the vision in front of them. And then also by bringing them together with each other, keeps the whole process on a positive track. I lack many skills. I think my gifts lie in the energy, energising, encouraging and people skills. I think that the project management, administrative skills are what I don't have and think that affects the how because I think it could be done much better. There always seems to be an energy created when communities tap off each other, and catch a vision of things happening amongst us. And that people can sense without trying to explain. People sense it because of the community coming together. I think also the lack of planning, monitoring and evaluation skills also contributes toward not achieving best practises, but I think I'm working on it.

I think the other part of the how is that I pretty much leave people to--fellow practitioners, staff members--to pretty much run with their own agendas. Someone reminded me the other day that good leadership is allowing others to achieve their potential. That has its pitfalls. I think life is a risk. I also think in the how that I do it, I work from the seat of my pants, walking on water, taking chances, and as I said earlier, not stopping to administer, rather just going with the flow. So that's how I do it. [Pause.] Do you have another question?

[Now that you have brought out these ideas, thrown these things into the air, like shaking a carpet at the particles are floating in that beam of light, what comes to the top of your mind?]

What comes to the top of my mind is that I'm slowly coming to terms with the fact--and this is very difficult for me to accept because I really would like to change the world and it's going to be a continuous battle not getting despondent because of this energy that wants to change the world--I think if I...I'm slowly coming to terms with that, that the second prize is a little vision, that systems that we live in and live under and live by are complex things and I know that if I pull one bowstring the reverberations or something similar to that, like a pebble being thrown into a pond, there are ripple effects that I won't be able to see the results of, but I know that something is happening. The second vision is one of the pebble in the pond and the fact that if I drop whatever I've dropped into this ocean of life there is somehow an effect. There is a little exciting discovery in recent times by fractural geometrists who in their investigations are studying the chaos of a wave, or the so-called chaos of a wave, and because fractural geometry is dealing with the minute or the fractions of geometry or geometrical processes, even in the chaos of a wave there is a design and that even the smallest part of the chaos of the wave contributes to its overall space. And the discovery by these same geometrists, the postulate that the wings of a butterfly, a small butterfly, flapping its wings in northern Russia have an effect on the weather pattern in the southern hemisphere, encourages me to carry on.

So again to reiterate, if I throw all this stuff up, I see myself as a pebble in a pond, and I somehow believe it does have an impact.

[You started saying before that something was difficult for you to accept...]

Yes, that even my small life makes a difference. Because of this energy inside of me that just keeps going and is not satisfied with not changing the world, so the danger I is I just burn myself out trying to change the world and it just wouldn't happen. So the realisation is that even if I play a small part, it's okay, I may not change the world, but doing my best to change the world is also enough.

[What does changing the world mean?]

I think changing the world has very much to do with my understanding of liberation theology and the struggle of the poor. That changing the world for me would be envisaged as eradication of poverty and all forms of oppression. So that's what I consistently see in front me. That's changing the world.

[How do you track the process in yourself?]

I think at the moment it is very difficult to track that because of the complexity of rural development, the amount of work, physical work, is almost physically impossible to cope with. So the time available for integration of all the stuff that is happening is not there. So it's dangerous at the moment for me. Personally. One needs space to reflect, to integrate, to evaluate, to re-plan, re-strategise on a continuous basis. But that needs time and space that is not available at the moment, so I get back to running by the seat of my pants again. The last question was...

[How do you track the process in yourself?]

I think by measuring my lack of sleep sometimes. By a physical feeling...of varying levels of feelings of stress, of becoming aware of fears, of failure, and letting staff down, those fears are a track I'm revisiting. I sometimes am able to breathe and look for the positive in the day, instead of pure workload, and try to go home with a sense of peace and I always promise myself when I cross the mountain I will leave work pressure on this side and try to find space to integrate on that side, but I don't have the skills to do that. So it could be part of the answer to a better management style of my own life as well as generally... Are you saving these things, it's not going to crash? [Yes, I'm saving.] This is dangerous stuff you know... How else do I track it inside of myself...

I think I constantly am in trouble with family and others because of my preoccupation of thoughts and schemes and I'm hardly ever in the now. And I think partly the reason for this is I'm processing all the time things at work, things for the future, developing opportunities for the poor, all happening all the time, and I find myself staring at somebody that I'm supposed to be talking to and I'm in another world sometimes. Yeah...so being told to come down to earth by my family and friends is often what jolts, or jars me into understanding this is what...this is a challenging thing for processing something that needs to be addressed. I don't have the skills to make the switch... [Long pause.] Ask another question.

[What does the development that you do at work have to do with your own development?]

I think that I've developed a measuring tool inside of myself whose entry into the hermeneutical circle, into a question that called me into the ministry a number of years ago. I was in a successful corporate position and amongst many other things, there was a recurring question and vision that took me to the end of life, to the end of

my life, to the point of death, and made me turn around at that point and the recurring question was, and still is, "What do you want to see?" And I think the answer to that goes back to the vision of this place, is that I would want to be faithful to others and positively impact others lives and whenever the times get tough around losing my way, I know that I have impacted on a number of--no, not a number of--a few people's lives that I've seen changed due to my interventions into their lives, or my rubbing shoulders, whatever. And I think those women, and they're all women, are my prizes...almost because they stand tall today and came out of very serious systems of oppression. And just knowing them today, getting a little phone call from they now and again, or me phoning them...

What was the question? [What does the development that you do at work have to do with your own development?] So the development in other people's lives encourages me in my development to continue. But I'm also inside of myself... [in barely audible voice] Wouldn't be intellectually...would it be emotionally... [Resumes] I'm shallow in my knowledge of myself, so I think...so what I'm trying to say is that the development of myself has something to do with the development of others, but at this stage has been more to do with work inside myself, my internal work, because the process of development doesn't just happen through others, it needs to happen inside of me, the work of consciousness-raising inside of myself, of developing myself...that I'm very shallow at. Why? Time. Time and space. I regard it as a luxury at this stage.

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Mercy  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Thursday, 10 April 2003  
Time: 2:00 - 3:00  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]  
Well, you see, I see myself mostly as a person who is obliged to change peoples' lives, not only by giving skills, but by changing their mentality, from who they are to the future person or the brighter person. For example the people we are dealing with now don't have a clue about working for themselves. People don't believe in self-employment. For me I see that as a challenge. And we don't have jobs in South Africa and they don't have a clue there are no jobs in South Africa. So we have to move from being dependent to being independent. So that means if a person then has acquired the hard skills such as painting, embroidery, or sewing, it doesn't mean they have to go into a factory to work, but can find other ways of making jobs for themselves with the skills that they have. For example, one of the women who is part of the group trained in sewing, etc., she is now in Easter Cape and she phoned me in February to say, "I'm not coming back. I'm making money with the skills I got from the college. I'm painting clothes, making designs of pots on the clothes and selling them on the streets on the road to Coffee Bay." So she said, "I'm making money." So that's what I want to bring to the learners, that entrepreneurship culture to them, "I'm thinking for myself, working for myself, I'm not being exploited by anyone." It's a challenging thing because you can influence the person to change, but it is his or her choice to change. And that is what I am doing at the present moment.

And again one of my challenges I'm facing at the present moment, like I told you outside, is that we're at a point where these people have different skills, we have different markets, and we're dealing with the markets at the same time and a lot of different products and a lot of different designs, so how do I encourage these people to be able to finish their work when the products are needed by a deadline? So if we have an order that is due in 2 weeks time, I have to work hard to make sure the order is finished on time. So I have to work with them to make them understand that they need to fill this order. So the challenge is to put that in their minds so that they don't need me to do that for themselves. At the beginning of this year we took them to one of our markets in Somerset West, 2 of them representing the group, to one of the interior designers who had ordered something from us. The reason for taking them was to see the quality they should produce, the neatness, and the cost of the things the woman was selling. I felt so encouraged, because when they came back they said, "Guys, if we don't improve the quality of the work there is no way we're going to get money." So for the fact that they saw it with their own eyes, felt the materials, saw the cost, now with the Woolworth orders they know if they don't produce the quality, they won't get the order. Now they work here late hours. Even without me, they continue to produce, maintain the quality. "Don't ever think I will be there, you have to go stay outside in the world, and be independent," I'm always telling them that.

[Pausing to reflect for a moment:] I'm throwing everything in there now...I'm just talking... [That's fine. You're relating what is important to you.]

At some stage, people don't work if they're not happy. I'm also taking that into consideration. How do I do that? I go in to their [work] venue and do a listening survey. I use my problem-posing approach, bring in the code into the class. They might say, "We have a problem of money." And I say, "We have to find a way to solve it, you guys." There's a lot of dialogue between me and them. I'm doing a lot of mentoring and [my message is] "You're welcome to come to me with questions, or if you aren't feeling happy. But you have to work independently, look after yourself, no one will look after yourself."

[Now that you have come full circle with describing your work and this message to the learners, can you sum up what you do in one sentence?]

