

Young adolescent girls' experiences of occupational engagement in Lavender Hill

By Heather Wonnacott

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Division of Occupational Therapy
University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Roshan Galvaan

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¹ All names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

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ABSTRACT

A person's health and well-being is influenced by the occupations in which they engage. Occupational therapy has traditionally focused on the disruption to occupational engagement as a result of impairment, disability and/or ill-health. Current trends in the profession are however, shifting towards a health promotion approach to intervention. In order to be able to develop appropriate, effective and efficient services, we need to understand how a 'healthy' person's occupations affect their health and well-being.

Lavender Hill is an impoverished community on the Cape Flats that is affected by unemployment, crime, violence, gangsterism and abuse of all forms. Children have been found to engage in health compromising occupations because of the combination of Lavender Hill's socio-economic status and the limited recreational facilities available to children. Young adolescents experience the effects of living in this environment, while simultaneously being faced with the many developmental challenges that confront them at this stage of their lives. Young adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to these demands, which have a negative impact on their health and well-being. As a result, it is necessary to understand their experiences in order to be able to consider ways of empowering young adolescent girls and enabling them to reach their potential.

In order to know the impact of young adolescent girl's occupations on their health and well-being, it is necessary to understand how they experience these for themselves. This study set out to understand the meaning and purpose 12-year-old girls living in Lavender Hill experience through their occupational engagement. The findings of this study will inform health promotion occupational therapy intervention with youth from impoverished communities.

This study took a qualitative, ethnographic research design approach. Two interviews were conducted with each of the four participants. Participants were also issued with disposable cameras to photograph their experiences and journals in which to reflect on these experiences. Analysed data revealed one overarching theme: *Occupational adaptation: Growing from a seed into a flower*. This theme describes the participants' adaptive responses to the challenges of living in Lavender Hill as developing adolescents. The theme comprises of three categories, which describe the participants' environment, the people who have an impact on their lives and who the participants are as occupational beings. The theme describes how these three elements interact to produce the participants' experience of occupational engagement.

Through the findings, it became evident that there are three factors that influence young adolescent girls occupational engagement in Lavender Hill: 1) the influence of an affirming environment, 2) the role of belonging and, 3) how young adolescent girls draw on their own

capacities to influence their experiences. These factors in turn, influence the development of young adolescent girls occupations. It is recommended that an affirming environment be created whereby young adolescent girls can engage in health-enhancing occupations that hold meaning and purpose. In addition, individual capacities should be developed to enable young adolescent girls to optimise their occupational opportunities.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adolescence: The period of childhood between the ages of 10-19 years (Philontheou & Rosen, 2001).

Children's Occupations: 'activities children find interesting or pleasurable and want to do or do because others manifest value in their doing so.' (Humphrey, 2005, p. 38).

Female activities: Activities that females more commonly engage in (McHale, Shanahan, Updegraff, Crouter and Booth, 2004), examples of which include: singing, dancing, reading, caring for younger siblings and cleaning at home.

Health: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease and infirmity (World Health Organisation, 1978). It includes a focus on an individual's ability to function optimally in his or her environment. (Christiansen & Baum, 1997, p.597).

Health promotion: "is the art and science of helping people change their lifestyle to move towards a state of optimal health. Lifestyle change can be facilitated through a combination of efforts to increase awareness, change behaviour, and create environments that support good health practices." (Viner & Macfarlane, 2005, p. 527).

Impoverished communities: referring to communities where poverty, violence and unemployment are rife.

Meaning: "the personal significance of an event as interpreted by the individual." (Christiansen & Baum, 1997, p 599). It includes the perceptual, symbolic and affective experience for an individual (Nelson, 1996).

Occupations: are activities that are characterised by three properties: 1) active participants; 2) personal meaning; and 3) an output process that produces an output product (Schkade & Schultz, 1992).

Occupational adaptation (the process): "is a series of actions, internal to the individual, which unfold as the individual is faced with an occupational challenge. The individual engages this process with the intention to produce a response that will result in an experience of relative mastery over the challenge." (Schultz & Schkade, 1997, p. 474).

Occupational adaptation (the state): "a state of competency in occupational functioning toward which human beings aspire. The existence and strength of this state in a person is a function of the extent to which occupational responses have been effective in producing relative mastery over occupational challenges and the extent to which such responses have successfully generalised to a variety of occupational challenges." (Schultz & Schkade, 1997, p. 474).

Occupational deprivation: 'is a state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors that stand outside the immediate control of the individual.' (Whiteford, 2000, p. 201).

Occupational development: "the gradual change in occupational behaviours over time, resulting from the growth and maturation of the individual in interaction with the environment" (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, 1997, p. 40 in Davis & Polatajko, 2004).

Occupational engagement: individual's use of occupations to fill their time, create circumstances of their everyday existence and create their place in the world (Kielhofner, 1997).

Occupational profile: "The exploration of the occupational dimension of people's lives based on their own narrative accounts" (Whiteford and Wicks, 1999, p. 131).

Poverty: implies more than an income insufficiency, it includes a lack of opportunity, lack of access to assets and credit as well as social exclusion. It is multi-faceted and fluctuating in depth and duration (Committee of Inquiry, 2002 in Child Well-being and poverty indicators report).

Risk behaviour: behaviour that has any chance of negatively affecting the health of the individual(s) engaging in it (Beaglehole, 1993).

Young adolescence: adolescents between the ages of 10 and 14 .

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This study took place in Lavender Hill as this is where service delivery related to the research project is based. This service delivery (through the occupational therapy programme *Facing Up*) both informs and is informed by the continuum of research (see page 18). The following study aims to better understand the youth to whom the service is offered.

1.1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1.1. Research Question

How do young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill experience the occupations they engage in?

1.1.2. Purpose

To understand the meaning and purpose 12-year-old girls living in Lavender Hill experience through their occupational engagement. This will inform health promoting occupational therapy intervention.

1.1.3. Objectives

- To develop an occupational profile of adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill.
- To explore the meaning young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill assign to their occupational engagement.
- To describe the purpose they ascribe to their occupational engagement.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Occupation is a central aspect of the human experience and engaging in purposeful occupations is believed to be related to one's health and well-being (Wilcock, 2002). This study will examine how young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill, Cape Town experience the occupations in which they engage. In order to understand these experiences, it is necessary to first understand the context in which the girls live as well as those factors that influence the occupations young adolescents engage in. This exploration of literature will begin by describing the context of Lavender Hill and the impact this has on occupations. The notion of poverty will then be presented together with the impact it has on children and their development. This will be followed by an exploration of occupation as it relates to health and well-being, as well as the impact occupational deprivation has on an individual. The experience of meaning will be discussed before finally looking at human development pertaining to young adolescence and how all of this relates to young adolescent girls.

2.1. The context

The following is an introduction to Lavender Hill. A more detailed description of the community that draws on the findings from this research will be presented in Chapter 4 (Findings).

Lavender Hill is a suburb in the Southern Peninsula of Cape Town. It replaced the Hardevlei / Rondevlei community (New World Foundation, 2003) and was constructed under the Group Areas Act of 1960, together with other communities such as Manenberg, Bonteheuwel, Parkwood Estate and Hanover Park. Coloured and Indian people were forcibly removed from their homes around the Cape Peninsula and relocated to these areas (Salo, 2004). Lavender Hill is characterized by poverty, a high rate of unemployment, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, gangsterism and crime. Housing is condensed and predominantly apartment-style, with limited access to recreational facilities (Carrier *et al*, 2002; Woodward *et al*, 2002).

Violence in the home and neighbourhood is common with thirty nine percent of children having witnessed gang-related violence, resulting in them being more likely to begin perpetuating such violence (COPES, 1996; Mapham *et al*, 2004). It has also been found that youth in Lavender Hill are exposed to conflict and physical, emotional and sexual abuse within dysfunctional families (Galvaan, 2004b). Human Rights Watch (cited in Petersen & Bhana, 2003) reported that South African girls between the ages of 12 and 17 are particularly vulnerable to being raped. Galvaan's (2003) pilot study exploring the occupational profiles of young adolescents living in Lavender Hill

found correlations with this report. Female participants made regular reference to sexually related behaviour and the risks they were exposed to in their community (Galvaan, 2003).

Poverty is closely followed by violence as pervasive threats to children's well-being (Barbarin & Richter, 2001). In addition, children have limited exposure to health promoting occupations and positive role models (Galvaan, 2004b). Research has found that the longer people live in such stressful social and economic circumstances the greater their risk of developing health-compromising conditions (Wilkinson & Marmot, 1998). Because Lavender Hill is an impoverished community, the issue of poverty and deprivation will now be discussed in further detail. This will be followed by an exploration of the impact poverty and deprivation has on health and well-being.

2.2. Poverty and deprivation

Poverty is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon (Committee of Inquiry, 2002). The United Nations Economic and Social Council (1999) developed a definition of poverty as, 'a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means the lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation' (p. 5). As this definition reiterates, poverty is a complex phenomenon that has far reaching effects. Almost 50% of South Africans are poor or at risk of becoming poor (Watson & Fourie, 2004a). Poverty thus has a major influence on South African society, with deprivation playing a significant role. Many of the above characteristics of poverty can be assimilated to Lavender Hill, particularly relating to insecurity, powerlessness and susceptibility to violence.

Poverty and deprivation are closely linked, yet distinct phenomena. Poverty refers to the lack of income and other resources that make it unlikely or even impossible to escape such circumstances. Deprivation on the other hand, includes the various conditions poor people experience independent of income. It has become associated to conditions of living rather than resources i.e. physical, social or emotional states or circumstances (Gordon, Nandy, Pemberton & Townsend, 2003). Fifty-six percent of the world's children in developing countries are severely deprived; while over 80% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa live in such conditions (Gordon *et al*, 2003).

Mechanic (1991) has found that all types of biological and social deprivation are associated with poor health and dysfunction in adolescence (cited in Wilcock, 1998a). Furthermore, it is widely known that living in poverty has a negative impact on opportunities for occupational engagement

(Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005; Fourie, Galvaan & Beeton, 2004; Watson & Fourie, 2004a; Watson & Lagerdien, 2004; Wilcock, 1998a). The following is a discussion of the relationship between occupation, health and well-being. It goes on to discuss occupational deprivation and occupational adaptation.

2.3. Occupation, health and well-being

Individuals use occupations to fill their time, create circumstances for their everyday existence and create their place in the world (Kielhofner, 1997). Since the beginning of time, people have filled their lives with goal-directed pursuit (Christiansen & Townsend, 2004) and will continue to do so throughout time.

As stated previously, satisfactory occupational engagement enhances one's health and well-being (Wilcock, 1998a). Through engaging in occupations, people are able to exercise their physical, psychological, social and spiritual capacities. Thus, by creating appropriate opportunities for occupational engagement, an individual is able to develop these capacities (Wonnacott & Galvaan, 2002).

In order to be able to facilitate the healthy and satisfactory occupational behavior of individuals, we need to first understand the factors that impact on "doing" (Harvey & Pentland, 2004). Johnson (1993) believes that as our understanding of occupations and their relationship to health and well-being grows, so too will our ability to link this knowledge to occupational therapy practice and education. If the profession is to address problems related to poverty, violence and other risk conditions, we need to develop our understanding of the occupational beings living in these conditions.

The following three sections describe different aspects of occupational engagement: occupations of meaning, occupational deprivation and occupational adaptation. The respective benefits and risks in these concepts will become evident within each section. Occupational development will be discussed following human development later.

2.3.1. Occupations of meaning

Occupations have the potential to be health enhancing (Wilcock, 1998a), particularly when they hold meaning and purpose for the person engaging in them. Nelson defines meaning as 'the sense that a person makes of a situation' (1996, p. 776), while Hasselkus links meaning specifically to occupations. She states that 'occupation is a powerful source of meaning in our lives; meaning arises from occupation and occupation arises from meaning' (Hasselkus, 2002, p. 14). Through action, or "doing", we realise meaning in our lives and thus make sense of our experiences. Children express the meaning they experience in their daily lives through activities such as play,

arises from occupation and occupation arises from meaning' (Hasselkus, 2002, p. 14). Through action, or "doing", we realise meaning in our lives and thus make sense of our experiences. Children express the meaning they experience in their daily lives through activities such as play, art, music and humour (Burgman & King, 2005). The cumulative significance of these meaningful occupations ultimately comprises a person's life narrative, which holds significance within their greater picture of life (Christiansen & Townsend, 2004a).

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (2002, cited in Hammell, 2004) stated that people experience meaning in their occupations when these occupations fulfil a purpose or goal that is personally or culturally important. Engaging in purposeful activity is directly associated with the meaning one experiences and engaging in personally meaningful occupations provides a sense of purpose (Mee & Sumsion, 2001). Children need to be able to access meaningful occupations in order to connect with their spirituality, find purpose and thus meaning in their lives (Burgman & King, 2005). It has also been found that meaningful occupation can provide ways for people to experience fulfilment as well as being a means through which to invoke agency (Hammell, 2004).

A dimension of meaning in our lives is experienced through the rituals or patterns of behaviour in which we engage (Hasselkus & Rosa, 1997). These rituals and patterns of behaviour have strong elements of symbolism, which are usually an expression of culture and are closely linked to occupations. Crepeau (1991) claims the distinction between rituals and simple daily routine lies in the symbolism within rituals i.e. their meaning (cited in Hasselkus & Rose, 1997). Another dimension of meaning-making in occupations is spiritual, which involves the contemplation of events in order to make sense of them within the greater purpose of life. Spirituality refers to the way people (including children) construct the meaning in their lives (Unruh, Versnel & Kerr, 2002), while serving as a source of motivation for their daily activities (Egan & DeLaat, 1994). Children express their inner world, truths and experiences through their occupations and their interactions with other. As a result, the manner in which children enact their daily activities is a reflection of the meaning they experience in their lives (Bergman & King, 2005).

Meaningful occupations are chosen and performed by individuals, groups and communities in order to provide them with experiences of meaning and satisfaction (Christiansen & Townsend, 2004a). Hasselkus (2002) notes that meaning has both a shared and a personal dimension, implying that meaning can be experienced independently or with other people. It is through the occupations in which we engage that we live out those relationships that bring meaning to our lives (Egan & DeLaat, 1997). For young adolescents, peer relationships are of central importance to their well-being from middle childhood onwards (Bukowski, Hoza & Boivin, 1994 in Markiewicz, Doyle & Brendgen, 2001).