Human development facilitator. [And what is that?] This is someone who is training participants from dependency to interdependency to interdependency. [And if I don't know what this means?] Let me give you an example. Due to the fact in Grabouw we are facing serious unemployment, people are waiting for their relatives to come and support them. You take those people in, training them in hard skills, soft skills, consciousness raising as one of the components, changing that person's thinking into money making and to business thinking. That's where the independency comes from. [And the interdependency?] The interdependency comes when she goes to the community and shares those skills with other people.

[Talking about consciousness, how do you know when yours has changed?]

I think therefore if you want someone else to change, that is how you see your consciousness is changing. When your consciousness changes, therefore you will be able to change someone else's consciousness. How do I know? [Rubbing face with hands, thinking hard...] I think by...by for the fact that I care for them, for the participants, for unemployed people that means my consciousness has changed. That I want them to be independent [means] my consciousness has changed. When I was in school, I was trained for adult education, but not in a practical way, just learning what I had to. But now that I'm in the field doing it, my mind has changed totally from the way I was in the school, in college. I see it as a reality, it is happening. So I have to work out a way to work with these people so that they can go from a poor life to a better life, a darker life to a brighter life. If you've got skills, you're no longer the same person you were before. The value will be added and your life will change, your thinking will change. If you have money in your hand, you think to yourself, "How will I use it?" When you don't have it, you only think, "I don't have any money."

[How do you find yourself in this field? Why development?]

First of all, it's coming from my background. I'm coming from the Eastern Cape, from very poor rural areas where they're waiting for their family to send money to them. There is no work, there is no hope that there will be work. Everyone is moving to urban areas. My thinking is you can make money wherever you are, if you have knowledge and skills you have power. If I can train a person to have knowledge, skills and positive thinking, they can make money. Like that women in Coffee Bay, she never thought she would have the skills to sell those things to tourists. Most of the people we have here are from the Eastern Cape, they have business skills,

encouragement, and they can go to be a good person back where they came from, from their roots, that is one of the reasons.

And again, there is something I always say. I will start my own business. It will be more motivation if it is my own business. So if I'm training people or facilitating, and saying "starting your own business is the ONLY option," they will feel very encouraged, motivated because the person who is facilitating is also a business owner or businesswoman.

[How does all of this come together?]

Let me make an example saying to you, I'm starting a hair salon. I know during the week I work at the college, but Friday afternoon people will come to my business and I will be busy with the hair salon, so I can schedule it. According to your market, if you're starting a salon, during the week people are busy, but during the weekend they are available, not too busy, to make themselves beautiful, the face, the hair. Or I can employ someone to be with me in partnership. If I'm at work, she can be busy running the shop or the salon. But the point is that the skills I'm teaching I'm also helping someone. For instance, in Grabouw a lot of people have businesses, but they don't know how...their businesses are running at a loss. Why? They don't have business skills! In order for the business to be successful, they must have a separate business account, they must keep this separate from the personal things. They won't grow in their busy if they use this money for their personal problems. They don't have this thinking in their minds, not to use this money for nonsense or for unreasonable matters.

[What might be some of the strategies you use to bring this change of consciousness?]

First of all, workshops are very important. You need to have workshops each and every day. You're giving them information, you're sharing, giving them time to share their information because of their experience, so they're also learning as well as you, the facilitator, you're also learning from them. If you could see our schedule, our year timetable, we're supposed to have workshops with these people 3 times a week. So we have to look when their not too busy so we can put that in and workshop people about this consciousness raising. Even when they are busy or during their lunch times, I go to them and motivate or encourage them, and whenever they have a problem they have to share their problems. They must not be afraid to come up front with their problems.

[How do you know their consciousness has changed?]

You're talking about the output indicators from them? The way I measure them? I can give you an example. Last week I went to the community to recruit more people because we need more people who are going to be training in beading. We have a lot of orders from Saudi Arabia and overseas for some very nice stuff. We don't have enough capacity. We got 10 people. I was meant to train these people in beading, but one of the older trainees is doing it and you cannot believe what those people are doing right now. The fact that she cares about the new people coming from the community to train them. She said to me, "I can see that you're busy, so why don't you give me an opportunity to implement the skills I have?" You can see it is working very well. The language is the same, so when there is a question from them to her, it is easy to understand; they understood from day one what to do because the

language is the same. So the training takes less time and they can capture what to do immediately.

[You gave examples of a shift in consciousness relating to yourself and then to the learner in Coffee Bay... How would you explain the *process* of consciousness changing?]

So you mean how would I explain this consciousness thing to a third person?

[No, even to yourself, if you had to put it into words?]

A good question. [More thinking, pause...clearly a difficult question for her.] I would say the process of consciousness raising is to empower or to enable people to develop a critical understanding of their society and how to change.

[This is a definition, not an explanation.]

The question you are asking seems similar to the others, so I will repeat the same answer.

[Okay, let me give you an example. Let's say you are riding a bike. It feels great, the freedom, the fresh air, moving along enjoying yourself. Now, in order to get to that experience, I'll have to explain that before you get on the bike, you raise the kickstand, then swing one leg over and place one foot on a pedal. But before you place the second foot on the other pedal, you have to start moving a bit or else you'll fall over. You see? Explaining the process of riding a bike...]

The process of consciousness raising is very much challenging because you have to understand the people's thinking in order to change them or raise their consciousness. You must have the power, ability and passion of doing it. It's like when you're taking the child to the school and telling them the best thing is going to school, but she is going only because she has to. It is only when the teacher is putting things in her head, the information is then helping her see where she is going. It is a long story, because you can't say, "I'm finished now," because new difficulties and challenges are coming in life. The people who are coming now will go out and start their own businesses, but we can't say, "This is it, bye-bye." We have to monitor them. It is a very long process, it is ongoing. And there is no other way to change someone's mind if you don't know how to communicate with that person, if you don't understand their circumstances, if you don't understand their background, it's not easy to do it.

[This reminds me of Xhosa story telling, giving lots of examples...][We both laugh...]

My lecturer at Technicon said that the only way you can help a person understand what you want to say is by giving an example. I gave my students an essay to write about unemployment, causes of unemployment and the solution. I want a person to understand what it is, how are they going to solve the problem. You don't have to be narrow-minded, but to think broadly about the essay.

[When asked about the strategies you use to raise consciousness, you spoke about the workshops. How do you put together a workshop?]

First I plan it, checking their availability, and making the necessary arrangements with the scheduling and the tools.

[So, how do you do what you do?]  
When I think I'm there, you change me... [We laugh.]  
How do I plan what I do, that's what you're asking me?  
[Yes, how do you do what you do?]  
Planning, listening... No man, that's not the answer. I don't know now.

[I give the option of thinking more about it and letting me know on my next visit, or of thinking more about it now.]

Can't you give me another question, not so tough, so that I can just *flow*?

[Okay. What were some of the catalysts or main influences in your choice of work?]  
First of all, it is what is happening, seeing people not having hope, not believing in themselves. That changed my mind, to help someone help themselves. I've been talking to a lot of people who don't believe in themselves, don't believe that they are unique, special, that "no one is like me."

[So there wasn't just one incident, it was more gradual?]  
Let me give you an example. I live in town, not in a suburb area, so you see a lot of unemployed women coming in, they're moving up and down, moving up and down, looking for bags, dirty stuff, and I used to call to them and ask, "Why are you doing what you are doing? You have talents, you have your thinking, you have your brain, you can not go on like this. You are very lazy, I see you as lazy. I see you can support or maintain yourself in other ways than scratching for old clothes, food." The women would act like they are feeling ashamed of themselves, don't want to change their situation. So luckily the college is offering everything for free, and it can help take you out of your circumstances. I'm talking to them without fear, without sympathy. You won't be able to develop a person if you have sympathy, saying, "Oh shame, shame, shame, bring her food." She must find a way to get food, ask herself, "How will I get food?" If you say, "Shame, shame," she will still rely on you, expect you to give her food. But I say, "Wake up, dear." That is the only way I'm doing it. I don't want anything to do with the mothering people. There are people doing that deliberately, they don't want to work, they don't want to wake up. No one can help you if you don't help yourself.

[As the interview period was now complete, Mercy agreed to think about the question "How do you do what you do?" and write something down for me before my next visit.]

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Naym  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Thursday, 10 April 2003  
Time: 10:00 - 11:00  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]

Like I told Mark yesterday, I don't think anyone has no knowledge of anything. Everyone has an idea of something. What I'm doing is tapping into what he or she knows. Like we've been taught to use a code or picture and out of the picture they tell me what they see, they describe a possible situation and usually my last question is, "Does that happen where you stay?" Like a picture of unemployed men or youth: "What do you think could be solutions to that problem?" So basically what I'm saying is that people are not empty vessels, so if you ask me what do I do in light of someone who doesn't know the field, I would say you don't fill the cup, you get the most out of what is in the cup already, and slowly fill the cup some more.