There are external factors that impact on meaning however, namely the political, social and economic factors in a person's life. A person can only have some sort of meaningful control over their lives if these external factors enable them to do so (Coleridge, 1993 in Hammell, 2004). In occupational therapy, this is recognised as the relationship between the individual, their environment and the occupations in which they engage (Law *et al*, 1996). The environment further shapes and is shaped by the occupations an individual engages in. The environment can either afford or impair opportunities for engagement with policies and social structures influencing how the environment is able to impact on these opportunities (Polgar & Landry, 2004). As a result, a person's occupational experiences need to be considered within the context in which they are engaged in so, as to truly appreciate the meaning these experiences might hold.

From this, it is evident that meaningful occupations play a significant role in our daily lives and can make an invaluable impact on our experience of life. Many people however, are unable to engage in occupations that bring meaning to their lives due to external factors that lead to an experience of occupational deprivation, which will be discussed next.

2.3.2. Occupational deprivation

Occupational deprivation refers to 'a state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors that stand outside the immediate control of the individual' (Whiteford, 2000, p. 201). Deprivation may occur for many different reasons, including social, economic, environmental, geographic, historic, cultural or political factors (Whiteford, 2004). Socially marginalized people are most at risk of experiencing occupational deprivation. This includes women, children and the poor (Wilcock, 1998a), which means that girls living in Lavender Hill are particularly vulnerable to experiencing occupational deprivation.

Children who are deprived of opportunities and resources to play because of poverty or economic and/or social factors that force them into child labour are likely to experience occupational deprivation (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004a). In their study of play and leisure profiles of children in Lavender Hill, Mapham *et al* (2004) found that 58% of children in their study (those in grades 4 to 7) participated in 50% of activities or less. Children were asked to circle whether they participate in a series of activities, which were represented through picture representations. Activities were categorised into sport, outdoor, indoor, creative, lessons and social. They attributed the compromised activity participation to the influence of living in the socially disorganised community of Lavender Hill, as well as to the lack of resources and recreational facilities. The essential effect of this was one of occupational deprivation within the lives of these children. As a result, they found that the children in their study experienced decreased competence due to the limitations within the activities they engaged in. Furthermore, these children failed to optimally develop their physical

and mental abilities, which in turn had an impact on their overall human development. Townsend and Wilcock (2004a) also noted this relationship between occupational deprivation and human development in their discussion of occupational justice.

Before exploring the significance of human development in the lives of young adolescence, it is necessary to describe how humans adapt to or are adapted by their occupations, seeing as development involves adaptive processes.

2.3.3. Occupational adaptation

In order for occupations to be a source of health and well-being, a person needs to be able to successfully engage and experience competence in relevant activities, tasks and roles (Schultz & Schkade, 1997). As occupational beings, we develop competence in occupational performance through an internal adaptive process while engaging in activities. There are many factors that impact on an individual's ability to achieve such competence including a range of intrinsic factors (personality, skills, values etc.) and extrinsic factors (social structures, environment, cultural traditions etc.). Adaptation requires a complex interaction between these factors and the relevant occupation, where successful occupational performance relies on the ability to reconcile all these factors (Schultz & Schkade, 1997). Christiansen and Townsend (2004b) state that adaptation is 'the fit between biological organisms (internal factors) and the demands of the environment (external factors)' (p. 153).

Because life is dynamic, humans are required to constantly adapt to the internal and external changes that confront them. Schultz and Schkade (1997) describe a person's internal processes in terms of sensorimotor, cognitive and psychosocial systems. These systems are influenced by external factors, including a person's environment, genetics and experiences (Schultz & Schkade, 1997). It is upon this framework that Schkade & Schultz developed the occupational adaptation frame of reference (1992).

Occupational therapists help service users/clients to develop adaptive responses in order to be able to satisfactorily perform their roles in life. Such intervention has traditionally addressed adaptation in response to a disruption in function due to illness, impairment or disability (Schultz & Schkade, 1997). Current shifts in the profession are moving towards the development of working within the scope of health promotion (Watson, 2004; Wilcock, 1998a) and not just rehabilitation. Green and Kreuter (1991) define health promotion as being any combination of environmental and educational support actions and conditions that are conducive to healthy living. In considering the community of Lavender Hill, it becomes evident that support actions and conditions are not present for healthy living. Individuals living in Lavender Hill do adapt according to the environmental

demands and challenges that face them, despite the lack of support. These adaptive responses are not however, always optimal.

As stated previously, occupational therapists enable the development of optimal adaptive responses within individuals. Because our past focus has been on rehabilitation, our current understanding of adaptation is limited to a rehabilitative frame of reference. In order to ensure that appropriate and effective adaptive actions are developed within a health promotion framework, we need to better understand the processes of adaptation employed by the individuals, groups and communities with whom we intend to work.

In order to be able to understand these adaptation processes, it is necessary to consider the individual's developmental processes, particularly when those under consideration are children. Developmental changes and adaptive processes are particularly evident in children's lives. The following section will focus on human development with a particular focus on cognitive and psychosocial development within early adolescence.

2.4. Human Development

Craig (1976) defines human development as the changes in thought, structure or behaviour of a person as a function of the biological and environmental influences in their life (cited in Simon & Daub, 1993). These changes begin at conception and continue through to death (Simon & Daub, 1993) and are most evident through the occupations in which an individual engages (Davis & Polatajko, 2004). For example, much of a child's time is spent engaging in play, while an adolescent invests a large portion of their time into relationships; and most adults spend a the majority of their time engaging in work-related activities. The activities in which people, particularly children, engage is a reflection of their level of development (Davis & Polatajko, 2004).

Drawing on Schultz and Schkade's classification of a person's system, human development is comprised of three aspects: sensorimotor, cognitive and psychosocial (Schultz & Schkade, 1997). Because sensorimotor development is focused largely in the early years of a child's life, only cognitive and psychosocial (emotional) development will be discussed here.

Jean Piaget's (1929, 1952, 1983) stage theory of cognitive development is the most commonly quoted framework of cognitive development (cited in Weiten, 2001). He proposed that children progress through four stages, each of which is characterised by a fundamentally different thought process. The two stages that are pertinent to the population of this study are the concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years) and the formal operational stage (11 years to adulthood) (Simon & Daub, 1993). Concrete operational thinking is most evident in a child's problem solving abilities, which are evident in the types of games that they, such as the board game Monopoly (which many of the children in Lavender Hill play). Formal operational thinking on the other hand, sees an

adolescent contemplating abstract constructs such as love, justice and free will (Weiten, 1995). As a result, adolescents (particularly girls) engage more in conversations rather than in physical play (Pettitt, 2004). It must be noted however, that as with all developmental theories, the ages that Piaget ascribes to each of these stages usually varies in reality so they should only be used as a guide (Weiten, 2001).

In terms of psychosocial development, the most widely known and commonly used theorist is the psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson (1963 cited in Weiten, 2001; Simon & Daub, 1993). Erikson considered the social and societal demands that are placed on a child and referred to these as psychosocial stages of development (Simon & Daub, 1993). Each of these stages involves a psychosocial crisis that involves transitions into important relationships. Erikson believed that personality development is shaped by the manner in which individuals deal with their psychosocial crises, with each crisis being a turning point yielding two possible outcomes (Weiten, 2001).

The two stages pertinent to the participants in this study are the fourth and fifth stages of psychosocial development. The fourth stage, industry versus inferiority, usually occurs between the ages of 6 and 12. During this stage the child is challenged to develop skills and a sense of competency, success of which leads to the sense of industry. As a result, schoolwork and sporting activities (amongst others) are important sources of adult recognition in order to achieve success in this crisis (Weiten, 2001).

The fifth stage, identity formation versus role confusion, occurs during adolescence. In this stage, the adolescent seeks to develop a secure self-concept as a unique individual, while embracing a set of values that provide a sense of direction (Weiten, 2001). According to Erikson, adolescents are particularly influenced by social factors in developing their sense of identity (in Flischer, Ziervogel, Chalton & Roberston, 1993). Their primary social relationships in this stage of development are with peers and community members, meaning that the adolescent begins to seek out relationships beyond their family structure (Weiten, 1995). Markiewicz, Doyle and Brendgen (2001) found that these peer relationships have a direct impact on the adolescent's social competence. During this stage, an adolescent becomes less interested in schoolwork and young adolescent girls invest much of their time in developing their gender identity through relationships. (LeCroy, 2004).

The above theories assume that children receive the appropriate stimulation to facilitate their development. Mapham *et al* (2004) found evidence that children living in Lavender Hill are developmentally compromised because of the poor socio-economic circumstances and social disorganisation of their community. As a result, one might expect variation in the developmental norms described above.

Having considered some of the components of a child's development, it is now necessary to look at their occupational development as this pertains to human development. Within this discussion, the role of play and gender will be considered in relation to occupational development.

2.5. Occupational development

As has already been established, human beings are essentially occupational beings (Davis & Polatajko, 2004). As Fidler and Fidler (1978) stated, doing enables the 'development and integration of the sensory, motor, cognitive and psychological systems; serving as a socialising agent, and verifying one's efficacy as a competent, contributing member of one's society' (p. 305). From this, it is evident that occupations are instrumental in all aspects of human development and ultimately in identity formation.

It is 'presumed that a person's ability to engage and master occupations change and develop throughout life' (Davis & Polatajko, 2004, p. 94). However, little is currently known about the actual process of human occupational development per se (Wiseman, Davis & Polatajko 2005). Davis and Polatajko (2004) have framed occupational development within an interactionist view. This view holds that individuals are engaged in a reciprocal, interactive relationship with their environment that ultimately defines their occupational development throughout their lifetime. In other words, the maturation process interacts with the environmental factors in a person's life (Davis & Polatajko, 2004). Gesell & Ilg (1943) believe that developmental potential is optimised when there is a goodness of fit between the socialising influences and the unfolding maturation of the individual (cited in Davis & Polatajko, 2004).

Davis and Polatajko (2004) have identified three principles of occupational development within the interactionist perspective: continuity, multiple determinicity and multiple patternicity. Continuity refers to the fact that although occupations may vary across a person's lifetime depending on their growth and development, that person has a particular pattern of engagement that is consistent across their lifespan. Multiple determinicity is the interactive nature of the person, their environment and the available occupations to produce occupational development. The person comprises of a genetic construction, learning/plasticity and active participatory factors, while the environment includes the physical, social, cultural and historical aspects of a person's environment. The third principle of multiple patternicity denotes that the pattern of occupational development is characterised by changing mastery and multiple variations and the patterns of growth. Neither of these are smooth or unidirectional, with age and stage of life impacting on factors such as rate, characteristics, quality and quantity of development.

The complex interaction between an individual's development, their environment and the occupations in which they engage, renders it difficult to simply construct a framework of ages and stages of occupational development, although work has begun in developing a profile in early childhood to early adolescence (Davis & Polatajko, 2004). From the activity descriptors, it is evident that this profile has been developed within a First World context. A profile of occupational development still needs to be developed for a setting such as Lavender Hill. However, it is acknowledged that developing such a profile is a complex process due to the many interacting factors.

What is known about occupational development however, is that play fulfils a crucial role in the life of a child and adolescent. The following section will discuss the role that play has in a child's development.

2.5.1. The role of play in occupational development

Play is considered the primary occupation in a child's life. It is often defined by the fact that it is self-motivated or chosen, pleasurable, and provides opportunities for learning that are developmentally significant (Christiansen & Townsend, 2004a). Furthermore, Bundy (1993) noted that playfulness is a behavioural style or attitude rather than merely an activity choice. Simon & Daub (1993) highlight four functions of play, namely: social, physical/sensory/perceptual, emotional and cognitive functions. Socially, play teaches a child how to relate to other people, while providing insights into the mores and norms of their culture. The physical, sensory and perceptual function of play is facilitated by the repetitive movement (gross and fine motor) nature of play that allows the child to master the skills required to be able to engage masterfully. Through the emotional function of play, a child develops a sense of self, self-confidence and the potential for adapting to future needs. And finally, the cognitive function of play enables a child to learn to manipulate events and objects in their internal and external environment.

For a young adolescent, play becomes more complex as they creatively attempt to project future goals and activity plans into their play (Hurlock in Simon & Daub, 1993). According to Erikson, during the fourth stage of psychosocial development (industry versus inferiority), play is the means whereby the child learns the skills and tools for his or her culture. The mastery of tasks and competency development are intrinsic rewards. During Erikson's fifth stage (identity formation versus role confusion), the primary focus of play involves role identification with work-oriented tasks playing a major role in their play (Simon & Daub, 1993).

2.5.2. The role of gender on occupational development

An aspect of social development involves the development of gender roles. Throughout childhood, boys and girls interact mainly with their own gender group. Boys mix in larger groups where

reputation and status are important, while girls prefer smaller, more intimate friendships and interactions (Pettitt, 2004). The essential developmental principle in female gender development during puberty is the increase in the feminine role (Archer, 1992). This role development includes engaging in tasks around the house, including cooking and cleaning. Adolescent girls may also be required to help care for younger siblings.

These gender roles determine activity participation although girls have been found to engage in a greater range of gender-specific activities i.e. those typically classified as male as well as female activities (McHale *et al*, 2004). The issue of gender is gaining recognition in its impact on health, well-being and occupational choice (Davis & Polatajko, 2004). The role of gender in occupational development can be seen across time and cultures. It is an issue that affects everyone at some point in their lives, if not continually. Levinson (1996 in Davis & Polatajko, 2004) describes the gender splitting effect where, regardless of culture and context, there is always some distinction in male-female patterns and activities. There is a distinct occupational gender division in terms of self-care, productivity and leisure occupations, which is seen to be attributed to societal demands that are placed on men and women alike (Davis & Polotajko, 2004).

During adolescence, gender-intensification emerges whereby these gender differences become more pronounced and gender-appropriate role expectations from significant people in the young adolescent's life become stronger. This in turn contributes towards gender differences in achievement and social domains (Pettitt, 2004). Social psychology has identified four gender-specific, role-related behaviours that emerge in girls, during adolescence: 1) they experience increased anxiety and self-consciousness; 2) their achievement becomes distinguished into feminine (artistic, social) and masculine (mathematical, mechanical and physical) domains of interest; 3) they become more concerned about disruption of self-esteem; and 4) personal relationships with other girls become more intimate and mature (Archer, 1992).

These behaviours will naturally be reflected in the occupational engagement of adolescent girls, not only in occupational choice but also in their nature of engagement. It is evident from this that gender development influences occupational engagement. It is also apparent that certain activities facilitate the development of gender roles and behaviours, activities such as cooking and dancing with friends.

Conclusion

This exploration of literature has shown the complexities inherent within 1) impoverished communities, 2) occupations, 3) the experience of meaning as well as 4) within adolescent development. Each of these factors is multidimensional with interactive parts. It is thus evident that young adolescent girls' experiences of occupational engagement is a complex phenomenon with

much to teach us. Some of these complexities and interactions will be brought to light in this study and are presented in chapters 4 and 5. A description of the methodology for this study will be described next.

University of Cape Town

2.6. Research in Lavender Hill

2.6.1. Contextualising the research

This research project forms part of a continuum of studies. These studies are being used to inform the development of health promotion occupational therapy programmes for youth living in impoverished communities such as Lavender Hill. Little is understood about the occupations of youth living in impoverished communities. In addition, little is known about the skills and strategies that they have developed and applied within their context. Theories are often applied to situations, yet it is not known whether these theories are in fact applicable to such settings. For example, there are widely accepted developmental norms that are assumed to be universally applicable or the assumption that children experience life in the same way as adults. It is necessary to think critically about these matters in order to establish whether these generalisations and assumptions are applicable to people in different situations. It is also important to gather information that is grounded in a research framework to ensure that practice is developed on sound principles. With this belief, research has been conducted with youth from Lavender Hill. Three of the pertinent occupational therapy research studies will be presented here.

Carrier, Dutton and Lee (2002) explored the reasons why primary school learners engage in risk-taking occupations. This collective case study explores the risk behaviour of three 12-year-old boys at a primary school in Lavender Hill. Since this study only considers boy's risk taking behaviour, further research needs to be conducted around the factors that affect girls. The findings from this research reveals three main factors that contribute towards the participants engaging in risk behaviour: 1) the constant exposure to others engaging in risk behaviour; 2) living in a socially deprived community and; 3) individual attributes. An interaction exists between the individuals, their environment and their occupations. This study did not however, explain the relationship between these factors. If one is to effectively address the issue of risk-taking behaviour, one needs to better understand each of these individual factors as well as the interaction between them.

Mapham, Lawless, Abbas, Ross-Thompson and Duncan (2004) conducted a study exploring the relationship between the agent-host-environment and the play profiles of learners in Lavender Hill. The study includes learners in grades one through seven attending another primary school in Lavender Hill. The research found that children living in a socially disorganised community experience occupational limitations due to being deprived of access to occupations. This leads to occupational deprivation and associated developmental problems. It is assumed that if children are unable to engage in particular activities, they are likely to experience occupational deprivation. According to Whiteford's (2000) definition however, occupational deprivation occurs when external factors prevent an individual from engaging in occupation of necessity or *that are meaningful to them*. Mapham *et al* (2004) thus only consider the first part of Whiteford's definition i.e. the preclusion from necessary occupations. They do not consider whether their participants experience

meaning in what they do. A comprehensive determination of occupational deprivation needs to be considered before accurate conclusions can be drawn.

Galvaan (2003, 2004a) has been involved in extensive research within this context. To date, research has explored adolescents' activity participation (2003) where a base-line understanding of the kinds of occupations youth in Lavender Hill engage in was established. Participants took photographs of their lived experiences and these were later discussed in focus groups and individual interviews. Participants' photographs and activity profiles were used to guide the initial interview process of this (Wonnacott, 2005) study. Further research has been conducted (Galvaan, 2004a) to investigate youth risk behaviour in Lavender Hill. The South African Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (Reddy *et al*, 2003) has been used for this study and the results are currently being prepared.

2.6.2. The need for this study

Previous research has focused on risk factors relating to boys occupational engagement (Carrier *et al*, 2002) as was described previously. To date however, little research has been conducted with girls in this context. Because girls are a vulnerable population, it is necessary to understand their experiences in order to be able to consider ways of empowering them and enabling them to reach their potential.

In addition, the researcher works with young adolescent girls and needs to better understand the complexities concerning their experiences. By better understanding their occupational experiences, one can more accurately identify areas of deficiency and discrepancy; and develop ways of addressing these. At the same time, one can tap into the skills, capacities and inherent abilities that they have developed.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This study took a qualitative, ethnographic research design approach. In qualitative research, the researcher needs to become aware of individual assumptions and biases so as to separate these out from the research process. It is also important that the researcher remain alert to how these could influence decisions during this process. For this reason, the researcher began this research process by reflecting on and capturing pre-existing thoughts, views and beliefs relating to the research question, a process referred to as bracketing (Kelly, 1999). This will be presented together with a description of the researcher in relation to the study and study population. This will be followed by a rationale for selecting a qualitative, ethnographic approach to the research. The process of data collection, management and analysis will be described before presenting the ethical considerations of this study.

3.1. The Researcher

The following is an autobiography where I describe who I am in relation to this study. This is included here in order to provide the reader with insight into the researcher's position within the research process. The events and experiences that contributed towards the development of the research question are described. The lessons and insights gained from these events and experiences will be explained. This will be followed by a journal entry, which was written prior to the data collection to bracket pre-existing knowledge and perceptions of the study population. An independent expert researcher advised this bracketing process. She advised the direction and scope of reflection as well as how to use this information within the research process.

3.1.1. Who I am within the context of this research

I am a young, white South African woman. I grew up in a white, middle-class suburb of Cape Town and had little contact with people of other races until my high school years. Throughout my childhood, I was largely sheltered from the negative effects of Apartheid and had little knowledge of the impact it had on much of South African society. I was unaware of life in the townships and ghettos of Cape Town and throughout South Africa. As I got older, I came to realise that so many South Africans lived in the harsh, substandard conditions created by the townships and ghettos. I also came to realise just how derogatory, unjust and inhumane Apartheid was.

My understanding of the effects of Apartheid continues to develop as I see its continued impact on many South Africans. I have come to realise that all South Africans need to actively address the many scars that Apartheid has left behind. As a white South African who experienced many privileges and opportunities growing up, I believe that it is my responsibility to use my privileges

and opportunities, including my education, to affect change in the lives of marginalized South Africans.

When I first started studying occupational therapy in 1998 at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) I experienced, for the first time, what it was like to be in the racial minority. I also gained insight and experience into South Africa's diverse races, cultures, religions, languages and educational opportunities. I learnt the value of being open-minded and non-judgemental when interacting with people, particularly those who come from different backgrounds to myself. I began to learn the rich and valuable lessons from the diverse people around me. Lessons associated with the resilience of overcoming the effects of oppression and/or living in an impoverished community, such as how community members support and strengthen each other when faced with injustice. I also learned lessons related to the richness of other cultures. These lessons challenged my own perceptions of seeing things as only right or wrong. Instead, I came to appreciate diversity and realised that someone who is different to me, is not necessarily wrong. For example, I realised that the valued notion of independence (that I had grown up to believe) was not necessarily the best way of living as there was great value in interdependence. I also experienced what it was like to study within a volatile environment as UWC was plagued with strikes during that year. Many lectures and examinations were disrupted, which caused me to question the quality of my education.

This awareness and sensitivity grew as I continued my undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town (1999-2001). It was here that I gained further insights and skills into the diversity inherent within South Africa. I also began to learn about community dynamics, particularly with regards to the lessons that communities can teach outsiders. I came to learn about some of the processes involved within transformation. For example, the need to address past injustices and the need to confront pre-existing perceptions and assumptions about people. One of my assumptions was that coloured and black South Africans were less intelligent, when they had merely received an inferior education.

I also became increasingly aware of how much I had to learn about the deep scars of Apartheid. In order to address some of these scars, I realised that I had to be willing to learn from those with whom I would work. Through this, I came to realise how ignorant I had been about Apartheid. I realised I had to be willing to consider my life in relation to Apartheid, in terms of the opportunities I was afforded and perceptions I held. I realised the blessing I had of a secure education and the opportunities I had had to explore parts of Cape Town and South Africa. Although my experience of childhood strongly contrasts with that of a child in Lavender Hill, I realised that there are a number of similarities between our experiences. Similarities such as the games we play and the challenges of fitting in and being accepted.

Through service learning placements, I became aware of the needs of communities and the effects of living in an impoverished community. I also realised that I did not have all the answers but that the answers lay within the community members themselves. In my final year of my undergraduate studies, I was placed at a primary school in Lavender Hill for my final service learning placement. It was here that I was introduced to the community and children of Lavender Hill.

3.1.2. Involvement at Facing Up

Upon graduating, I decided to continue at the service, which up until that point had only been run by intermittent student placements. In developing this service with Roshan Galvaan, the impact of the programme has become evident. At the same time however, it has become continually evident that we do not optimally understand the work that we are doing and are thus not able to optimise intervention opportunities. I also became aware that my conceptual understanding of what I was doing was only in its infancy and for this reason, I decided to do my Masters degree in Occupational Therapy. I wanted to develop my thinking within the coursework of the Masters programme and in turn, develop research that would assist in developing the service. It is hoped to ultimately be able to develop a model of practice that would see this service expanded to other impoverished communities.

The core focus of the programme involves work with young adolescents in grades 6 and 7 with a follow-on group for learners who progress to high school. Gender-specific groups are run with those learners who are at risk i.e. engage in risk behaviour, are aggressive, bully other children or are being bullied and are socially isolated. The aim of these groups is to facilitate the group members' agentic capacity, their ability to regulate their own behaviour and to engage in health promoting occupations rather than risk behaviour. I have been working with young adolescent girls during the four years that I have been working at Facing Up and it is through this work that this research question emerged.

Through working with and observing girls in this context, I have come to learn that in Lavender Hill, like most communities on the Cape Flats, gender roles and responsibilities are reversed. Men in the community are largely disempowered, while the woman and girls take on leadership roles and responsibilities within their homes and community. The disempowerment of men has its roots in Apartheid where men had limited work opportunities, an intentional phenomenon developed under the Apartheid government. When they did obtain work, it was largely seasonal and sporadic work as labourers and fishermen. Women on the other hand generally had more secure work in the textile and domestic work sectors. This meant that women were frequently the primary and stable breadwinners in families (Salo, 2004). This phenomenon continues today and the effects can be seen when one moves through the community where many men wander the streets, while the

women leave home early each day for work. This is contrary to the natural roles of men and women that are seen in societies around the world. These natural roles see men as the provider, while women care for the home and children. Through these observations and insights, I came to realise that children living in Lavender Hill have a different experience of childhood to the experience that I had. I realised that families function differently as the women assume responsibility for the care and provision of their household. I also realised that girls form a different definition of their gender identity to mine, an identity that is informed by their values and experiences.

Ironically, the women in Lavender Hill do not always have the power that would be expected to be associated with their roles. In her study based in Mannenberg (also on the Cape Flats), Salo (2004) described how men compensated for the limited role as breadwinner by assuming control over women, even abusing them. This abuse of women and children is rife often leaving them destitute and unsupported. I have come to learn that this is an accepted phenomenon, especially the abuse of women. This acceptance has been reflected through children who have told me how women deserve to be beaten if they do not listen to their husbands/boyfriends. This contrast with my belief that no one has the right to beat another person and no one ever deserves to be beaten. I also do not believe that physical violence is a healthy solution to conflict. I believe that the effects of any form of abuse are more destructive than the short-term benefit that might possibly arise as a result of the abuse.

3.1.3. Significance of these experiences to this study

South Africa's political history has left communities to struggle with the legacy of Apartheid. This legacy is complex, particularly when one includes factors such as poverty and social order. Through becoming aware of these complexities, I came to realise the importance of withholding assumptions and generalisations. These are also important principles within the research process where the researcher seeks to develop evidence to support the research question under study rather than simply draw on personal knowledge and beliefs. At the same time, it is important to think critically about the assumptions and generalisations that you hold as a researcher. This is necessary in order to ensure deductions are accurate and appropriate for all those to whom the study pertains.

In order to critically engage in an appropriate and relevant manner, it is necessary to consider the voice of those to whom the study relates. Learning from research participants is a fundamental principle in the research process. I first began to learn this principle through working in communities and continue to do so the longer I work with the community. It was through listening to young adolescent girls in Lavender Hill that the research question in this study emerged. I repeatedly heard about young girls frequenting shebeens or walking around at night. It was not the

fact that they were attending places that were inappropriate or unsafe that interested me. Rather, it was the fact that most of the young girls that described such activities also spoke of the dangers involved in these activities. Dangers such as being raped or abducted. Yet they continued to engage in these activities. Previously, my assumption would have been that these actions were simply defiant adolescent behaviours. Through critically engaging with the phenomenon however, I realised that there was more to attending shebeens and walking in the street than I understood. I needed to gain a better understanding of these, and other experiences, to be able to realise the significance of the occupational engagement of young adolescent girls.

In order to be able to understand such experiences, I realised it was also important to consider the gender roles in this community. I could not assume that the gender roles that I grew up with would be the same as those in Lavender Hill. Again, because the complex history of this community continues to affect all aspects of social life, including the gender roles that are adopted, I could not assume that the roles were inappropriate or unacceptable. Instead, I had to learn how the individual's within those roles experienced them.

A further lesson from my past experience that has influenced this research process is the significance of a disrupted education. From my own experience, I know that the volatility in an education system leaves one feeling uncertain about the future. I also remember considering whether it was worth investing time and money into an education that did not guarantee me outcomes that I was expecting i.e. a good education with a degree to show for it. I have seen a similar phenomenon in the schools where I have worked. Children internalise the limitation of their education and associate their sense of competency and worth according to the degree that others invest in their education. Hopes and dreams are moulded according to others' belief in them as effective and valuable human beings. The contradiction comes where children and youth overcome these volatile barriers and display resilience in developing their potential. It was this contradiction that also interested me and led me to try and better understand their experiences. The following is my understanding as it stood prior to the commencement of research.

3.1.4. My understanding of young adolescent girl's experiences of occupational engagement

The following journal entry was written on 2/4/2005, prior to data collection for this study. The objective in writing this was to capture pre-existing knowledge, assumptions and expectations to enable me to bracket my experience of young adolescent girls in this community from my participant's experiences.

Much of my knowledge and understanding to date has been attained through working in Lavender Hill with young adolescent girls. The thing that strikes me most about the girls living in this

community, and I think it extends to other similar communities, is the role of sexuality within identity and as a tool to gaining acknowledgement. From a very young age, girls are encouraged to use their bodies in a sexual manner to gain affirmation and acceptance, including from their male educators. Granted, this does not apply to all girls, but it is generally encouraged within the community. I also know there are young girls who engage in sexual relations, although when children are asked when it is right to have sex, they usually say only when they are 21 years old.

There is a high incidence of sexual abuse as well as physical abuse in the community. Although this is a matriarchal society, women are largely disempowered and abused. This transfers to girls as well, and is seen even on the playgrounds and in the classroom where boys will hit girls and touch them as they please (generally).

I know that young adolescents go to games shops where adults smoke and drink. They also go to shebeens even though they may not yet drink. Here they are at risk of being beaten or raped and yet they still go. It was through this observation that my research question developed: If they know they're at risk of being beaten and/or raped, why do they still go to these places? I know there is little else to do but there must be an element of meaning within this in order for it to outweigh the risks.