I used to think that way, that people are empty vessels, when I was teaching, but after going into OBE and the Grail thing, I changed my methodology of teaching. "I'm the man, I'm the guy with the knowledge." Yesterday [at a training he conducted at a farm] I learned from a man who left school in Standard 3! That is what was said at the Grail, that education is a dialogue, and for me that worked. I've made a study of the principles we've adopted from Paulo Freire, the problem posing and the dialogue method. Perfect! It works, it really works. The first thing you need to do, you need to be prepared, what to go with to get a particular outcome from a particular lesson. Sometimes you won't, but sometimes you do. When Paulo Freire says education is not neutral, I go there with my perceptions, my background and my way of thinking. I don't think that all of that has been said when education is neutral. You're working toward an outcome, it may take you longer to reach that outcome, not everyone thinks the same. You might get sidetracked, so you must know where you are going. For me that works. I would like the traditional teacher to adopt that method. It's nothing new to us, using codes. We didn't call it codes back then, we called it pictures, movies, diagrams, the "hulpmiddel." We've been using that, I've been using that for a long, long time. But I needed to go down to the guy's level, get the most out of him, allow him time to respond, and then build on that. It's easy on me. It makes my teaching easier. I don't need to be "the man" anymore. I can be one of you, they accept me as an equal. That opens the door to dialogue and to trust, and that leads to other things.

[How would you say that in one sentence?]

I can do it...I would say, get started in moving from where the learners are and also know where you are going. That almost captures it, but not really. It doesn't do justice to what I'm saying. That's giving it a shot.

[Pause, watching me type.] You're really writing all this down, aren't you? [What I'm doing is the same process that you're describing, starting where you are, so I don't want to leave anything out or put it into my words. Even the questions you ask

show what tangents we might take. For example, you might not have even noticed what I was doing over here.]

You know, Kate, I think the sooner anyone in the training business...the sooner that person realises education is just not education for the sake of education, it's transformation, the better. What does it mean when you say you're educating a person? If a person can find a link between education and transformation... Paulo Freire says transformation is not something you can do for something else. For me, that phrase stuck with me. I cannot do it for you. I can only facilitate the process. If we internalise it, if you start believing it and start living it out, the change in your methodology and what you think...it's not just methodology, it's the way you think and the way you see life, the way you see people, especially those who are in your hands for education. You can't talk about education and leave the other world transformation out. I'm basically in education to transform, I can't do it for you, you have to do it for yourself. It could be so easy, if you are creative and if you believe in the process. Because sometimes people say things and it's just nice to say things. Like I'm a development worker. So what does that mean? So what are you doing? I'm training or in service. So where does it lead for the person you're training? If you don't give him the tools to change his environment, you've done nothing, You've basically wasted your own time and his. That's what we've been doing a long time, not giving the person the tools. I'm going to put it simply. Don't think me mad about Paulo Freire! There are a lot of methodologies you can look at, but he says make the person aware, conscientise the person. And I explained this to my wife because her brother was going for a job interview, so I asked him what do you understand when it comes to transformation, what do you think transformation is? So I explained to him that if you make a child aware of his circumstances, the place he stays, of society, the world, if he becomes aware of things and you allow him to get the tools to take responsibility for his life, you've done much more than a mathematics teacher can teach him. Because he knows what happens in his life depends on him, he becomes responsible for his life. If we could do just that.

I come from a teaching background and I think we are actually failing our kids, because we don't give them the tools to go out there and be an individual. We don't give them enough to be independent...or interdependent. We fail them and that's what I think of the so-called teachers. They don't see education as equal to transformation. They see education as education. And to me that's where we're getting it wrong. I don't know if that makes sense? [It's only important that it makes sense to you.]

Last night I had a long chat with my brother-in-law. He just got out of university and he's applying for a post. So what can he offer our society? What can he bring that no other person can bring, that teachers should bring? He said knowledge. I asked what is that child going to do, how will he use that knowledge? Is the cup empty? He said he only learned the stuff at university in order to pass the exams and then he forgot it. That is the sad thing about the university. I've been to university.

It's all up here [at a high level,] not down here [where the people are on the ground, using hand movements]. You have to allow people to be part of the learning. The methodologies they use, [at the university] is that you have to be "the man." You're not "the man," you're not all-knowing. We have to share in the learning.

[How did this process of consciousness raising happen for you?]

I think it happened already at the Grail [at the Training for Transformation in Kleinmond] and even before that I think my love for philosophy and just leadership and motivational speeches. I thrive on those things, I've got lots of books, gazettes, and it all fits in very nicely with what happened at the Grail. And I think why it went quick for me is that I could hook into it at different levels of what was happening at the Grail, so understanding what was happening immediately, coming with a background with that kind of thinking. So after the Grail, it came together. We bought books long before we went to the Grail... So me and Mercy are the 2 who really clicked with what was said, what Paulo Freire and Max-Neef are trying to tell us. We've been doing a lot of curriculum work, work on the training curriculum, and we internalised it. So for other guys in the college, it hasn't been a good...no, not a good, but a smooth, process, because they're still struggling with what is said at the Grail. I could get what was said quicker.

[How do you know you "got it"?)

I think the change not just in my teaching, but in my thinking, I would not say I get like 100 percent, there's still a lot of things I need to learn, change, adapt, you can never say you've got it. If I say that then I don't allow myself to learn anymore. Like I'm not the progeny of Paulo Freire or Max-Neef! I want to be me and use what I can take from them. I take what I can get with them and mix it with what I have. I have 10 years of teaching experience, and use other methodologies, and use a nice blend. But what I like about Paulo Freire and Max-Neef is exactly what I've said, they've got a direct, not nice, but a direct link to education and transformation. And for me it just, it's widened my thinking. And like I said, if you can somehow connect the two, otherwise you're wasting time. If you can do that you're halfway there. And I've connected it, I think I've connected it, I've seen the connection. Education can't be on its own. You are educating to transform.

[What is the evidence on which you base your own transformation?]

I would say that evidence or proof for me are the results I get from the trainees, the people I started training after the Grail, especially after the second [Training for Transformation] session we went on earlier this year. To me, evidence is that. And also evidence is also the way I prepare myself for a training session. Evidence is the way I put a workshop together, or notes together, or an exercise together. For me that is evidence that there is a change in my facilitating process. That is all the evidence I can think of at the moment, in my class, in my methodology, and in my preparation, for me that is evidence.

[Can you give me a specific, concrete example?]

Usually when I prepared myself, I make damn sure I know everything on the topic and pre-judged... not pre-judged...I told myself this is the question that could be asked, so you make damn sure you can answer all those questions. "I'm the guy you listen to me." Now I don't do that anymore. The first thing I do, I think how can I use a code in the frame of mind. How can I get people's response out of it. For preparation I used to take at least an hour. Now I get a code, see how appropriate it is to my outcome, and put down a few questions to guide them. The whole change has saved me a half hour just in preparation time. Of course you can't foresee everything, like I used to think, like all the possible questions they'll come up with, the trainees.

Now it doesn't have to come from me. And in my class, now that I prepare like that, I am more comfortable, they are more comfortable, there is more interaction, I don't do half as much talking as I used to do, there are more questions, dialogue, and I see them as adults with prior knowledge. And for me it makes my teaching much, much easier.

[And more difficult in any way?]

I think the difficult part of it, Kate, you now have to be creative in your planning and it doesn't always come easily because of time. I do my preparation in the evening. If I don't get stuff, if I don't get a relevant code, it frustrates me. Where am I going to get that code? I don't prepare weeks in advance, but in the evening before I need to do my training. But I don't prepare myself way in advance. Then I need to find a relevant thing. I won't go to bed if I don't have the proper thing, I won't be able to go to sleep. I need to plan at least 3 or 4 days in advance because I think I put pressure on myself. It's not really the process. Like I said the difficulty for me is being creative, finding the right way, coming up with innovative ideas, getting people involved in the training. That is why I told Mark yesterday...what was good there was that there were a lot of people sitting with caps on their heads. He needed a quick role play, and he could use the caps as products to be sold. He was doing some business training. So what I'm trying to say is that while teaching you must always be aware, not to make it easier, but how to get the most out of it, the training session. And it's not always easy. I have my non-creative days too, but you have to think and be creative. It's not just your average process because it expects of you as a facilitator to be creative, and sometimes that it is difficult for me.

[What are your overt strategies for this kind of reflection on daily basis?]

I think for me, I don't really have a strategy. I have a drive to be good at what I'm doing. How I do that is by reading, by talking, even this, by dialogue with a lot of different people with different ideas that normally differ from the way I'm thinking. To get their thinking, to compare and see and look back, and to look at me again, where I am at. One thing I used to struggle with, I *used* to think everyone needs to think like me. I'm always right, I'm the witty guy. And when I explain to you something, back in the days, when I would explain Paulo Freire to someone, I would expect them to understand what I'm saying and adopt it! I'm still like that sometimes... But I think now I allow myself to learn, to learn from others and that's a *big* thing, and I'm growing from others. I'm opening myself, it's been for the last 3-4 years that I've changed my attitude. It is now almost like a weight is lifted off of myself, I can just be me, I don't have to pretend to be something, and that influences the process of facilitation *big time*.

The bottom line: I need to learn more, might it be from other people, books, videos, I allow myself to learn. I'm not a Paulo Freire-mad or Max-Neef-mad, it isn't a cult to me! I compare them to others. But what has stuck with me is the key principle of both of them and that is what I like.

[Was there one thing that happened or was it a gradual process?]