Through my observations, I have come to know that the children spend a lot of time walking around the communities as well as watching a fair amount of TV. They mainly watch soap operas, children's programmes, adult movies (e.g. Emmanuel) and action/violent movies. Few girls participate in sport although those who do, play netball and sometimes soccer. In summer, they walk or get a lift to Sunrise/Muizenburg Beach or go to the public pools in Retreat.

Most girls also have chores to do around the house, including cleaning, cooking and caring for younger siblings. They often take on adult and parental roles while their mothers are at work during the day. For some children this extends to the evenings as well because their parents work or go out at night leaving older siblings to care for younger ones.

Although gangs do not affect the girls as much as they do boys in terms of what they do, the gangs do still have an impact on their lives. Some girls do however join "skollie" gangs or children's gangs where they have a sense of sisterhood and often bully other children. Through these "skollie" gangs they often associate with other gangs and are exposed to gang activity, which often includes sexual intercourse for the girls.

Adolescence is a time of identity formation (Erikson) and also a time of exploration and risk taking. This exploration and risk taking presents itself in a range of situations and behaviours. Apart from

this aspect of development, I have come to experience how these children have differing levels of maturity. In some ways they are more advanced for their age (relative to the 'norm'), particularly in terms of responsibilities and knowing the adult world. In other ways however, they are less mature, mainly in their emotional maturity.

I have also come to learn and experience the resilience of these youth. They have developed ways of coping in their community although often these are rooted in strategies of self-preservation. These coping strategies are usually not optimal and not necessarily health enhancing. Despite their resilience, they are not given the space to have their struggles acknowledged, often living with the burden of their experiences, sharing it with no one.

I have learnt that these children have many needs and that they value being heard. They have reported how adults seldom listen to what they have to say and do not generally value their opinions. I feel it is an invaluable experience to be able to learn from these children.

Much of this knowledge informed the data collection process, particularly the initial semi-structured interview. I selected photographs for interview triggers that depicted activities in which I knew young adolescent girls engage. Questions were also formulated from this prior knowledge. Questions such as, 'Do you go to shebeens?'

As will become evident later on, some of this knowledge and these perceptions were confirmed during this research process, while other aspects were contradicted. My prior experience did however inform the attainment of some rich data and assisted in understanding what it was that my participants were telling me. Having considered the researcher, the actual research process will now be described.

3.2. Qualitative Research

The purpose of qualitative research is to 1) study people and processes in their natural setting; 2) to learn the person's perspective; and 3) to gain an understanding of people's experiences and their subjectively constructed realities. For occupational therapists, this insight and understanding is used to make a meaningful difference in the occupational engagement of the lives of the people with whom they work (Cook, 2001).

The way in which young adolescent girls experience their occupations is not well understood by occupational therapists. By studying young adolescent girls in their natural setting, their subjective realities can be better understood. At the same time, it is important to gain an understanding of the context as it is within the context that they engage in occupations. The subjective reality of young

adolescent girls is important if one is to consider developing appropriate intervention programmes aimed at enhancing the occupational potential of these youth.

When interviewing children, there is a natural power dynamic that exists. In addition, children associate adults within the school environment to be evaluators and disciplinarians. Both of these factors would have had an impact on the participants' participation within this study. However, it was decided to use the school environment as an access point for data collection as it is safe and the youth are accessible. The issue of power was addressed by using semi-structured interviews. Participants could share their subjective experiences with reduced anxiety of having to provide the 'correct answers'. Issuing the participants with disposable cameras to take photographs of their experiences further facilitated this power sharing. They were able to choose what they photographed, thus giving them the power to choose what they shared. The value of this became evident in the richness of data they provided. Each of these processes will be discussed in section 3.5.

3.3. Ethnography

The purpose of ethnography is to find ways to describe how people know, understand and give meaning to the experiences in their lives (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005; Cormack, 1991 in Khalil, 2003). This study aims to gain an understanding of how young adolescent girls' experience the occupations they engage in on a daily basis and to understand the meaning that they associate with these experiences. The aims of this study thus fit with the purposes of ethnographic research.

Atkinson and Pugsley (2005) identify five guiding principles of ethnographic research. The first principle is *meaning*, which acknowledges that social life is meaningful. An objective of this study is to explore the meaning young adolescent girls experience through their occupational engagement. The second principle is *process*, which recognises that social life does not comprise of fixed entities and structures but can be negotiated and redefined within the process of life. The third principle is that social actions and social identities make sense within *context*. For this reason, a description of the context was provided in the literature review. Contextual factors were also considered throughout the data collection and data analysis processes. The fourth and fifth principles are that actors are both knowledgeable and rational, and are thus the best informants of their experiences. Participants were thus considered the experts of their experiences and the researcher asked them to teach her about these experiences. They were also the best informants to describe their own occupational profiles.

An occupational profile explores the occupational dimension of a person's life based on their own narrative accounts of their experiences (Whiteford & Wicks, 1999). These experiences and narratives take place within the context of social phenomena. Through applying the five principles

that Atkinson & Pugsley (2005) define for ethnographic research, ethnography becomes a means to studying the essence and structure of these social phenomena. Ethnography also enables the study of how people interact within their groups (Khalil, 2003).

In an attempt to gain a rich understanding of the context in which the participants' social actions took place and their identities were developed (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005), participants' descriptors of Lavender Hill were used. These were combined with the researcher's thick description of her observations of the context. The researcher's knowledge of the context had been developed over a four-year period of working in the community. In addition, all data was collected within the context of Lavender Hill.

3.4. Study population

Grassdale¹ Primary was selected for this research project as it is situated in Lavender Hill, as stated previously, Facing Up is an occupational therapy programme that is based in primary schools in Lavender Hill. The current continuum of research is being accrued within this community to develop a comprehensive understanding of the occupations of youth in this community.

Grassdale Primary was selected, as the researcher is currently not involved with service delivery at the school. It was decided that the research process would be optimised if learners were not familiar with the researcher in the same way that they were at two other schools where she does provide intervention. At these schools, learners associate the researcher with a therapeutic role. In addition, the researcher has been involved with research at Grassdale Primary so educators and learners more readily associate her with this role. The school had also expressed a willingness to participate in future research projects should the opportunity arise. This willingness meant that the research process would not be a burden to the school, an important factor to consider when conducting research of this nature.

3.4.1. Sampling

Maximum variation range, purposive sampling was used to select four participants for the study. Selection criteria were included in a letter to the educators (see Appendix 2 for a copy of this letter). The criteria were as follows:

- 12 years of age for the duration of the study.
- Attend Grassdale Primary School and live in Lavender Hill.
- Have no suspected intellectual impairments so as not to impair reporting ability.
- Should be able to engage in one-on-one conversations with adults.
- Should not have been part of any of the previous research studies.

¹ Names of all the schools, learners and teachers have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Once support and acceptance of the study was gained from the Western Cape Education Department and the principal of Grassdale Primary School, selection criteria was discussed with the Grade 7 educators. They were also given a copy of the above-mentioned letter. Educators then identified those learners who they considered to fit the profile required for participation. It was decided to ask educators to identify learners as it was felt that their knowledge of the learners would be a valuable resource to access.

Educators were also asked to select girls who were representative of the range of girls in the community. The research question for this study includes all young adolescent girls in Lavender Hill. For this reason, the researcher wanted to obtain as much range within the profile of the sample as possible, such as family structure, activity participation, academic performance and behaviours. These characteristics were explained to educators who then selected four participants who they felt best provided an accurate representation of young adolescent girls in Lavender Hill.

Selection proved to be more challenging than anticipated, as educators did not always select girls who fitted all the criteria. They tended to focus on the criterion of being able to engage in one-on-one conversations with adults. This is understandable in light of the fact that not all adolescents are comfortable engaging in one-on-one conversations with adults (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Educators also selected girls who were more studious. The researcher had experienced similar selection challenges during previous research, as it seemed that educators selected learners who would provide a positive depiction of their school. The researcher thus had to adopt an alternative selection strategy in order to obtain appropriate participants for the study. This process will be discussed next.

From the initial girls that educators had selected, only one fitted all of the criteria. The main criteria that were not fulfilled were those of: age and living in Lavender Hill. Participants from the educators' selection were older or lived in the surrounding areas of Capricorn, Hillview or Seawinds. The researcher decided to ask these girls if they could suggest potential participants that they thought fitted the selection profile, as a form of snowballing. Snowballing is the sampling technique whereby participants are asked to suggest further participants who they know to fit with the study (Katzenellenbogen, J.M., Joubert, G. & Abdool Karim, 1997).

They were asked to think of girls who would provide the researcher with an accurate picture of all the different girls in the community. The researcher explained the purpose of the study highlighting the need to establish a picture of all the different girls experiences in Lavender Hill. Upon considering the age and thus their cognitive development and vocabulary of the population, the researcher adapted the language used to describe the range of characteristics to the girls. The researcher described the selection characteristics as follows:

Girls who,

- Do well at school; get middle marks; struggle with their schoolwork.
- Participate in lots of different activities at school and after school hours; only take part in some activities at school or after school hours; who do not take part in any organised activities
- Hardly ever get into trouble; occasionally get into trouble; who are often in trouble and are sent to the principal's office.
- Those who spend time with their families and at home; who mix with children in the community; who like going out and partying.

This proved to be a more successful strategy of identifying participants. The snowballing technique was used to identify one potential participant at a time. This was employed until the researcher felt that she had four participants who best fitted the selection criteria. Those who did not fit the criteria were sent back to class after the researcher explained why they would not be part of the study. They were then asked to consider other girls in grade 7 who would fit the selection criteria.

Profiles of the four participants (Ashley, Nicole, Shereen and Zilda) will be introduced in the findings (Chapter 4). It is however necessary to note that of the four participants that were selected, three came from St Montague Village. Prior to starting this study, the researcher had considered St Montague Village to fit within the Lavender Hill area. Grassdale Primary borders Lavender Hill and St Montague Village (see Appendix 1 for an aerial photograph of the area). It was thus decided to include girls who lived in Lavender Hill and St Montague Village.

Once it was established that the four girls fitted the selection criteria, the researcher once again explained the purpose of study to them. They were informed that they would be given a letter for themselves and their parents. The letters would explain everything that the researcher told them. They were also given the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns. They were then provided with the information letters for their parents / guardians (see Appendix 3) together with consent forms (see Appendix 4). The participants were also given information letters (Appendix 5) and assent forms (Appendix 6). It was explained to the participants that their parents / guardians had to give permission for them to be able to participate. They were also assured they had a say in the decision, which would be expressed on the assent form. It was also made explicit that, although they had a say, if their parents / guardian did not want them to participate, that decision superseded their decision. On the other hand, if their parent / guardian allowed them to participate but they chose not to, the participants' decision would be respected and they would not have to participate. Both consent and assent forms needed to be returned with positive responses in order for participants to be part of the study. One participant withdrew prior to providing assent, simply saying that she did not want to participate. As a result, a further name was obtained from those girls who had already agreed to participate in the study. All four participants parents / guardians

gave consent and all participants gave assent for all means of data collection i.e. interviews, photographs and journal keeping.

3.5. Data Collection

3.5.1. Ethnographic Methods

Ethnography is not confined to one mode of data collection. Literature, however, refers to three characteristic methods used in ethnographic studies: participant observation, interviews and prolonged engagement (Atkinson & Pugsley, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Each of these three methods will be discussed briefly. This will be followed by a description of the data collection process in the order in which it took place.

3.5.1.1. Ethnographic interviews

The goal of ethnographic interviews is to “discover natural categories of meaning in the interviewee’s minds” (Bateman, 2002, p 320). The manner in which a person shares their experiences is an expression of the meaning that they experience (Hasselkus, 2002). By getting the participants to describe their daily experiences, the researcher was able to glean some of the meaning that they experienced within their lives.

3.5.1.2. Participant observation

Participant observation in ethnographic research is considered the best method for understanding people’s experiences and the meaning they attach to these experiences (Bowling, 1997). Participant observation traditionally involves the researcher being in the group that is being observed. Situations are observed and recorded together with interpretations and explanations provided by the participants.

There are different levels of participant observation: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer, and complete participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). It has been argued that all-social research is a form of participant observation as a researcher cannot study society without being a part of it (Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

In this study, traditional participant observation was not adopted in that the researcher did not actively observe a situation. It was realised that being a white female entering the participants’ space beyond the school environment may place the researcher and participants in danger. In addition, it was felt that the presence of the researcher would not provide an accurate depiction of the normal experience of the participants engaging in occupations (Open Learning Foundation, 1997). This was particularly relevant considering the limited time available for this research project. For this reason, participants captured snippets of their experiences by taking photographs of their

different occupational experiences. The use of photographs will be described in more detail in section 3.5.2.2.

3.5.1.3. Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement adds depth to data that is collected as it allows the researcher to build relationships with participants and accumulate an understanding of their experiences (Lawlor & Mattingly, 2000). The researcher spent two months at the school during the data collection process. She spent approximately two hours interviewing each of the participants. Contact was also made before interviews were conducted as well as between interviews to follow-up with regards to the cameras and the photographs. These informal meetings proved to be valuable opportunities to build rapport with the participants. Although literature does not state a specific time frame quantifying prolonged engagement, the period of engagement in this study could not be considered prolonged engagement. This was a limitation to this study as it did limit the depth of rapport that the researcher was able to develop with the participants.

3.5.2. Data collection process

The actual process of data collection will now be described. This process began with an initial semi-structured interview with each of the participants. At the end of this interview, participants were issued with a disposable camera and a journal in order to capture their occupational experiences. Participants were given one week to take photographs of these experiences. Two and a half to three weeks after the initial interview, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with each of the participants. Participants' photographs and journal entries were discussed during this interview. Finally, member checks were conducted once data had been analysed. This process will be presented more detail in the following section.

3.5.2.1. Initial semi-structured interview

Interviews can be conducted in a variety of ways and in a range of practices. They can be structured or unstructured, be composed of closed-ended questions or entail in-depth conversations (Laliberte-Rudman & Moll, 2001). Interviewers typically conduct one-on-one interviews to enable the interviewee to share their subjective experiences. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer begins the interview with an open-ended question, which allows the interviewee to respond in a way that allows their experience to emerge. The interviewer picks up cues from the interviewee through active listening to ask further questions (Bateman, 2002). In addition, the researcher had a set of predetermined questions that were used to guide the interview process. These questions were:

- Describe what it is like living in Lavender Hill.
- Describe all the different things you do in your day.
- Describe what you do on the weekend.

These questions facilitated the exploration of the occupational dimension of the participants' lives in order to develop an occupational profile (Whiteford & Wicks, 1999). When participants were unable to respond, the researcher asked them to describe their normal day from the time they woke up to the time they went to sleep. In addition to providing the researcher with the range of occupations participants engaged in, it also provided an indication of the time spent engaging in these occupations. Participants were also asked for their reasons for engaging in the activities they described. They were asked this in order to identify the purpose of engagement (an objective of the study). Participants were not always able to provide this information stating that it is simply something that they do. There were occasions however, where the purpose for engagement was evident within their original response.

Once participants felt they had told the researcher all they could about the different occupations they engage in, the researcher showed them thirteen photographs (see Appendix 7) as data triggers for further discussion. Lorenzo (2005) describes data triggers as those techniques, activities and games that are used in the research process to facilitate participants to contribute in the interview process. The photographs that were used depicted children engaging in a range of activities as well as of scenes of daily life in Lavender Hill. The choice of activities was informed by the researchers prior knowledge of young adolescent girls' occupational engagement. In addition, the researcher included photographs of daily life in order to prompt the participants to describe their subjective experience of living in Lavender Hill.

The data triggers that were used, included photographs taken by children who participated in Galvaan's study of adolescent activity participation (2003) as well as photographs taken during service provision at *Facing Up*, the occupational therapy programme based in primary schools in Lavender Hill. It was explained that children who live in the community had taken some of the photographs and the researcher had taken others while working in the community. This explanation was provided in order for participants to know that the photographs were relevant to their own lives. It was highlighted that the photographs were only examples of some the activities in which children engage. Participants were asked to share what the photographs represented to them i.e. what *they* thought was happening in the photographs, whether they had similar or different experiences and anything else that the photographs made them think of. They were assured that if any of photographs meant nothing to them, they did not have to respond.

The photographs proved to be valuable triggers for prompting discussion regarding the range of activities in which they engaged. This discussion led to the development of the occupational profile for each of the participants. In addition, the conversation elicited by the photographs gave the

researcher greater understanding of the context as participants described their community in greater detail. This initial interview lasted for between thirty-five and fifty minutes.

As stated previously, participants were issued with a journal and disposable camera at the end of the interview. These methods will be discussed in the next section on participant observation (3.5.2.2). The participants' journal entries and photographs were used in the follow-up interviews, which will be discussed in section 3.5.2.2 below.

3.5.2.2. Photographs

Photographs were used as a form of participant observation, namely complete observer. Atkinson & Pugsley (2005) note that the important aspect of participant observation is the general methodological commitment to investigating everyday life in the situation in which it occurs. Photographs can facilitate an understanding of ethnographic patterns where data generation and analysis involves a search for patterns of thought and behaviour (Fetterman (1989) in Magilvy & Nelson, 1992). As a result, it was decided that the photographs would serve as a means of capturing participants' experiences as they experience them. The photographs that participants chose to take told a story in themselves. By sharing their life story, participants were expressing the meaning they experienced (Russell & Carey, 2003). This addressed the objective of exploring the meaning participants ascribe to their occupations.

Each participant was issued with a disposable camera at the end of the initial interview. They were asked to take photographs of all the different activities in which they engage. It was explained that the researcher wanted to experience what it was like to engage in the activities in which the participants engaged. For this reason, they needed to take photographs that captured these different experiences. The photographic triggers the participants had recently described were used as further triggers. This time they were used to prompt participants as to the photographs they needed to capture. Participants were given one week to take their photographs. Precautions for taking photographs were discussed with participants. These will be presented under ethical considerations in section 3.8.3.

3.5.2.3. Journals

Researchers often assume people they interview know and understand their lives and that in sharing their perspectives they know what it is they are saying (Savin-Baden, 2003). However, it is often only after an interview that interviewees begin to develop their own thoughts and feelings regarding the topic of the interview (Savin-Baden, 2003). To account for this, participants were given a journal to write reflections and/or subsequent thoughts resulting from the initial interview. The researcher was aware that some learners in the context have poor levels of literacy so offered participants the option of recording an audio journal onto audiocassettes. Three of the participants

indicated they would prefer to use the audio journal. A cassette recorder was left at the school and arrangements were made with the principal for participants to access the recorder to make journal entries. Participants did not however feel comfortable asking the principal to use the recorder. Consequently, they did not make use of the audio journal facility. Two of the four participants wrote journal entries where they described their experiences of living in Lavender Hill. It is felt that perhaps the initial rationale for using journals was not appropriate for young adolescents. As stated previously, Savin-Baden (2003) speaks of the development of thoughts and feelings regarding an interview only after the actual interview process. The assumption was made that the same occurs when young adolescents are interviewed. This process may have needed to be better facilitated. This could have been done by writing semi-structured questions in the journals to cue participants in journal entries. Questions that could have been used include:

- What did you do today?
- Why did you do what you did?
- What was it like doing what you did?

Once the photographs were developed and the journals collected, the researcher set up times to conduct follow-up interviews with each of the participants.

3.5.2.4. Follow-up interview

The second interview was conducted between two and a half to three and a half weeks following the initial interview. The researcher had initially planned on leaving two weeks between interviews but participants required longer to take their photographs. Participants were given two weeks instead of one week for this process. In addition, there were logistical delays related to school times.

The aim of the follow-up interviews was to extrapolate meaning and purpose experienced within the occupations in which participants engaged. By giving participants the opportunity to talk about their photographed experiences, they were able to share their subjective knowledge. Within this process, they were able to express the meaning they experience through their occupations within their context. They were also able to describe how their occupational experiences fit within the community in which they live.

The interview began with participants describing the photographs they had taken (each participant only viewed and spoke about their own photographs). Berman *et al* (2001) in Riley & Manias (2004) describes this process as 'photo-talk', which is "a narrative evolved from the 'space' between the photographs and the dialogue" (p. 401). In some situations, the photographs acted as further triggers for discussion as they cued participants to talk about experiences related to the

photographs. Shereen and Ashley discussed their journal entries once they had spoken about their photographs.

Once participants had spoken about their photographs and journals, the researcher asked questions relating to the initial interview. These questions had been developed after reading the initial interviews (which had been transcribed verbatim) in preparation for the follow-up interview. It was found that participants had answered some of these questions while discussing their photographs and journal entries.

At the end of the interview process, participants chose one or two photographs to have them enlarged (they could either have one large or two medium photographs). These were given within a week of the final interviews. The rest of the photographs were returned to the participants once the study was completed.

3.6. Data management and analysis

All interviews were recorded on audiocassette and later transcribed verbatim by independent transcribers. The researcher checked each transcript by listening to each cassette recording, while simultaneously reviewing the relevant manuscript and making the necessary changes.

Data was managed and coded using the computer software package NUD*IST Invivo. In order to draw on the richness of the data, the researcher displayed the participants' photographs during the analysis process (Berloff, 1997 in Kelly, 1999). Data was coded inductively using a content analysis approach. The goal of content analysis is to reduce the material to develop data into categories. These categories are usually derived from theoretical models, through an alignment with theory rather than from empirical material (Flick, 1998).

During the initial phase of analysis, the researcher asked the questions:

- What are they (participants) essentially telling me?
- What do they do?
- What is it like to do those things?

The answers to these questions, resulted in the emergence of thirty-nine codes which formed three themes: occupational profile, environmental factors and relationships. The participants' photographs also depicted these three themes. The themes were basic descriptors of the participants' experiences within their occupations ('doing'). They also described their interactions with other people and their environment.

During the next phase of analysis, the researcher considered the characteristics of the participants' occupations in terms of meaning and purpose. The key question during this phase of analysis was, 'What is it about what they do?' The researcher asked what purposes and what roles the occupations played in the participants' lives. This was asked in order to identify the purposes the participants ascribed to their occupations. Meaning was identified through repetition, prioritisation and tonal inflection within the dialogue (Burgman & King, 2005). Eighteen categories emerged from this level of analysis.

Each of these categories was then explored in detail, while identifying the different relationships between the categories. This process led to the emergence of three categories: *Occupational Adaptation*, *Growing Up* and *Connecting*. These categories were represented as three separate entities although the latter two were seen to occur alongside each other. It became evident however, that there was a relationship between the subcategories of each category. This led to an exploration of the relationships that existed between the subcategories. During this process, the researcher considered current theories concerning human occupation, which meant that this phase of analysis was deductive.

Through this process of analysis, it was realised that the participants had described the many adaptive responses that they experienced within their deprived circumstances. As a result, the findings were seen to fit into the theme, *Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed into a flower*. The researcher drew on the analogy of a flower to describe the process of adaptation because of the many parallels that exist between a flower that grows in a garden and the participants growing up in Lavender Hill. It was also realised that there were different levels to this adaptive process i.e. macro (*Lavender Hill: Where it all happens*), meso (*The people around me*) and micro (*Occupational being: doing, being and becoming*) levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This led to the development of a model (see Figure 1 on page 54) that illustrates how the participants' experiences are influenced by the interaction between these different levels.

The first category, *Lavender Hill: Where it all happens*, consists of two sub-subcategories¹ (*Food for growth* and *The weeds and the worms*). These sub-subcategories describe the environmental factors that either enable or hinder and restrict occupational engagement. Wilcock's (1998b) notion of 'doing, being and becoming' described the nature of the participants' occupational engagement and was thus used to describe the second category of *Occupational being: doing, being and becoming*. This category consists of three subcategories: *What I do* (doing), *A human being* and *A blossoming flower* (becoming). Each of these subcategories consists of a number of sub-subcategories, although the number in each subcategory varies. The number of sub-subcategories

¹ These are referred to as sub-subcategories because the category *Occupational being: doing, being and becoming* consists of three subcategories, each consisting of a number of sub-subcategories. The sub-subcategories in each of the three categories represent the same level of data.

per category is a reflection of the participants' developmental stage and the nature of data that was collected. Because the participants' cognitive development is still largely in the concrete operational stage, they are more aware of their 'doing'. This was reflected in the six sub-subcategories of *What I do*. In addition, the participants are only entering Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development, identity formation. This means that they are only becoming aware of their developing identity. Therefore, *A blossoming flower* only consists of two sub-subcategories. Furthermore, due to the limited period of engagement in the data collection process (see section 3.5.1.3.), the nature of the interviews revealed the more obvious and superficial aspects of human occupation i.e. the 'doing' rather than their 'being' (*A blossoming flower*).

The final category is *The people in my life* describes the participants' relationships and how these impact on their occupational experiences. These people (represented by the three sub-subcategories of *My family*, *My friends* and *My neighbours*) are part of the participants' occupational engagement as it is within these relationships that engage. In addition, the people in the participants' lives form a connection between themselves (*Occupational beings: Doing, being and becoming*) and their environment (*Lavender Hill: Where it all happens*). This creates a sense of belonging and connectedness for the participants.

Once data had been analysed, the researcher set up times to conduct member checks with two of the participants, which will be discussed shortly.

3.7. Ensuring trustworthiness and rigor

3.7.1. Reflexivity

A research journal was kept to capture and analyse the researcher's subjective preconceptions, biases and beliefs relating to the study (Finlay, 1998). Section 3.1. (see page 20) includes the initial reflective process of the researcher's pre-existing perceptions and beliefs. In addition, journal entries were recorded following each interview, as well as during the data analysis process. In these entries, the researcher captured thoughts and impressions that emerged during each phase of the research process. This enabled the researcher to become aware of and account for possible biases.

3.7.2. Peer debriefing

The researcher had regular consultations with her supervisor to discuss the research methods and techniques that were being implemented. The researcher's supervisor also guided the analysis process so that depth in analysis was attained. Throughout the research process, research findings, analysis and insights were discussed with four impartial colleagues (independently) who have experience with qualitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

3.7.3. Transferability and dependability

A thick description of the context (see section 4.1.) has been included in order to contextualise and facilitate transferability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, this chapter (chapter 3) provides a detailed description of the research process to ensure dependability of the study.

3.7.4. Member checks

Member checks are intended to serve as a form of discursive validation of data and interpretations with participants (Flick, 1998). Initially, two participants were selected for this process. Zilda was selected as the researcher felt that some of her contributions had been relatively distinct and wanted to ensure that she had captured these accurately. The researcher also wanted to use the opportunity to clarify a point relating to Zilda's home situation. Nicole was selected because it was considered that her profile fits a contrasting representation of all the participants. Those aspects of her profile that had to be considered in this decision include family structure and the types of occupations in which she engaged.

The researcher met with each of these participants individually where the codes and themes were presented. The researcher also described the interpretations that had been made. She explained what she had come to understand from participants during the data collection process. Participants agreed with these findings and commented that they made sense to them. They also said that these findings were an accurate reflection of their experiences. Zilda and Nicole's responses verified the researcher's findings, which meant that member checks were not necessary with the other two participants. However, when Shereen and Ashley learnt that the findings had been presented, they requested that the researcher share these with them as well. Upon discussing this with all the participants, they decided that this should happen as a group, which the researcher agreed to do. The researcher felt that the participants would be more likely to discuss the findings amongst themselves and in so doing, provide feedback relating to the analysed data. Once again, the participants agreed with the findings and the interpretations that had been made, thus serving as further verification of the findings. It became evident that by presenting the findings to the participants as a group, their experiences were validated and they expressed pride in the contribution they had made.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

3.8.1. Access

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Cape Town Ethics Committee (Rec. Ref: 099/2005) and the Western Cape Education Department (Reference: 20050329-0039). Permission was then obtained from the principal of Grassdale Primary School. Times for interviews were negotiated with educators to ensure learners did not miss significant academic programmes or evaluations.

In addition, the researcher has worked at *Facing Up*, a health promotion occupational therapy programme based in two of the other primary schools in Lavender Hill and has developed a working relationship with the principals and educators at Grassdale Primary School. Educators at Grassdale had expressed interest in participating in research projects prior to the researcher approaching the school about this study. This was an indication of their willingness to participate in the research.

3.8.2. Autonomy

Relevant information about the study was given to participants and parents/caregivers (Katzenellenbogen *et al*, 1997) informing them that a study was being conducted concerning learners' experiences of the activities they participate in. Sampling criteria was not reflected in the letter. These were not included because it was felt that the criteria did not reflect distinctive characteristics that might impact on parents'/guardians' willingness to consider consent. A parental/caregiver consent form accompanied the information letter (see Appendices 3 and 4). Parental/guardian consent was required in order for participants to be included in the study. In addition, informed assent was obtained from the participants, with an information page also accompanying the assent form (see appendices 5 and 6). Full details of the research were also explained to the participants before they were given the information letters and consent/assent forms. The researcher believes it is important that the participants were able to decide independently to participate and to offer their own assent following consultation with their parents/caregiver. This is in an attempt to convey the message that the participants' decisions and views are valued and important.

Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty, thus emphasizing autonomy. This point was reiterated during the study although none of the participants chose to withdraw participation or any information. Participants' names and identifying details were changed to ensure confidentiality. In addition, all faces on photographs were obscured to prevent identification.