It was a gradual process, but there was one thing that was a turning point in my life. I had problems with my health and isn't wasn't a medical thing and I went to see a... not a psychiatrist, the other one...[A psychologist?] Yes, a psychologist. And I spent quite a few months with him. And just getting to know a person's self. In those

sessions I got to know myself, or know myself better, and that gave me quite a lot of insight and gave me a fright to learn certain things about myself. After my sessions with him, there was a willingness, no a *wantingness*, more than a willingness, to change. But it didn't happen overnight and I needed to remind myself of certain things.

[Interruption: Adrienne with message that Naym should phone Henry urgently, he is waiting for some specific information. Then Adrienne asked a question about how to cut some fabric and discussed alternatives briefly with Naym. When she left, I asked Naym if he needed to go phone Henry and he said not this moment...]

[I wanted to ask you why you feel you need to stress that you're not stuck on Paulo Freire or Max-Neef?!

When me and Mercy needed to put consciousness raising in the training...like in all the proposals there is a training component, and this is what we do when all of the guys [i.e., college staff] are involved in the process. And we would have a mock presentation, we've even changed the name [i.e., conscientisation], taken the name totally out of it, changed it to "conscious awareness," which puts it into quite a neutral ground, because we were accused of being Paulo Freire-mad by my colleagues. But Mercy said, "That's the *only*..." And I said Mercy, "Don't say *only*, but that it's a *good* way..." Because I think for me and Mercy Paulo Freire was a good starting point for us so that's what I like to stress. I'm not in a cult because we've been accused of being just that!

[Why development?]

Well, I was in teaching, and then I was in IT also teaching, but then the crossroad came: do I go into IT full-time? I like computers, I love working with it, if I can spend my whole day working with it I will. But then the question is: Who is going to benefit out of it! Especially in Grabouw, because I was born here, I see too much poverty, suffering and pain, and I just can't ignore that. And it's true, I've experienced it. We visited with a group of students, we went to the squatter camps. It was raining, there was water flowing out of the squatter's house, there was a kid outside, with bare bum, bare feet and runny nose and he looked *happy*. And I got a picture of my son almost the same age, and I asked myself what did this child do to deserve to be in circumstances like this? Who I am to judge him, not him but his circumstances? He didn't choose them. But he was happy.

I couldn't understand that, I couldn't get that. Before, to me, life was supposed to be good and if you wanted to be happy you must have a nice house, a warm house, clothes, car, but this kid doesn't have any of this, but still he's happy, or at least he looks happy. So the question came, so if you think that is supposed to be life, all those nice things, then so many people don't have it. And where do you, how do you measure happiness anyway? Do you measure it with material stuff? And I realised not. And I think we had a talk about that last time [during my previous visit to the college]. And I was at a training session where this guy did this to me. He said that I must wipe out how many years I am, wipe out all those years, start at my age now and take it 10 years forward. Clean slate. You get invited to a function, a limo picks you up, and a big door opens, it says inside "congratulations" and when you arrive there are ministers and important people there, everyone, people taking pictures of you, you are the spotlight. And then you get handed a programme, and it says there are 3 guest

speakers, the first is your wife. What do you want your wife to tell these people to make these people believe you've been a good husband? Then I write down those things... The second speaker is my child, and what do I want him to say about me as a good father? Third is a colleague. Then when I'm writing all these things down, especially with my kids, to be a good father, I didn't realise it at the time...guess what? There's not one material thing on there, on the list were loving, caring, giving security, it was all those things, it came from me, I wrote it down, nobody told me to write it down. For me that's important, that's what I want my kid to say, I was there for him, not that I gave them a 1000 rands every week. So If I'm writing that, am I on that road? And I decided I'm not going to hunt after money any more, I'm not going to spend my free time taking a part time job, because to me that isn't important to my kid. For me it's spending time with him, normal time, quality time. And with my wife, because me and my little one, she's 7 years old, and we had a terrible relationship because we didn't see eye to eye, because to me she was a rebellious child, but then I realised I haven't spent enough time with her and in a short time, in 6 months after me deciding I used to think I was "the man," if you ask for a bicycle I just give you anything you ask for...in 6 months, Kate, I promise you, a big difference. We're the best of buddies now, not buddies, we're so close. And my little boy, there is a big improvement. And even in my relationship with my wife, it changed dramatically because of my change of perception, or perspective. My mindset changed, what is important to me. It came from seeing that child happy with nothing. I would not want to live like that. He would not want to live like that, but he was still happy, laughing.. He impressed me big time.

[Edwin came in while Naym was relating the above and said Henry urgently needed Naym to call him. I suggested that, now that Adrienne and Edwin had come in, Naym might want to call Henry before Mark came in!]

[Resuming after the call...] In Somerset West, I was on my way to work one morning, it was raining, and here was a guy in the back of the bakkie in front of me. I was not in a good mood. I have a car, a house, a refrigerator, and here I sit being angry and in a bad mood while the rain is dropping in his face and he is *laughing* with his friend! I thought to myself that *he* should be feeling like me, he is probably on his way to a building site, where he'll be out in the rain...and I'm going to my office, where it's comfortable, with a heater. So, why am I not happy like him? And those are the things that really raised the question of what was important for me. And I think also kinda make me realise that I wanted to change, appreciating other things other than material things. We had a very nice discussion, me and you, and it happened right after that [incident]. I'm glad I saw that guy in the back of the bakkie, because it helped me to focus again on what is important. And I think I benefited, the people I work with benefited, others, my family...everyone because I've changed my focus. It's unbelievable but it's true.

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development

Interviewee: Nicky  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Tuesday, 6 May 2003  
Time: 10:00 - 11:00  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]  
Is that the first question? [Well, it's one way we can begin the interview. I can ask something else.] Would you like a coffee? [Orders hot drinks for us.]

The first thing for me is to look at the person's level, the way I'm going to explain it, the terms I'm going to use is important, the tools I'm going to use, the pictures, a diagram, things like that. For me it is important for me to take people out to the sites to see what people are doing, that is important for me. If we have visitors from overseas I like to take them out to the site and let the people speak for themselves, really see what the people are doing out in the community. I found in the past that I had people when I started with a project and you are talking like this [like we are in the office] and you grab some of things that people are saying, but when you can actually look it is a different impact. I think it is more effective. [Pause, saying she doesn't want to read the interview transcript afterwards.]

[What does it mean "looking at the person's level"?]  
If you know the people, for example, if somebody from, maybe from a medical background comes then you will talk at a certain level, do the presentation at their level. When maybe it is children coming to visit the college, you will talk on their level so that they will understand. If it is employees from an organisation you will do it on their level.

[Can you explain "the presentation"?]  
That is what I am trying to say. If you do training on different levels we are back on where you have to tell people what you are doing. I think if it is employees I will make more use of pictures more than talking all the time. Practical things like pictures and diagrams rather than to talk all the time. If you talk about physical, mental and social, you use those terms, you give a brief explanation of those terms. [Another pause, reiterating she is uncomfortable with reading what she has said, that she should be careful with the way she speaks.]

[How does this fit with the mission or ethos of the college?]  
I normally, when people ask me, I normally give this, not talk of only my department, but very briefly say what the college is doing and then come back to my department. But I think the whole vision of the college is where we want to make a positive contribution, where we want to change people's lives positively, to look at the whole holistic approach and how we are doing different things at the college and working together as a team, taking the holistic approach. But you give a picture of the whole college, not only the department. Because I think when you talk to people, what we are doing is successful and there are lots of other places and organisations that struggle to do things like this. Normally the NGOs are concentrating on specific things, and not the holistic approach to the whole human being.

[What is the “holistic approach”?]

The holistic approach is looking at the all aspect of the human being: physical, mental, social, spiritual, economic, everything about a person. But I think for me the most important is the spiritual, knowing yourself as a person, because once you know yourself as a person, all the other aspects will be positive...to be honest with yourself, knowing yourself, and once you know yourself, you will know when there is problem with the social aspect, a physical problem or a psychological problem and then deal with that. Because you see what happens, sometimes especially in nursing--and we spoke about that yesterday as well--when you look at a person’s problems, 80 percent are not a physical problem but rather a psychological or spiritual problem. One impacts the other. When you do have a physical problem, it is going to have an impact on your social, psychological and spiritual, and the other way around.

[How do you do it, the holistic approach?]

I’m doing it in my person life, me as a person. And also I’m doing presentations or training sessions on personal growth. When I started I did life skills, like self image, communication, conflict management, and etc., but going through my own crises, for example, when I had to work through that I gained a lot of experience and gained knowledge and from there I took that information and put it into training sessions. And to teach people how important it is to look at yourself as a person in a whole holistic approach. And going through that experience and teaching other people how to do it, I’m using drawings, to teach them, to show how the one can have an impact on the other. Like you take personal growth, for example, and show people about knowing themselves. And looking at your weaknesses and strengths. And I also take people back into their lives. To take them back into their lives, I do it with snapshot of 10 or 15 years ago, and then ask what was the photo about, what feelings did you experience, that is like positive, and I ask them to go back and look at the negative things that happened in their life and then to take the negative and change it into positive. Because I believe whatever happens in your life that is negative, it does make an impact on your emotions, because I find that in training, and an impact on your thinking. And whatever you feel and think comes out in your actions. So in teaching them how to change the negative into positive, to be honest with yourself, yeah...so for me that is important, to know yourself, who you are, to be honest, to be open to negative feedback from people. And to change that into positive. [Pause. As she has visibly relaxed, I ask her if our interview might not be interesting to review since what she is sharing is so important.] I think it will be interesting to look at what you are saying, because you never read or listen to yourself. And I think I will see that also, to look at yourself, to evaluate yourself as a person, and to see where you can change.