3.8.3 Beneficence and Non-maleficence

Beneficence and non-maleficence ensured that the study did not cause physical and psychological harm to the participants (Katzenellenbogen *et al*, 1997) by treating information with sensitivity and adopting a non-judgemental approach. Data remained confidential and participants had the option to refuse to answer or respond to questions, both of which were made explicit to participants (Oppenheim, 1992, Huysamen, 2001). There were a few incidences where participants chose to employ this right and chose not to respond to a question. This occurred when they did not have a response to some of the photographic triggers during the initial interview.

Participants were coached as to the types of scenarios they should capture in the photographs i.e. the range of the occupations they engage in (explained as all the different things they do). Precautions were discussed with participants with regards to taking photographs that might cause harm (e.g. avoid taking photographs of other people engaging in risk and / or illegal activity). The researcher also explored scenarios that participants should be cautious of. The researcher made it clear that should someone have taken offence and want the camera, participants should give it to them knowing that there would be no negative effects on them as participants to this study. None of the participants reported any incidences where they felt unsafe because of the camera or the photographs they were taking and they showed discretion in the scenes they chose to photograph.

There was an instance where one of the participants reported physical abuse in her home as well as possible sexual abuse of one of her cousins that was living with her. Referral was discussed with the participant. She agreed that it was necessary and important to take action so the matter was reported to the social worker at a local Non-Governmental Organisation. Two of the participants also referred to the use of corporal punishment in the classroom. This is a sensitive yet important issue and is currently being addressed by Facing Up (similar instances have also been reported at two of the other primary schools in Lavender Hill).

A second participant wrote a journal entry that indicated potential suicidal ideations. Much of what the participant reported in both interviews as well as the images she captured in the photographs were contrary to this journal entry. The researcher discussed the journal entry of concern with the participant at the end of the second interview. She reported she had written the entry in response to an unrelated experience and did not want (nor felt it necessary for) any intervention to take place regarding the matter.

3.8.4. Accountability

Participants' explicit permission to release sensitive information was obtained before such details were released (Huysamen, 2001). This was described in the above two cases when there was concern about the safety and well-being of the participants.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of this research. It begins with a thick description of the context (community profile). This description is written from the researcher's knowledge and perspective of Lavender Hill. The participants are then introduced by means of individual participant profiles. This is followed by a presentation of the theme, *Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed into a flower*.

4.1. Community profile

The environment is known to play a significant role in the process of occupational engagement. For this reason, a detailed description of the community will be presented here. The community of Lavender Hill was introduced in the literature review (Chapter 2). This section is a more detailed description of the community and is written from the researcher's perspective. The profile has been informed by my experience of working in Lavender Hill for the past four years. During this time, I have spoken to children, parents and teachers about the community. Participants in this research project have also contributed to my understanding of the context. Further knowledge has been gleaned from literature, particularly from the writings of Don Pinnock (1997, 1984) and Jonny Steinberg (2004) who write about life on the Cape Flats.

Lavender Hill is an impoverished community that continues to live with the scars of Apartheid. The high-density, low-cost housing sees a large number of people concentrated into a small area. Housing structures vary between apartment-style flats (commonly referred to as courts), semi-detached houses (*halwe huisies*), freestanding houses and informal structures or bungalows¹. The informal housing structures (bungalows) are usually erected in family or friend's backyards.

In addition to the high-density housing, many of these homes accommodate more people than they were originally designed to house. Two or three bedroom homes accommodate up to fifteen or twenty people. The pros and cons of living in such circumstances are subjective. The participants' experiences of this will be presented in the section 4.3.

Lavender Hill has a high rate of unemployment. This is most evident in the fact that there are numerous people loitering in the streets or sitting on the pavements during the day. It is notable that a large proportion of these individuals are men. This is another effect of Apartheid when men had restricted, and usually sporadic employment opportunities (Salo, 2004). This phenomenon continues today. There is however, a fairly active informal trading sector in Lavender Hill.

¹ The participants in this study each come from one of these dwellings

Residents run shops from their homes where they sell a variety of goods, including bread, milk and fruit, sweets and chips. Residents call these shops *huiswinkels* (home shops). Some of these vendors also sell sweets and chips at school fences (at those schools that permit such activity, Grassdale being one such school). Other informal trade includes mechanical repairs, childcare and clothing production.

Lavender Hill has four primary schools and one secondary school. All of the schools accommodate more learners than they were designed to accommodate. The educator-learner ratio is, on average, 1:45 per class. The schools are predominantly Afrikaans-medium with one English-medium class per grade (Grassdale has three classes per grade – two Afrikaans and one English). The high school sees a high rate of school dropouts and early school leavers, with a relatively small proportion of learners completing their grade 12 education (in comparison with the number of children who start their primary school education). Economic factors are a cause for learners leaving school early. Learners also drop out of school for a range of reasons, including: limited academic ability (often due to neglected learning disabilities), peer pressure, chaotic classrooms, bullying and little perceived benefit in completing secondary education.

Lavender Hill offers children few recreational facilities. Open spaces between the courts are laid with concrete, (as this photograph illustrates) resulting in there being little greenery and few trees. There are a few parks and fields where children play. However, these facilities are not always safe as they are poorly maintained. Climbing structures and swings are broken due to wear and tear or vandalism. In addition, parks have little (or no) grass. Instead, they are sandy with stones and litter (including glass) covering the ground.



Adults engaging in illicit activities sometimes prevent children from accessing these parks. Many of these adults are associated with the gang culture that is so prevalent in Lavender Hill. The territorial nature of gangs sees gangsters fighting over and protecting their turf. In these territories, gangsters control the drug trafficking and brothel operations. They also manage games shops where children play arcade games (COPES, 2003). The greater a gangs' area of influence, the more income they are able to generate. More significantly however, is the associated power and control gangs gain through their territory. As a result, gangs invest their time and energy in defending and increasing their turf. This usually occurs through gang fights where members shoot at and stab opposing gang members. Unfortunately, innocent bystanders (who are often children)

get caught in the crossfire or by stray bullets. Gangsters have also been known to assault community members in the street, taking their money and possessions e.g. cell phones, jewellery or watches.

There is a high incidence of abuse in Lavender Hill. This physical and verbal abuse infiltrates daily life where interactions between community members are frequently aggressive in nature. Children can be seen to play out these acts of aggression through games such as '*skop mekaar*' (*kick each other*) and '*rape me - rape me*'. Sexual abuse is rife in Lavender Hill with children (boys and girls alike) being particularly vulnerable to such assaults. The above forms of abuse are frequently associated with substance abuse, which is common in Lavender Hill. Dagga and tik² are currently the most popular drugs in Lavender Hill. Children from Lavender Hill as well as the media (Cape Argus supplement, 2005) have reported that children as young as 7 years old are smoking tik.

There are a few support services in Lavender Hill but they are unable to address the many needs of the community. These include:

- The **Seawinds Community Health Centre** is open on weekdays. Services focus on maternal and child health.
- The **New World Foundation (NWF)** is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that operates in Lavender Hill. They offer a range of activities to the youth, including: crèche facilities, holiday programmes, art classes, dance groups and gospel singing lessons. They also have various services for adults, the elderly and people with disabilities.
- **Love Life** is an HIV/AIDS organisation. They work with youth to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in an attempt to prevent the spread of the disease. Love Life offers sex education to classes in schools. They also use sport as a mechanism to convey their message.
- **Children and Violence**, formerly COPEs (Community Psychology Empowerment Service), is a branch of The Trauma Unit in Cape Town. They address the psychological effects of trauma and violence. This service has recently moved premises and is no longer based in Lavender Hill. They do however continue to provide a service to the community.
- **Facing Up** is a health promotion, occupational therapy programme that operates in two of the primary schools in Lavender Hill.
- Other services are initiatives of local religious groups, mainly Christian and Muslim groups. These services include soup kitchens, lay counselling and youth groups.

The Lavender Hill Development Forum was established in 2003. The purpose of the forum is to address Lavender Hill's negative stigma and to improve living conditions in the community. The

² Methamphetamine or crystal meth is commonly known as tik and is a highly addictive drug. Although it can be consumed in a variety of ways, it is most commonly smoked. It is currently a prominent drug in South Africa and is reaching epidemic proportions in Lavender Hill (Cape Argus supplement, 30 June 2005).

forum has been involved in gardening projects; leadership, economic and educational development; and crime prevention strategies (NWF, 2003). They are also involved in regular negotiations between gang leaders, which has seen a decrease in gang warfare over the past two years. There has been a noticeable difference in Lavender Hill since the forums inception two years ago. Street corners are decorated with gardens and shooting incidences have declined. The participants' in this study reflect some of these changes in the findings in section 4.3. However, before that discussion can take place, the participants need to be introduced.

4.2. Participant profiles

These profiles will enable the reader to develop a picture of each of the four participants who took part in this study. The profiles offer the reader further insight into the participants' personal characteristics; their lived experiences; as well as an introduction to the type of occupations in which they engage. Each of the profiles describes the particular participants' family and living circumstances, their responsibilities in the home and some of the occupations in which they engage.

4.2.1. Ashley³

Ashley is 12 years 7 months⁴. She grew up in Milnerton but moved with her mother to St Montague Village two years ago because the aunt they were living with fell ill and moved away. Ashley lives with her mother in a two-room bungalow in her aunty's back yard. Ashley's father lives in Mossel Bay with his current wife and children. She occasionally visits them during the school holidays. Her mother seems to be a significant and valued person in her life. She frequently made reference to her relationship with her mother; describing the important role that her mother plays in her life. Ashley also spoke of how her mother informed her values and opinions. She strives to please and make her mother proud. Her mother works in the city centre in the hospitality industry. She leaves for work at 05:30 and returns home after 17:00, which means Ashley is at home alone for most of the day.

Ashley enjoys helping to clean the house and tends to the plants in their garden. She loves animals and has a pet cat that she plays with and cares for. Her cat is very special to her and follows her when she goes to visit friends. Spending time with people and caring for others (including her cat) are meaningful activities in Ashley's life.

Ashley still regularly travels to Milnerton by taxi, with her cousins, to visit friends and family; and to go to the beach. Ashley accompanies her mother or cousins to Wynberg on weekends where they do their shopping or go to movies.

³ Pseudonyms have been used throughout the text in order to ensure confidentiality

⁴ Ages calculated as at the final interview

Ashley has the same group of seven friends at school as at home, some of whom are younger than herself. She engages in a range of occupations on the nearby field with these friends. It is on this field that she and her friends play soccer against the boys every evening. Ashley enjoys playing soccer and netball; and dancing with her friends. At school, she takes part in dancing lessons and plays netball. Ashley and her friends often play games like 'seet-el-seet' (hide and seek) in the street at night. They also play these games in other people's yards. She reports to 'watch a lot of TV' and enjoys children's television shows such as 'Wild Room' and 'CrazE', as well as soap operas. She is attentive to her schoolwork and takes pride in being a diligent learner. Ashley attends church with her mother where she enjoys learning about God and singing gospel songs. She values caring for others and doing things for those in need, such as caring for those who are sick. She also values being able to distribute food, with her mother, to those in need.

During the interviews, Ashley required prompting and seemed concerned that she may be giving the incorrect responses. During the initial interview, Ashley spoke predominantly of the activities she did outside of Lavender Hill. It seemed as though she was trying to depict experiences that she considered to be consistent with those of young adolescent girls from other communities. She seemed eager to impress and provide a positive impression. During the follow-up interview however, Ashley spoke mainly of her activities at home and in Lavender Hill. This seemed to indicate that she was more comfortable and confident to share these aspects of her occupational experiences. Photographing these experiences proved to be a valuable tool in facilitating this process.

4.2.2. Nicole

Nicole is 12 years 11 months old. She lives in St Montague Village with her mother, father and four siblings. She is the oldest of her siblings. Her mother is a nurse and her father is a driver for a national courier company. They have lived in the same house her whole life and she considers her street to be safe. Nicole usually helps her family clean the house on a Saturday morning before going to visit her uncle. She also helps tend to their garden. Nicole's family is important to her and they do a fair amount together as a family. They usually visit her uncle in Valhalla Park and attend church together as a family over weekends. Many of Nicole's values are informed by her Christian faith.

Nicole is not very familiar with the 'street life' and tends to listen to stories of what is going on rather than having first-hand experience of this. She is aware that people 'smoke straws' (tik) that make them high but does not know what they smoke or what it means to be high. Further, she considers tik to be a kind of diet. She knows of people who do use the drug and is aware that it has harmful effects on a person. Nicole makes the distinction between the road in which she lives and

the other areas in Lavender Hill/St Montague Village. She considers her road to be safe from crime and violence, while the others are unsafe.

Her friends are important to her and she values that they trust and respect each other. She claims that she and her friends are old fashioned because they don't 'go on' like the other children in the community i.e. they do not swear, fight, cause trouble and they are not rude to each other. They visit each other every day and often walk to the library in Retreat (approximately 3 kilometres away). Nicole enjoys laughing with her friends and reading books.

She enjoys watching television. She watches children's programmes (*'Wild Room'*), soap operas (*'The Young and The Restless'* and *'Passions'*) and dramas (*'The Practice'*). On Sunday afternoons she usually watches movies. Nicole plays with friends in her street, particularly with the girl who lives next door, who is 10 years old. Nicole and her friends go to the park where they play netball and basketball. They also play games in the street and soccer with the boys on the field.

School is important to Nicole and she takes pride in her work. She often chooses to help her teacher with chores during break time. When her teacher does not require her help, Nicole plays soccer outside with children in her class. She reports that many of the other children at school are rude.

During the interviews, Nicole made an effort to speak articulately and seemed to use language that she would not ordinarily use on a daily basis. For example, when she spoke of her family, she said that *'they're a lovely family'*. This seemed to be in an attempt to convey the message that she was a 'good girl' (which will be described further in the sub-subcategory: Being a good girl) who came from a good home. Nicole seemed to be more protected from the negative influences in her community than other participants. This was accompanied by a slightly more naive understanding of life experiences (although more in line with what one might expect from a child of her age).

4.2.3. Shereen

Shereen is 12 years, 11 months. She is Afrikaans speaking and lives in St Montague Village with her mother and 16-year-old sister. They live in a one-roomed, semi-detached house. Her mother's friend and children stay with Shereen's family when she experiences marital conflict. They usually stay for a two to three week period. Shereen's parents are separated and her father lives in Lavender Hill but frequently goes to Pretoria where he works as a construction worker. As a result, she does not see her father often. Both her parents abuse alcohol although she reports that her mother is currently reducing her alcohol consumption. Their drinking embarrasses Shereen because they behave inappropriately when intoxicated. Both sets of her grandparents live in

Lavender Hill and she visits them regularly. However, a family dispute regarding her mother working for her aunt had been preventing her visiting her mother's parents recently.