[You must have to do your training with a great deal of sensitivity...]

And what I’m doing with this whole thing of personal growth is using pictures, drawings. For example, to look at your weaknesses and strengths, draw an animal with some of your characteristic, take two characteristics of yourself. But the whole idea of working with the person is to draw themselves and also to explain [emphasis], because I am working with a group, and that is a way of knowing yourself as well as the people you are working with. When we went away in March, the Groenland Aids Action Group, we were working together for 4 years already, and I did that session with them. In this session, some of them cried that day, we actually learned things from one another that we didn’t know. So I focused more on practical things. I have

one picture where different people are at different levels on the tree, and I ask them where they stand. I ask about the personal life and in the work place. And I ask them to keep that and see what happens in 6 months. I ask them to colour it. And ask what happens in this 6 months, to see how any positive change. For me, doing personal growth training, I grow every day, doing personal growth with other people is also a healing process, going through my own crises. I can honestly say that today I reached a place of inner peace within myself, but the healing process, that is going to take very long. For other people maybe not so long, but you have to go through different stages.

I work with other people, and ask them if they are reaching out, what can you offer other people, someone going through a personal crisis. Like an introductory session on reaching out, I start with, "Are we really reaching out? What is it like to experience a crisis?" And I go deeper into that, use examples, for example, what do you think is a crisis? To take them back and say to them, "For me normally it feels as if you are sitting in a very deep, dark whole" and to work on those emotions. Asking, "What do you experience as a person? And when you are sitting there and someone comes and you hear footsteps, what do you experience then? Maybe there is a little help, maybe they are coming to help. But then the footsteps fade. You lose hope. But then the next moment, there come more footsteps, there might be a little light, and always when there is a light, there is hope, and a future. And then the person is going to come to give you a hand and pull you out of the very deep, dark hole." It is important to talk about us, and ask them if you ever experienced a crisis like that. Maybe there is a lot of us sitting in that deep, dark whole. Or maybe we are the cause of that, pointing fingers all the time, or are we the people who are going to help them out? How do you want to be treated? What can we offer to other people? I often explain to them that I am one of the richest people, in things money can't buy, instead of giving money and material things. Then I do the practical experience, like when you have an apple under the chin with 6 to 8 people in a circle, with the hands behind the back. That is just to explain to them that you cannot be doing everything alone, you need other people's support. And turn to the person next to you, hug them and ask what does it cost? It's about respect, love, when you talk to a person it must be a person you can really trust, who can keep confidentiality and who can listen, and pray for that person. Not to turn your back on them.

In my personal life, I socialise with a group of people and you know personal growth is one of our topics. And for me it's so nice looking back to this group and how did we motivate each other. You know, sitting over weekends, one of us having a problem and the way we are assisting and supporting one another, and it really is a very positive outcome from using that knowledge of personal growth not only with training, but in your personal life. To tell people we are all different, we are not all the same, to accept you the way you are, and not how other people want you to be.

[And how do you translate this with learners here?]

Very practical things. Make them part of the whole discussions. After my second session on personal growth, people came forward for counseling sessions, identifying personal problems and seeking for help. [You also do that?] Counseling, yes. Not on a regular basis. What I'm trying to do is when people really want to do it, will I do it. For me, counseling is a on-going process. I don't believe in one session and then you

leave the person. I do counseling with families that I've been with for 3 or 4 years. When that person needs you, yeah.

[How does this fit with the vision of the college?]

For me it is the department I'm working in, health and community development, and that is why I will fit in with the various departments doing life skills for them. But I think also the college staff need more personal growth sessions, capacity building, personal growth. I started off doing one session with them, and we need more sessions. Because I believe you have to start...one of the presenters said one day, "Let the peace start with me." Whatever you are doing, you have to start with yourself. You can't go out and teach other skills and things. It's like, practise what you preach. It is important to, especially, I get very upset about waiting when there is staff meeting, and you're waiting for people to come and you are doing a training session and you expect your learners to come on time. You must start with the in-house things and then go out. You must set the example.

[How do you compare what you do with the training you received in Kleinmond?]

We're doing most of the things within our department. The things that they are doing in Kleinmond, I've been through those trainings already in my previous work and also in my current jobs. I was involved with the master training in life skills and also teaching life skills. With the education department and health. When I was a school nurse we had to go through this training. When we started life skills in the schools, I was one of them training the teachers and principals, at different levels, working with the teachers and the children in the class and the parents in the community. So it was on all different levels. I did master training twice already in life skills.

[Did you learn anything new in Kleinmond?]

You know Kate, for me going through training twice, it's always a plus because in Kleinmond especially there were different terms than what we were taught. Here and there, there was some experience, some practical things that I gained, but most of things I had already. But for me going back into the training is like a refresher course, evaluating yourself, see what other things were added. For conflict management, how many times did I go through conflict management and there was a very nice example: she had a hat on with different paper, she had her coat on, and that was a thing I learned again, to take back to my training. There were other practical things to use, for me it was like a refresher course.

[What do you think about the Paolo Freire concept of "conscientisation" discussed at Kleinmond?]

My approach is everything what I'm doing must be according to the needs of the community. And the work I did in the past was about not from the top down, but from the bottom up. You have to get people's information, to see how they feel about it, to involve people. One of four projects is the health promoting schools project where you also use the holistic approach, with teachers, students, parents, and administrative support. You go back into the school and you do a needs analysis with all of those groups. With the children themselves, you see what are their needs, same with the teachers, parents, admin support team. You will do it differently according to what they want. For example, going into the school and also with the groups write me on a piece of paper some questions, you don't have to write your name, just whether you are a boy or girl and your age group and throw it into a box. Sometimes people

don't want to identify themselves, don't want people to know. Then I take that, look through the question. Then I will do a training session on their needs. When you go to school and do training on TB, how do you know if they know about TB or it is the information that they want? Like teenagers. And I believe also to make that interaction between you in front and the group, for them to be involved in the discussions and you don't dictate to them, it is a 2-way discussion, talking, and if there is really something that they want to ask and not talk in front of the group, wait for a break and also to say to them, the whole thing about respect when somebody talks because most of the things we are dealing with are very sensitive issues, especially if you work with HIV/AIDS working with the anatomy and sex and things like that.

[You interpret Paolo Freire as taking a bottom-up approach?]

Doing listening surveys as well. When you are moving around, doing networking you pick up, you listen. The one thing I forgot to talk about in personal growth is that whole window thing, The way you see yourself, and how other people see you, things that you don't know about yourself. [For example?] Oh, I wouldn't say it wasn't things I didn't know, but things I knew but not too honest about it. Like one of my friends told me that my daughter manipulates me and I know it, and I said oh I know it, and 2 weeks after he said, "I didn't have the right to tell you that." And like one of my friends, you still need personal growth and maybe a year or 2 ago I would get cross, but now I say personal growth is an on-going thing, you need it every day. If someone says something negative to me, I...and in the workshops, I know I have to work on it. One of the weaknesses I've got, I can even talk about my weakness, when someone talks, and I'm sitting there anxiously, I work myself up and I'm so worried that I'm going to forget what I'm going to say and I talk before that person finishes. And so far only Mark will say, "Wait a minute, Nicky" and I thanked him afterward for helping me with that. He is the only one with the guts to help me with that. I am very open to my weakness, if other people don't identify it as a weakness, you may not know it is a weakness...You may know you are doing something wrong, but you don't know it is a problem for other people. And what I really believe in is if you have a problem with anybody you must go to that person with a right attitude, approach, because if you don't do that it is also going to have negative impact, the way you are going to treat that person is going to have a negative impact. It actually builds up a frustration in you, whenever you look at the person you see that negative person until there is conflict. That whole thing about personal growth, you will know how to work in the community, you will know when there is conflict, and how to handle it. I see conflict as a positive thing, but it depends how you handle it. The right attitude, the right time, etc.

My daughter is my real role model. [The one who manipulates you? Nodding.] She is 6, grade 1 and you know there were incidences when I really learned from this little girl. For example, one day I bought a top and a skirt. And she said to me, "You just buy and buy and buy. You keep on complaining that you don't have money but you just buy and buy and buy. And I asked her what else can I do. "You must wear your old clothes." It makes you think. On the one hand you don't have money but you just buy. Recently, she got up and said, "Mom, how would you feel if you keep on asking me something and I keep on saying no to you?" I said, Audrey, if I asked you something and you said no, maybe I'll accept that answer. Another incident. I put on one of my socks on her, it fits her nicely. She got up one morning, and asked, "How

would you feel if I asked you to put my socks on to go to work?" I said to her I can't because they don't fit me. Even though she is 6, that is what we were taught in psychology, we focus on emotions and how do you feel. She is testing how other people feel, throwing things back into my court, though she is so small, teaching me things I didn't take note of. And using all my air time...to call her father.

One of these things I did...it's like a puzzle. And there was a piece missing in my professional life, I couldn't deal with a dying person, I just couldn't. If one of the health care workers told me about terminally ill person, I would do anything to avoid it. After the death of my sister...

[Stopped recording here as Nicky shared personal information.]

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

University of Cape Town

## **P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development**

Interviewee: Nita  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Tuesday, 6 May 2003  
Time: 9:00 - 10:00  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]

I would start by saying that I am working in the admin of the Elgin Learning Foundation and my responsibilities are actually, we are the core of the college, the admin department and we need to work together with all the other departments to see that everything goes according to schedule and everything runs smoothly. To be specific for what I'm doing, Adrienne who runs the reception and Althea the finance department and apart from that I manage the budgets of the admin department and I need to see everything goes according to that. I am also working on lots of HR things of the college concerning on that and I am actually moving more into that than I was before. I'm also doing training for the small business unit. We were consulted by the Nosipho Consultancy to do training for people in rural areas, people who want to start their own business and there I am working with a group of 7 people and that's about it.

[How do you make all of that work?]

That's a tricky one. How do we make it work? I don't know if I'm going to be on the right track. That is a very difficult question. There needs to be a good understanding amongst each other, to be...everyone needs to know what their responsibilities are. And if everyone knows what the vision is, they can work towards that, they know what the importance for them to be there, they would strive just to do that, to reach the goal that was set out for them, for us. With the support of each other, that is very important, every day things are not going the way you want them to go, so it's good that someone should be there, or someone to, you know, that you can talk to, that will understand, especially in the environment we are. It sounds like we're just busy with training. We're busy working with individuals, different needs, different personalities, and if you are not strong enough to work with the outside, you will crack. So it's important that you have the support of your colleagues as well.

Like I said, we're dealing with lots of different people and personalities and you don't know the kind of person you are going to deal with unless you are with that person. Sometimes people are difficult, some people are nice and some are not, so you have to learn to cope. We're only humans, you can only take a certain amount, then you sort of get fed up, but you can't express that feeling on that person. Or you have to get to someone you can talk to, to off-load, like a colleague. It's not good for me to go home and talk to my husband. Okay, they know what we're doing generally, but they don't have the experience, what you deal with on the outside. So it's better to speak with a colleague.

[And the vision?]

The vision of the college? [Yes.] The vision also, you know, say for example you've got something to do, or you want to do within your job, obviously everything you do needs to be in line with the vision, but it's not only going to...I don't believe the

vision expresses totally what you are supposed to do. You will always go beyond that to the best of your ability. Our vision is to change lives through education. Not only education, but you are going to work with the individual as well. So how you are going to work with the individual is important. So we have to think about how we are going to change that person's life. Change people's lives through education and training, and service, that's it.

Also important, just to get back to the vision as well, so it's important that the services we deliver... it's important that I don't do training for the sake of training. I want to go back to the person and see the difference I made in that person's life. I am doing training in business administration, I'm only teaching two in the group. When we started off, she was very uncomfortable and didn't know how the relationship would develop between the two of us and it was important for me to establish a good relation with her from the start so she wouldn't feel, wouldn't be afraid to talk. Through the training we have several meetings with the Consultancy, every three months we have meetings where you have to report back and they say they can see the difference in her already. Because one of the things she wouldn't do is stand up for herself, she would let someone stand up for her. I wanted to teach her to do for herself. And one of the things is when she has orders, people need to pay her, or they pay the Consultancy and the Consultancy pays back into her account. She notices that and she would never go to them and say the money is not paid yet, this is what is outstanding, of the money she was supposed to get in. Nowadays she phones them up. As part of the exercises we went over was how the process are supposed to work, I went through that whole process with her and she could phone them up and tell them how much she was supposed to get. And that sort of gave me, I felt good, that is giving me a reflection of what I wanted to see in her. Busy developing in her, a bit of self-confidence. [Pause.]

[Is this how you are putting vision into practise?]

As an example I've told you the story of Molly for example and that is one of the ways I would use. Not only to make people sort of like, not just to make people feel self confidence, it should be more than that. That was just a start. Can we stick on that question, I've just been thinking now, to change lives, how are we going to put that into practice? I'm going to refer back to the people we are dealing with. And when you get a person you are going to work with, when you are going to look at the person. Or some people have the ability to see that person, the kind of person that is. So you can or I can at least try to change that life, or to contribute something to change that life through education, training and service. But at the end of the day, my vision can be there and I can strive to reach that vision, but without the...if that person is not going to work toward that vision with you, or if that vision is not the vision of that person as well, there is no way you can make a difference in that person's life. Horse to water. It's when you are asking something back from the person. For example, if I can make...what does that statement say, that a person must also give something back from his side, otherwise they would also depend on you to give to them even if in the form of training or service. So if we can work together we can make a change in his or her life.

[Could you explain giving something back from his side?]

It might be willingness to learn, for example, or working together, probably have the same vision as you, as yourself, or what the organisation stands for in those terms.

That person must also have a goal, not only the college's goal to change his life, but the students have a goal themselves, where they want to be, or what they want to become, you can sort of make a decision on their behalf, they must feed you that information and then you can work with that.

[What is your process of thinking about that?]

How did I come up with that? I don't know, I just sort of imagined...I see the person for the first time, the way I'm going to look at him, the way I'm going to see that person, and what my expectations are going to be and what that person's expectations are going to be. And take it from there. Look at the vision. Look at their vision of what they want to become, how you are going to use that to change his or her life, and how you are going to contribute to that and how you had never thought about that before.

Mmmmmmm [sound indicating "no"]...I'm lying...When I went on the micro MBA course we had to visualise the different types of people we're working with, that we are working with as the client, and I had to go back and use that information and see how I was going to use it to fit into the vision of the college.

[So is this an active use of the process you learned from the micro MBA?]

It's not that you get the opportunity to do that, Kate. It's not always easy to get the opportunity to that. This interview makes you think, makes you actually see what the importance is for you to be here. I mean you sit in your office, you do your job, but you don't always get the chance to sit, like sitting here talking with you, but just let your mind go and see what you are dealing with. What is the importance for me to be here? And that is what I'm busy thinking, what am I doing? You know? And it really does make you feel, what is my purpose for being here, what am I going to do about it, especially looking at the vision for example. It makes you think, it makes you wonder why you do what you do.

For the love of it. I also wanted to be a social worker when I was at school but due to factors I couldn't go any further in that field of specialty. I actually tried to get a short cut through the police department, to do it through the police department, but that didn't work. I always had the love for people irrespective of race, gender, because...I actually wanted to, to give something back. The kind of person I was before...I have probably changed, especially in this environment, since I started here...was to always care about people and there is one of my strongest points, I think, is to care for people, to want to be involved with them, and to give something to them in some sort of way, whatever the need might be, to try and help where you can.

Remember I told you that I wanted to be a social worker and that is being involved with people, doing lots of things for them and understand difficulties they experience. And I often wondered how I would be able to do that. Okay, you've got people in the community around you, you get involved in church things, community things, but sometimes that is not enough and before I actually worked here I couldn't, I couldn't. I thought I was involved in the church organisation...you couldn't express yourself...the more you, you were actually limited in what you could say, and here you have the opportunity to deal with the individual itself, you can go beyond what you experienced before. Like I said when I started here I saw it as an opportunity of getting it out...What I have inside I can share with other people.

[Why do you think you couldn't do that before?]

The social work or getting this inside of me? People look at you and see where you are actually coming from. And often they will look at you and especially, especially where we are actually coming from, and they will look at you and sort of look *down* on you. And if you are in another environment, they will look at you in another way. And you will actually be able to see the difference between the way they look at you first and the way they look at you now. Things have changed. I have changed, I have, I have become a more stronger person than I was before. That I can say. Yeah, I think that is it. I'm not going to go into detail about where I came from.

[I wonder if what is going on with you is that same thing going on with Molly...]

I could say that there might be some resemblance there because if you look at the way, I'm just taking the example of Molly, the way that Nosipho [Consultancy] looked at her first and what their expectation was, and the way Molly dealt with them previously, she wouldn't stand on her feet. So at the end of the day, Molly is busy, she is in the process of becoming a stronger person. Saying what she has to say. Now take it from my side, when I first started here, I wasn't as strong as I am, I guess I've become more self-confident, I've become a stronger person. I hope I don't...

I looked at myself and then looked at Molly and actually see the resemblance. No, it is appropriate, it definitely is. It actually is a good thing that it is happening because I can reflect in her the way I was and the way I became after a while, you know, looking at the kind of person that I am now. And it is giving me the opportunity to go back and reflect on the way I was and the way I am now. And also on Molly and the way she is busy developing, and the kind of person she is becoming at the end of the day. It would be good, because it would give me reflection and also remind of certain things. And...of certain things like how it's going to make me wonder, it's going to take my mind back and it's going to make me wonder, can it be that I went through the same processes Molly went through, did I experience that? When I talk to Molly for example, she will say I'm feeling good, I've done something, it will always remind me of the way I was and the way I am now. So...and it will give me in the end the opportunity, though Molly is going...we are two different people, and she won't experience things the way I did, she will be on a learning curve...for me as well. She will be a reflection on how I can be a better person as well and we can actually learn from each other, giving, taking....