Shereen's mother runs a '*huiswinkel*' (home shop) from their home, selling sweets, chocolates and chips. When her mother and sister are not at home, she has to sell products (mainly to children). Shereen helps with some of the chores at home i.e. she does the dishes on Tuesdays, makes her own bed on Wednesdays and occasionally helps her mother with the washing. She goes on errands for neighbours, such as buying milk and sugar from nearby *huiswinkels*. They usually give her money for these errands, which she saves. She had been planning on using her savings to buy herself a cell phone but had recently given her money to her mother to get their television repaired.

Shereen has one friend at school and one at home, who is in Grade 2. She claims the children are '*onbeskof en voorbarig*' (rude and impudent). She feels it is not safe to play outside and instead chooses to spend most of her time indoors. She spends a significant amount of time watching television (three and half hours a day and more on weekends). She enjoys watching '*Wild Room*', and '*CrazE*⁵ during the week and on weekends she watches movies. When at home, she and her friend play games with pens and paper otherwise they play outside in the street. Shereen loves babies and enjoys looking after her neighbour's infant. At school, she and her friend '*loop in die ronde*' (walk around).

Shereen used to play soccer for the school but could not afford to go on the tour last year. As a result, she no longer plays soccer for the school. She does not play soccer at home because she does not have anyone to play with. Shereen plays netball for her school and the New World Foundation. She also sings in the school's choir, although they only meet when there is a specific event. Shereen attends church regularly where she sings solos or duets and dances during services.

During the interviews, Shereen spoke with a quiet confidence. She needed little prompting to speak and maintained eye contact while talking. Shereen expressed an excitement in being able to share her experiences with the researcher. She was also excited at the significance of her contribution in this study.

4.2.4. Zilda

Zilda is 12 years 11 months. She lives in Lavender Hill with her grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunty and 8 cousins. They live in the courts in Lavender Hill. They live on the third floor in a three-room flat. Zilda has 2 sisters and 2 brothers but they live with other family members and in foster care. Her mother lives in Grassy Park and her father in Milnerton. Zilda visits her mother during the

⁵ "Wild Room" and "CrazE" are daily children's magazine shows.

week and her father over the weekends. Her father also visits her at her grandparents' home during the week. Zilda lives with her grandparents because her mother abuses alcohol, which usually results in her physically abusing Zilda. She reported to not live with her father as he lives in Milnerton, which is too far from her school.

There is not always sufficient money in the house to buy food for the household. In these situations, Zilda and her cousins have to ask neighbours for food. Zilda indicated that her grandmother would not be able to accommodate her for much longer because she could not afford to support so many family members. As a result, Zilda is going to go stay with her father in Milnerton when she goes to high school. Although Zilda enjoys school, she is often absent from school.

Zilda has to do chores around the house, including washing the dishes, cleaning the balcony and hanging up the washing. These are fun activities for Zilda as she and her cousins make games out of them.

Zilda is exposed to a fair amount of violence and abuse, particularly verbal and physical abuse from her grandfather and uncle. Both her grandfather and uncle drink alcohol and smoke dagga. They become aggressive when intoxicated. She encounters many people who drink alcohol and who smoke tik. Zilda reports that there are frequent police raids of homes in Lavender Hill. During these raids, police search for people who possess and deal in drugs. Zilda indicated that all homes are searched during these raids.

Zilda enjoys watching the activity that takes place in the courts. This activity includes people fighting (usually when they are intoxicated) and gang shoot-outs. She claims that she finds the people fighting to be entertaining because of the way that they act when they are drunk. Zilda has come to believe that it is right for husbands / boyfriends to beat their wives / girlfriends if they do not listen to them.

She is also exposed to sexual activity in her home when adults watch pornographic movies or engage in sexual activity while she and her younger cousins are present. She describes that some of the boys in the courts touch the girls in sexual ways. Zilda usually calls her father or grandmother when boys make sexual advances.

Zilda frequently visits friends after school and on weekends. They are the same age as her but all go to different schools. They all save their money so that they can buy luxuries (sweets and chips) and hire movies. They also hang out in the park and go to clubs and shebeens where they dance and sing in karaokes. Zilda enjoys dancing and has competitions with her friends.

Zilda attends church and confirmation classes every week, which she says she enjoys. She watches television most afternoons. She mainly watches children's programmes such as *'Power Puff Girls'*, as well as soap operas (*'Passions'* and *'All My Children'*).

She spoke strongly against spending time outside, preferring rather to spend her time indoors. She said that this is largely because it is unsafe to play outside. Her grandmother also does not like her playing outside. She referred to a number of instances where she does not feel safe and either avoids such situations or engages in these activities with a group of friends and/or her cousins.

During the interviews, Zilda spoke freely and needed little prompting to talk. She was comfortable sharing her experiences, including instances where people would fight, swear and abuse others. She spoke of these instances in a matter-of-fact way and included language that would be used in her daily life, including descriptive swear words and phrases. Although she made an effort to speak clearly and loudly, she generally avoided eye contact during the interviews.

The three categories of this theme together with their relevant subcategories and sub-subcategories will be presented. Each subcategory will be concluded with a brief reflection.

4.3. THEME: Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed into a flower

The findings from this study describe the participants' experience as girls developing and growing up in Lavender Hill. The analogy of a seed growing into a flower has been used because of the many parallels this presents. In addition, Ashley and Shereen care for plants and flowers at home, while Zilda expressed the need for more flowers in Lavender Hill. However, the complexities of human occupation cannot always be paralleled to the nature of a flower. For this reason, the analogy will only be applied where appropriate.

The theme Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed into a flower, consists of three categories. Each of these categories represents a different level of the participant's lives: **Life in my life** represents the macro level, **The people in my life** the meso level and **Occupational beings: doing, being and becoming** the micro level. As Figure 1 (see page 54) illustrates, these levels are not independent of each other but rather interact to form the whole experience of the development of occupations. A summary of the theme is depicted in the following table (see following page):

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Table 1: Summary of findings

THEME		
Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed to a flower		
CATEGORY Lavender Hill: Where it all happens	CATEGORY Occupational beings: doing, being and becoming	CATEGORY The people in my life
Sub-subcategory 🌱 Food for growth 🐛 The weeds and the worms	Subcategory What I do Sub-subcategories ❖ Making sense of my life ❖ Making things predictable: 'I'm just used to it' ❖ Making choices, making changes ❖ Working with the worms ❖ Feeding other plants ❖ Wanting to be picked	Sub-subcategories 👨‍👩‍👧 My family 👨‍👩‍👦 My friends 👤 My neighbours
	Subcategory A human being Sub-subcategories ❖ 'I'm just like any flower: <i>It's just so</i> ' ❖ I'm a good girl ❖ Connected & disconnected	
	Subcategory A blossoming flower Sub-subcategories ❖ Gendering ❖ Girl-woman	

Drawing on the analogy of a flower, a seed will only grow into a flower if its environment is right. It needs to be planted in nutritious soil, receive sufficient water (but not too much) and sunlight. In the same way, a child grows up in an environment and that environment impacts on his/her growth and development. It also impacts on the child's experience of their growth i.e. it could be positive and meaningful or negative and meaningless. The category *Lavender Hill: Where it all happens*, describes those environmental factors that help and hinder the participants' ability to engage in occupations. The subcategory *Food for growth* describes those factors that enable occupational engagement. *The weeds and the worms* on the other hand, describes those factors that hinder the participants' ability to engage in occupations.

The second category, *Occupational beings: doing, being and becoming*, draws on Wilcock's (1998b) notion of doing, being and becoming. 'Doing' is represented in the subcategory *What I do* where participants describe the various occupations in which they engage. This subcategory also describes how they use their occupations to fulfil various purposes in their lives. The participants

also described who they are as girls from Lavender Hill. This forms the second subcategory, *A human being*, which represents 'being'. *A blossoming flower* forms the final subcategory and represents the participants' 'becoming'. Each subcategory is comprised of a number of sub-subcategories. Each subcategory has a different number of sub-subcategories, the reason for which is explained in section 3.6. of the methodology (see page 36)

The participants' experiences do not occur in isolation as they are in constant contact with other people. It was often with and through these people that the participants' occupations became meaningful. Their relationships were also a source of growth because of what people (particularly their family members) taught them. As figure 1 depicts, these relationships encompass the participants as well as their occupations. Through connecting with these different people, the participants also form a connection with their environment. This connection occurs through the seeking out and experiencing a sense of belonging. These relationships will be presented in the category *The people in my life*.

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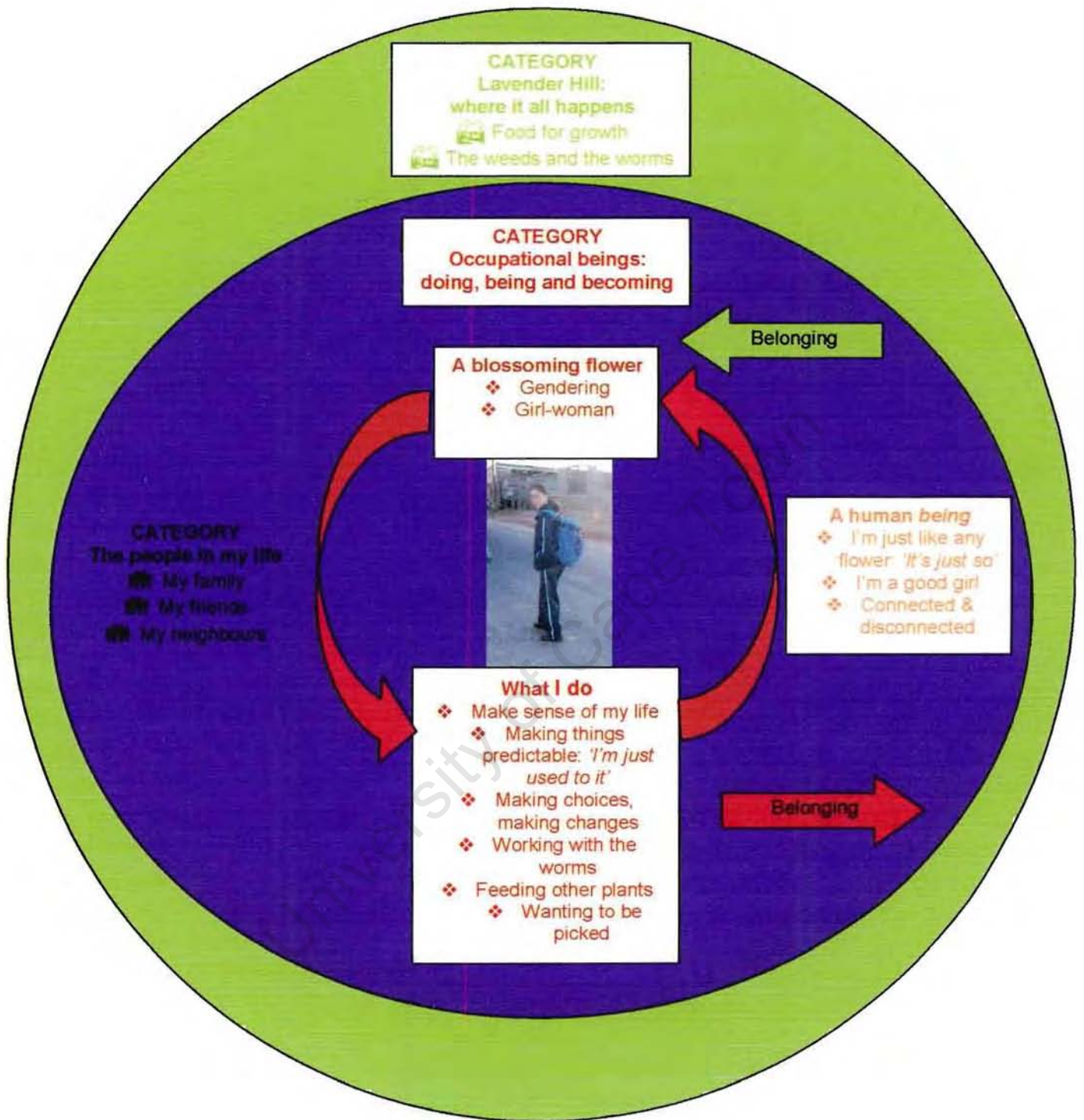


Figure 1: THEME
Developing Occupations: Growing from a seed into a flower

4.3.1. Lavender Hill: Where it all happens

This category describes the participants' subjective experiences of living in Lavender Hill. These experiences were found to either enable or hinder opportunities for occupational engagement. The enabling factors will be discussed in the sub-subcategory *Food for growth*, while the disabling factors will be discussed in the sub-subcategory *The seeds and the worms*.

4.3.1.1. Sub-subcategory: Food for growth

*'I like looking after flowers and plants...
if I get home and then I take the pipe and then I water them.'*

In this quote, Ashley describes how she cares for the flowers and plants in their garden. Previously, it was described that seeds require the right nourishment to be able to become a plant with flowers. This subcategory describes those environmental factors that enable the participants to engage in occupations where they too can blossom and grow as individuals.

The participants frequently described doing things with other people, including their family and friends. As figure 1 (see page 54) depicts, various people surround the participants within their community of Lavender Hill. This category, *The people in my life* (see page 84) will not describe the relationship the participants have with these people. However, it is important to note that the following factors occur within their relationships and seem to positively influence their occupations.



Zilda, Nicole and Ashley all said that they go with their friends to the park near their respective houses. They sit or play on the swings and jungle gym, while talking with their friends. They also play on the fields near their homes. Ashley and a group of friends play soccer against the boys most afternoons. Nicole joins these soccer matches occasionally but usually has to be home before the game starts at five o'clock. The soccer

players meet on the field and one of the boys brings his soccer ball. Ashley described how other children understand that these soccer matches take place on this field each day. *'But say now they see you are busy there and then, and then they leave it, and then they say they'll come back later and then we say 'thank you' and then we play on.'*

However, if others do want to play at the same time, Ashley said that those children go and play on one of the other fields in the neighbourhood. When Zilda and her cousins are bored, they go to the park behind their court where they play soccer with the boys. At other times, they play games

such as 'Sometimes we just like play (spinning) top and we just like play with the skipping rope and that', on the piece of land referred to as The Gravel.

Apart from playing in the parks and fields, Ashley and Nicole also play games with their friends in the street. Ashley plays games such as 'hide-and-go-seek' and 'on-on'. They play

until ten or eleven o'clock at night. Ashley says that playing at night makes it more fun because, 'sometimes where we hide and then, the person that's keeping – they come look for us and then they fall over stuff and then we laugh, then he hears us, then he stands up, then he goes. Then he goes to the pole and then he counts us out.' She also described how they hide in other people's yards or houses. These people did not necessarily have children who played with Ashley but, 'They don't mind. They're kind... They never say no. I don't know why.'