[Mark came into the office briefly to fetch a document and Nita stopped talking, saying she didn't want to speak in front of him. When he left, I asked, "Why?"]

There are certain things you are going to feel comfortable talking about in front of other people. And some you won't. Say, for example, do you say that I think...is it appropriate to say this in front of him? You think before you talk.

[How important is it to do this?]

First of all, it will always, it will remind you of certain things, okay? And normally like the way I would look at certain things now is you can think of something that happened in the past or the way things were and it might be and then you look at it and how you dealt with that thing, and the way you became a stronger person as I said. But at the end of the day, something might happen again, then you can go back, look at it, how you changed and are different, the process that you went through, how

you dealt with it...Let's say it was something negative, how you took that negative, the process you went through, turned it to a positive and on that basis it should give you some, a bit of confidence. Because often you will find if something goes wrong you will sit there and go *rrrrrrrrrr*...but at the end of the day, or this is the way I used to look at things, you will....But at the end of the day that is the way you will look at the negative. It is totally up to you how you will turn the negative into positive. That is what I went through. You can talk to someone, a colleague, they can make you feel better. But it is you as a person that needs to deal with. What you take from the inside, you as a person needs to work on it. Especially when there are feelings involved. They can help you deal with it...Reflection will help you, put you on a path, I would say, on how you are actually going to turn the negative into positive, or how you are going to deal with certain situations. I must be careful how I chose my words.

[When did that change happen for you?]

I can tell you exactly where. When I first started to work when I left school, I'm looking at the kind of person I am, when I was *rrrrrrrrrr* and now *aaaahhhhhh*. When...okay, the kind of personality I had, my personality has definitely changed, I've become I stronger person. When I first started to work, you're coming from school and you don't have any experience, you are dealing with the different kind of people, you didn't have the opportunity to do that at school before stepping out into the real world. I struggled to get through that, I was so sensitive. Say for example I didn't do something the way I was supposed to do. And people or the manger would say something. I would then go sit, bite my nails, cry, very depressed, I was actually very depressive, because I didn't have the experience, how to express myself, and also lack of knowledge, but a lack of it probably would be a lack of experience that actually rated that. And you know I went and I...like I said, I would crack, I would cry, I would go home, and would want to leave. You know the people you work with, they have experience, know exactly what they are doing, they are always... And like I said, you are working with different personalities and you would get that person who was trying to help you and the person who would try to crack you down. And the person who would crack you down you let it, and they would. And it went on for 2 years in my working experience and lots of things went on in between. Eventually the shop closed down because they were liquidated or something. And I went to another job, and I went to...I only worked with men and I didn't experience much of that there. I tried to get into, beginning to see or to get a bit more experience of real life, but when I started here I started off as a receptionist and being a receptionist meant you had to deal with the public and this is actually where I got my exposure in terms of the person I am and dealing with the different kinds of people, that wasn't my strongest stepping stone, being in front. I actually enjoyed its emphasis, and for 4 years I was sitting there, dealing with the people and learning how to cope with certain things, how to deal with the different people, like I said, because there you have the opportunity. You know, there are the phones, the people are coming in, there are *people*... so I would say in that 4 years I could actually see myself and to be honest with you, I would go back and say they could see the difference in me, they would say when you started off here you hunched your shoulders...and after the first 3 months that were difficult, you had to get into shape because it is a totally different environment. And they would say you have grown. Yes, I have grown in terms of the kind of person I am now and I became a stronger person. That was my stepping stone, I got the exposure, the experience, a lot is happening there, though it doesn't look like it. So yes, after the... within that period of the 4 years it actually gave a

reflection to...but also with the support of the persons you actually worked with. If it weren't for them who let you, to expose you, let you get experience... You know, you get people that you work with that limit you only to certain things, and then you get people who allow you... I don't know the word in English, bear in mind I am Afrikaans. What is the right English word? It's like living within...giving you the opportunity to take it and run with it, like I am going to allow you to run with it, to the best of your ability, and go with it. And there are some people who limit you and don't give you the opportunity to run with it. You can only run til a certain point and then you have to stop there. But I guess that is what happened in the 4 years. Take it and run with it. It was something new. When I started here, the college was 1 or 2 years old. It was also something new for them, something they had to experience. But it turned out for the good. I guess. No it did. [Pause.]

[Noting the time for the interview was finished] Thanks for putting me in a tight spot!

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

## **P.A.R. and Grounded Theory: Leadership in Development**

Interviewee: Veronica  
Interviewer: Kate  
Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2003  
Time: 9:15 - 10:05  
Location: Elgin Community College, Grabouw

[How would you describe what you do to a person not working in your field?]

It depends who the person is I'm talking to, I guess, but I would...the first thing that would come to my mind is that I'm working in community development and that's my major function. And from that there is various things that I do. I train, I try and supply information and I am also raising funding, but it's all got to do with community, rural community, that is how I would try to explain it to people. More or less, I would also add that I would initially arrived at this place with 2 objectives, one was to do research for a Ph.D. and the other one was to be involved in grassroots work that would change the status quo in rural areas for Western Cape. So I had those 2 things in my mind since I've been here the last 2 years, but that is fundamentally what I would like to see as my major task.

[So, can you describe how you do what you do?]

What I do now, or what I've done, and have been doing? [Perhaps both...] I came here initially on a very part-time basis, initially I just worked with information and started thinking of doing an adult information centre and a school resource centre, so that was my major involvement at first. And then I still taught at UCT. But then as I got more involved here, I spent more and more time here and I got drawn in, especially with the change in management with Mark, got involved in small business initiatives and fundraising. So at this moment in time, most of my time is spent fundraising, doing proposals, looking for connections, partners, and some of my time is still spent on the school, the mobile library project, but that is not the major part of my day. I also help with training of adults, adult training, in the agriculture learnership, but that is also a minor part, but mostly I now work with fundraising. Did I answer your question?

[It's like peeling the layers of an onion, isn't it? Can you explain how you go about doing your work?]

My particular way is to do read a lot of research through looking at journals, development journals, doing a lot of newspaper scanning, networking with people who know more than me, like Mark, DMI, yourself, so I'm building up a knowledge basis in my office, you know, of potential partners, potential donors, so I'm actually doing a lot of research at the moment. I'm doing quite a lot of proposal writing, and this is all very much exploring the best way of getting to funders at the moment. I've got some partners I'm already working, I'm getting funds from, so that I manage also, project management. And I work closely with our fundraising consultants, Downes Murray International in Durban, so that is a lot of the stuff that I do. I also network with our department a lot, especially small business because I agree with Mark that if we want to go into community development or to change lives, that is the way to go, get people to earn money, to start a small business, to generate money. So I network a lot with Henry, Naym, Mercy. Because I was in the department last year, to help them with their work. I also do a lot of networking with the agricultural department

because they asked me. And Health. So I get feedback from them on their funding needs, their ideas about activities in the communities, and the costs. And I also mentor the intern we've got in the mobile library project, I help her with her studies and her practical work. Yeah, and there is a lot reporting, back to funders I'm involved with in the moment, report writing.

[Could you explain "DMI"?)

Mark, from his previous experience, he used DMI for the fundraising for the organisation and they are working in 2 ways for us: they have a direct mailing initiative, whereby we've just sent out 30,000 letters to people in the U.K. We have rented lists, charity lists, of people who are inclined to give to good causes, so 30,000 letters have gone to the U.K. asking for money. So I spend a lot of time with DMI to draw up...we've got 2 stories that have gone out to appeal for funds. There is a very emotional story that is from Mark that is signed by him, and there is a direct appeal, for 20 pounds, 30 pounds, asking to buy a child a book, or something for the creche. So I spend a lot of time with that, making sure the mailing has gone out. Another thing I'm being drawn into more frequently now is the design of our training courses, our learnships with agriculture, looking at our curricula within the national qualifications framework, so that is also a part of my work. Education and training, fundraising, and reporting.

[You see how much more there is to what you do then where we started...]

Sometimes it's a problem, frustrating, and sometimes it's challenging, because the organisation is very dynamic, almost organic, changes almost weekly with regard to priorities and deadlines with things that come to the college or ELF that never even thought of, that is just arriving on our plate. And as I said it can be very frustrating because there's not a lot of structure--I'm coming in, I'm reading my e-mails, I've got a class now-- it's not much like that. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad, I think we need to find a little balance somewhere in there.

Talking to you made me realise that I at the moment might be a bit of a jack of all trades here, and I'm doing a lot of things and I might not be doing all those things very well. Due to the nature of the beast, we are called upon to be multi-skilled, all of us actually, and we're in that process of getting there. Because fundraising is something new to me. When I came here and started working with the mobile library project, I realised we needed things, we needed to find funding to staff the project because we needed a person who could do the day to day library work. I was at that stage very part-time and I was till lecturing at UCT a lot and I wasn't very interested in working in the library, I wanted to manage the project, but we needed a library assistant. We also needed books, the bus was supposed to go out to schools, but there wasn't appropriate materials to go out on the bus. We had some hand-me-down books from Japan and the U.S., England that weren't appropriate, Eurocentric stuff, Emily Bronte, Charles Dickens. And this is predominantly an Afrikaans area and there were not appropriate books to put on the bus. When looking for funds, I had an instant success, I got the money. So I think the manager said, "Aha, we have someone with talent here" and I got drawn into that. I'm basically an educationist, lecturing all of my life. I got married very early and the first 10 years of my life I spent raising my family, so I'm a bit of a late starter. I also didn't go to university, I got all of my education through distance learning, and I started working in mornings as a librarian. I got into my chosen career almost by accident. So fundraising was

never part of my job. It is interesting and stimulating and can be disconcerting because people do not part easily with their money, corporates. That is why it is a very specialised field and this is why we need to bring in some expertise. This is slightly off the topic...all this talking and reflection makes me think I'm diversifying, getting a bit off what I came here to do, perhaps a Ph.D. and do the mobile library, the library projects because that's what I'm qualified to do. So I'm re-...how to you say...changing direction, re-designing myself, rethinking...which is quite something for me because I think at this moment at time I'm the oldest person on staff, but I don't really see this as a negative thing for me personally. I find in South Africa there is a lot of ageism--is that how you say it?--which is not the case in America, I don't think, and the Europeans are not that concerned about age and the restrictions and the person who is not very young anymore, I don't know. There's a lot of reflection on my part. I am also wondering about doing a Ph.D. because I do want to never stop learning, but I'm thinking I'm might do something else that is more pertinent to what I'm doing here, fundraising, something more practical, perhaps later get back to the Ph.D. thing.

[How has been the transition from what you were doing before to now?]

Luckily for me now, I think... I taught most of my time at the University of Namibia and that institution is really...I love the place...it is really a third world institution whereby students would come to the university and would never have stepped foot in a library for instance, don't know how to cite or reference, have a tremendous problem with language, so that the institution--there is a bridging year, where students do core subjects--so I almost feel t that I already worked with people with a very basic background, grassroots stuff, coming from the "stix" to university, and because entrance requirements were relaxed for the bridging year, I almost felt I worked with adult education and literacy. So when I got to UCT it's a more sophisticated environment, but there are still some of the same problems there. But still it is quite a refined environment, academically speaking, so maybe I felt there was something I was missing in my career, I m not making much of a difference. I'm teaching a couple of students, going out to research centres...So when I came here [to Elgin] I really felt this is it, especially since Mark has been here. Before that it was a only a potential, a shell, to change people's lives. Ever since he's been here, it has really been happening, the people are here that we actually want to change. For me it's been mind boggling working with them, especially coming from a white Afrikaans background as well. That is why we left for Namibia, to get out of the environment, the white Afrikaans environment. We lived [in Namibia] in a multi-cultural hostel with children from diverse backgrounds and my little white children were there for the first time mixing with different races. Before then we never really touched black people, drink from the same cups, so already there the mindset... but I never got into close contact personally. And here I find a I have to reinvent myself and to unlearn, it's even more in my face here. The only way I can succeed is by unlearning almost everything, things that have been brainwashed from the time I've been born in South Africa as a white Afrikaans person. So that has been very exciting for me, I've learned a lot. And teaching for the agricultural learnerships, working with farmworkers, that was mind-boggling for me. I really felt I learned more from teaching that group than all my years in lecturing in university. I just learned a lot and it really opened my mind to the potential of these people. Before I thought they were just farmworkers and they were going to be workers for the rest of their lives. And I also try to fit into a staff complement of very diverse people, from very diverse

backgrounds. And sometimes it is difficult and I sometimes have here, as a white Afrikaans person, there have been some difficult times here, but it has been a learning curve for everybody here.

As I say, this is fascinating, we work with so many layers, levels, as you know. If you talk to a person like Dora in the kitchen, or Joy, there is such a lot to learn from those people and previously you wouldn't have actually spoken. So I think that is actually what I was looking for when I came here, to get down to the real South Africa from which I've been isolated for quite a long time. Some days I feel that God, do I really want to go into this? It is very depressing, I've got this major guilt thing. I was a mature person in the apartheid years before we left, and I just lived my life without doing much about it. My children asked me how could I not do, or say anything. I say to them I think the brainwashing was complete. In school, church...because Afrikaansers are very bound to the Calvinist, conservative background. Through your parents and family, through the norms, so that is all I can say. We were just aware of being uneasy in the situation and that is why we left...yeah, that is definitely why we left. So I think that is what I actually came here to in Elgin, to see if I fit into the real South African environment. It is difficult for me... Sometimes I think why don't I get on a plane to Australia or New Zealand and just be again in some sort of cotton-wool situation, have a protected little life, comfortable, not caring about my fellow South African perhaps, or perhaps...maybe you've got this as well, an ostrich putting his head in the sand, because I believe that statistics show that the gap between very well-off people and poor people here is the biggest in the world. I don't know if you've heard of this...Professor Sampie Terblanche of Stellenbosch...there was some article by him, some research by him where he threw out all of these statistics and you can either ignore that and live behind big security walls, or you can become involved and that is what I'm trying to do. But mainly I think it is an optimistic thing to be here, it is positive.

As I said when we started with the learnerships last year, we have some in-built this year, we had some young guys in the class: Why are they here, they're probably gangsters or dealing drugs. I found so many interesting things about these guys. But if I had passed them in the street I would have been very afraid of them, watched my purse. I found out that they had, first of all they were human like me. That is another legacy of my immediate or previous past, you sort of think of some layers of society as not being on the same level as you, and that they had very pertinent dreams and ambitions and that they're a person just like me. Also found out that I think we're doing the right thing. People should be enabled and that is the only way to go, and yeah, that is one of things that would keep me here, I think.

[Confidentiality was assured. A complete copy of the transcript was given to interviewee on 18 July 2003. Permission asked to include a copy of the transcript--edited, if necessary--in the appendices of the dissertation.]

Table 1: MATRIX OF NEEDS AND SATISFIERS\*

Needs according to existential categories Needs according to axiological categories	BEING	HAVING	DOING	INTERACTING
<b>SUBSISTENCE</b>	1/ Physical health, mental health, equilibrium, sense of humor, adaptability	2/ Food, shelter, work	3/ Feed, procreate, rest, work	4/ Living environment, social setting
<b>PROTECTION</b>	5/ Care, adaptability, autonomy, equilibrium, solidarity	6/ Insurance systems, savings, social security, health systems, rights, family, work	7/ Cooperate, prevent, plan, take care of, cure, help	8/ Living space, social environment, dwelling
<b>AFFECTION</b>	9/ Self-esteem, solidarity, respect, tolerance, generosity, receptiveness, passion, determination, sensuality, sense of humor	10/ Friendships, family, partnerships, relationships with nature	11/ Make love, caress, express emotions, share, take care of, cultivate, appreciate	12/ Privacy, intimacy, home, space of togetherness
<b>UNDERSTANDING</b>	13/ Critical conscience, receptiveness, curiosity, astonishment, discipline, intuition, rationality	14/ Literature, teachers, method, educational policies, communication policies	15/ Investigate, study, experiment, educate, analyze, meditate	16/ Settings of formative interaction, schools, universities, academies, groups, communities, family
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	17/ Adaptability, receptiveness, solidarity, willingness, determination, dedication, respect, passion, sense of humor	18/ Rights, responsibilities, duties, privileges, work	19/ Become affiliated, cooperate, propose, share, dissent, obey, interact, agree on, express opinions	20/ Settings of participative interaction, parties, associations, churches, communities, neighborhoods, family
<b>IDLENESS</b>	21/ Curiosity, receptiveness, imagination, recklessness, sense of humor, tranquility, sensuality	22/ Games, spectacles, clubs, parties, peace of mind	23/ Daydream, brood, dream, recall old times, give way to fantasies, remember, relax, have fun, play	24/ Privacy, intimacy, spaces of closeness, free time, surroundings, landscapes
<b>CREATION</b>	25/ Passion, determination, intuition, imagination, boldness, rationality, autonomy,	26/ Abilities, skills, method, work	27/ Work, invent, build, design, compose, interpret	28/ Productive and feedback settings, workshops, cultural groups, audiences, spaces for

Table 1 - continued

Needs according to existential categories Needs according to axiological categories	BEING	HAVING	DOING	INTERACTING
<b>IDENTITY</b>	29/ Sense of belonging, consistency, differentiation, self-esteem, assertiveness	30/ Symbols, language, religion, habits, customs, reference groups, sexuality, values, norms, historical memory, work	31/ Commit oneself, integrate oneself, confront, decide on, get to know oneself, recognize oneself, actualize oneself, grow	32/ Social rhythms, everyday settings, settings which one belongs to, maturation stages
<b>FREEDOM</b>	33/ Autonomy, self-esteem, determination, passion, assertiveness, openmindedness, boldness, rebelliousness, tolerance	34/ Equal rights	35/ Dissent, choose, be different from, run risks, develop awareness, commit oneself, disobey	36/ Temporal/spatial plasticity

Max-Neef, M., et al. (1991) Human Scale Development. New York: The Apex Press.