This photograph shows Nicole playing the ball game, "Old Man". She also described playing hopscotch in her road, 'We play like, um, we like make blocks in the road and, it's not like the main road, it's just roads like. The Village is most not like the main roads like here, and like...here's the road and then the houses opposite each other like that one that the main road's there and then we play there, we make

blocks and then we play games.' It is apparent from her justification of playing in the road, that she considered it to be wrong for children to play in the road because of traffic. She rationalises this by saying that her road is not a busy road. She also repeatedly stated that her road was different to other roads in the area. 'But not like in our road... The people are more respectful than the other people. In our road.' She said that her road was quiet and safe. In expressing this, she not only indicated that her street was different but she was also conveying the message that it was respectable. The latter issue will be discussed later in the subcategory *I'm a good girl* (see page 77).

The above spaces (the parks, fields and streets) all enabled the participants to engage in occupations that brought meaning to their lives. Shereen however, did not access these areas and only occasionally played in her yard. She chose to rather spend her time indoors, the reason for which will be explained in the next subcategory, *The weeds and the worms*.

The space not only provided a place for participants to play, but it also set the scene for entertainment. Zilda said that one of her favourite pastimes was watching the action in the courts and described one such incident, *'I just like uhm, uhm, like watch the action in the court like they fight and that... like last night there was a lady, she was drunk and so she was taking off all her clothes, and so she was just in her bra and so she was fighting with the children, the children did nothing to her and so she swear "JOU MA SE, JOU MA SE", and all that stuff. And so the children were making fun of her, and so after that she was cooled down so she went home and she came back again, so the children were laughing so she thought that the children were laughing at her.'*

Apart from the spaces that enable the participants to engage in activities, Lavender Hill also has resources and facilities that the participants utilise. The most obvious facility is Grassdale Primary. Apart from being learners who gain academic skills and abilities, school also provided the participants with other opportunities. Shereen, Nicole and Ashley all participate in extracurricular activities at school. Shereen sings in the choir and had recently started playing basketball, while Ashley and Nicole play netball for the school. Ashley also takes dancing and knitting lessons in the afternoons. From this, it is evident that their school provides the participants with opportunities to engage in a range of activities after school hours where the activities enable the participants to learn and experience new things.

But their school is not the only facility that provides such opportunities. Shereen plays netball at the New World Foundation. In addition, she sings and dances for her church during services. Ashley also sings for her church. In addition, her church organises trips and outings, *'It's fun, cause they go to outings like the last time we went to the Farm Yard. It was fun, because there isn't beach. There's pools and it's fun for you. There was lots of activities to go on.'* By accessing the church, Ashley was able to access further opportunities.

The participants valued being able to access learning opportunities. When speaking about school, Ashley said, *'I like to do my work... It's fun here, and we learn a lot'* Their churches were also a means to access learning. Zilda attends confirmation classes each week where they *'learn about Jesus and we write stuff'*. When speaking about attending church, Ashley said, *'I feel happy cause, then I just, I like going to church. I like learning stuff about God and how he discovered the world.'* This illustrates the meaningful opportunity that church provides Ashley. Another learning opportunity is accessed through the local library. Nicole makes use of the Retreat library three kilometres away. She and her friends walk to the library where she selects books relating to the topics she is learning about at school (e.g. books on the Bushman and Khoisan). Shereen also reads but she reads, *'soos daai boeke van "The Famous Five", "Sweet Valley", "The Ohlson Twins" en daai boeke. My suster bring vir my boeke van die library af.'* (*like those books about The*

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The participants valued being able to access learning opportunities. When speaking about school, Ashley said, *'I like to do my work... It's fun here, and we learn a lot'* Their churches were also a means to access learning. Zilda attends confirmation classes each week where they *'learn about Jesus and we write stuff'*. When speaking about attending church, Ashley said, *'I feel happy cause, then I just, I like going to church. I like learning stuff about God and how he discovered the world.'* This illustrates the meaningful opportunity that church provides Ashley. Another learning opportunity is accessed through the local library. Nicole makes use of the Retreat library three kilometres away. She and her friends walk to the library where she selects books relating to the topics she is learning about at school (e.g. books on the Bushman and Khoisan). Shereen also reads but she reads, *'soos daai boeke van "The Famous Five", "Sweet Valley", "The Ohlson Twins" en daai boeke. My suster bring vir my boeke van die library af.'* *'I like those books about "The*

Famous Five, *Sweet Valley*, *The Olson Twins* and those books. My sister brings me those books from the library). Shereen did not object to her sister choosing her books, neither did she object to the types of books she chose. Instead, Shereen indicated that her sister was one of her role models - the novels that her sister chose, were a way of informing Shereen about adolescence.

Apart from not going to the library herself (because her sister went for her), Shereen seldom spoke of going to other facilities (e.g. the shops) in Lavender Hill. Zilda and Ashley on the other hand, made regular reference to walking to such places. Zilda goes with friends and cousins to the local shops, a dance club in Retreat and Blue Route Mall where they go shopping or watch movies. She enjoyed being able to walk about independently, *'It's kind of fun because you can walk around during the day'*. She did state however, that it is not safe to do so at night. This will be discussed further in the next subcategory, *The sweets and the worms*.

Another enabler of occupational engagement is the availability of financial resources. As stated above, Zilda goes to the shops where she and her friends buy sweets or hire videos. She also described how she and her friends use their money at school, *'We put our money together and then we like buy stuff at the fence and we may go sit on the hill and we share our stuff.'* Nicole described how she and her friends shared their money, *'if we go to the library and some of the children ...some of our friends don't have enough money then we, the others, will pay.'* Ashley uses the money her mother gives her to get stationery for school. She usually goes with her mother to Wynberg where they go shopping or watch movies.



Being able to go to different places created further opportunities for the participants to engage in occupations. The main reason for visiting different places was to visit family (nuclear and extended family). Ashley visits her father in Mossel Bay during the school holidays. She also goes to Milnerton to visit friends and family where they go to the beach and to shopping malls. When Zilda goes to visit family in Milnerton, they usually go to places such as Canal Walk (a shopping mall) or to Boogaloos (where they roller blade). Shereen seldom spoke of leaving Lavender Hill although she did mention that her mother takes her to St James beach (approximately 7 kilometres away) occasionally. Nicole's family goes to Valhalla Park every Saturday afternoon to visit her uncle. They also occasionally visit family in Paarl. During the summer, they go to St James beach. Nicole's parents have their own car, which enables them to be able to go to these places as a family. The other participants have to rely on public transport, which is more restrictive. One of the

reasons that Shereen does not go out as much is because she does not have money available to do so.

As this category illustrates, the participants described a range of ways in which their environment enabled them to engage in different activities. There are instances however, where their environment restricts their ability to engage in the occupations of their choice. The following subcategory describes those factors that either prevent (prevent) or hamper (hinder) their engagement.

4.3.1.2 Sub-subcategory: The Weeds and the worms

*'It's not nice living without a garden
because I don't have much oxygen in the courts.'*

As this quote from Zilda illustrates, the implications of living without a garden can be suffocating. In the same way that a garden supports life, there are also factors that restrict a garden's life. A distinction needs to be made between those factors that prevent and those that merely hamper the life of a garden. As any gardener knows, weeds have the ability to invade and ultimately restrict a plant from growing, even causing it to wilt and die. Similarly, there are certain factors that restrict the participants from engaging in the occupations of their choice. It is commonly known that worms in a garden can be disastrous, particularly to the life of young seedlings. However, the right kind of worms can also bring life to the roots of a plant. An example of this is the earthworm that aerates and nourishes the soil. In the same way, there are a number of factors that the participants described that affect their ability to engage in different occupations. However, unlike weeds that prevented engagement, worms only hindered their experiences. It is important to note that the participants' response to the specific situations often determines whether the situation is a weed or a worm to them. This will be illustrated in the sub-subcategory *Working with the worms* (see page 72). As a result, no distinction will be made at this point between the weeds and worms, and the two labels will be used alongside each other (i.e. weed/worm).

The first weed/worm that will be discussed is the accessibility of friends. In Shereen's profile on page 47, we learnt that she chooses to spend most of her time indoors. She said that one of the reasons for this was that her school friends stay too far from her house. There are other children who live near her but she is only friends with the 7 year-old girl who lives across the road. This is largely due to the fact that she does not like the way the other children behave (which will be described shortly). Although she stated that she prefers to spend her time alone, it was significant to note that she plays with friends at school. Shereen's access to friends, impacts on her ability to engage in certain activities, particularly those that require other people. In a similar way, access to material resources also influences the participants' occupational engagement.

In the previous subcategory, it was illustrated how money enables participants to go to different places and do different things (e.g. watch movies). The lack of money was a second weed/worm that has the ability to restrict occupations. Shereen experienced this last year, *'Ek het laasjaar, toe het ek sokker gespeel. Toe kan ek nie meer sokker speel nie, want hulle sou Durban toe gegaan hê. Toe moes ek 'n R1000 het, en ek het nie sulke geld gehet nie. My ma't dit nie gehet nie.'* (Last year I played soccer. Then I couldn't play anymore because they were going to Durban. So I had to have R1000, and I didn't have that kind of money. My mommy didn't have it.) As a result of this experience, she no longer plays soccer for the school.

Thirdly, the participants referred to the way that many of the children in the community behave. The participants said that many of the children fight, swear and call other children names, *'...they are rude and they are very old-fashioned'*. These children are the main reason for Shereen choosing only to play in her yard or indoors, *'Ek speel net in die yard in. Ek speel nie buite die yard nie... Is droog, net as hulle skel is almal die kinders buite. So net nuuskierigheid daai. Dis die mense.'* (I only play in the yard. I don't play outside the yard. It's boring, only if they fight then all the children are outside. It's just nosiness that. That's the people.). Zilda stopped attending her church's youth group because of the way some of the children behave, *'Now we also go church here on the field and then um,... like last time in youth the children, they vry (hiss) and stuff just so in the church and that and so we told our grandma and so my grandma said we mustn't go youth anymore because the children's very rude there.'* She also said that some of the children swear in front of the priest, which she found offensive. On other occasions, Zilda said that she would have to call her father or her grandmother because the boys were touching her and making sexual advances. As a result, she and her cousins had to find somewhere else to play.

A fourth weed/worm was conflict. Shereen had not been able to visit her grandparents because of the estrangement between her mother and grandmother. They had had an argument related to the work that they did together. This meant that Shereen was also unable to visit her aunt, uncle and cousins who lived with her grandmother. As a result, she could no longer accompany her uncle and cousins when they went to the Spur Steakhouse. Shereen used to join them for lunch on Sundays, after which she and her cousins would play in the Spur's playroom.

The participants reported that there were times when they felt unsafe living in Lavender Hill, as one might expect from living in this community. Fear thus formed a fifth weed/worm. In the previous subcategory, it was stated that Zilda enjoys the freedom of being able to walk around Lavender Hill but that she can only do so during the day. However, even during the day, she never walked alone, *'Because I'm scared to walk alone to Foodworld⁶ and stuff. People can just take off your money and they just ran away and they would like skel (steal) us out.'* For the same reason, Ashley also

⁶ Foodworld is a local grocery store.

never walks alone. Although Shereen usually walks alone to school, she has become nervous to do so since being mugged last year. *'Want dit is gevaarlik daar. En ons was ook eenkeer op 'n Saterdag laasjaar, toe was ons ge-gunpoint hier in die gang in. En toe sê ek vir my ma ek wil nie meer skool toe kom nie; en ek wil ook nie meer in die gang loop nie. En toe vir 'n paar weke toe loop ek weer oor, elke keer oor die oor die bult, want ek wil nie meer deur die gang loop nie.'* [*Because it's dangerous there. And we were also, one Saturday last year we were held up at gunpoint in the alley. And so I said to my mom that I didn't want to come to school anymore; and I also don't want to walk in the alley*]. She had resumed walking through the alley next to her school (see the aerial photograph in Appendix 1) where this incident occurred. It was however, a stressful experience.

The participants were also aware of the risk of being kidnapped. The media had recently reported a red vehicle that had been associated with the abduction of a number of children in the area. Shereen was aware of these reports, *'En soos hulle gesê het, ek weet nie of dit die waarheid is nie. Kinders in ons klas het gesê daar het 'n jongetjie by Hek Primêr⁷ weggeraak. 'n Man met 'n rooi kar en hier lê jongens op die veld. As jy loop, dan vang hulle vir jou en dan rob hulle jou...Hulle sê dit is 'n man met 'n rooi kar met tinted vensters, tin-tin vensters. En dan roep hy jou en dan vang hy jou en dan vat hy jou weg. Toe is daar nou kinders al missing al. Dit was in die Southern Mail⁸... Ek weet nie wanneer daai gebeur het nie, maar daar staan net missing person en die naam en die van... En elke keer en dan dink ek daaraan. Dan lê ek so agteroor en sê ek "Nou wat is dit as ek nou next is of wat gaan nou gebeur as ek nou, enige iets kan gebeur as ek nou weer af in die pad gaan loop" of so.'* [*And like they said, I don't know if it's true. Children in our class said that a boy from Hek Primary went missing. A man with a red car and guys lie here on the field. If you walk, then they catch you and then they rob you. They say it's a man with a red car with tinted windows, tin-tin windows. And then he calls you and then he catches you and he takes you away. So now there are children missing. It was in the Southern Mail... I don't know when that happened but there's a sign with missing person and the name and the surname... And every time and then I think about that. Then I roll over and I say, "Now what happens if I'm next or what is going to happen if I now, anything can happen if I now walk in the street again" or that.*] From this dialogue, it is evident that Shereen is burdened by the risk of being abducted.

Zilda was also aware of the danger of being abducted. *'Like people can drive in a van and then you and your friend just walk down the road they open the door and just grab you and put you in the van and they drive away...You can just walk along the road or here in the courts at night or on the field and then there can just come, men or women, men and women, and then the man will tell the woman to and then they're gonna plan something, and then they can just grab you, drag you to*

⁷ One of the other primary schools in Lavender Hill (the name has been changed)

⁸ The local newspaper.

wherever and kill you.' This was a further reason for her not walking alone or going out on the streets at night.

As was stated on the community profile, gang-related shootings are a constant threat in Lavender Hill, *'here happens lot of stuff, like shooting'*. These shootings mainly occur in the courts. As a result, Zilda has regular exposure to the shootings, *'...sometimes they (gangsters) shoot and then they shoot against your windows and stuff. Like the last time we were laying in my grandma's room watching television. So there came a bullet through the window. Luckily my cousin, he was standing at the window but his money fell, and so he bended down to pick it up so the bullet came through the window.'* Ashley described how the sound of gunshots affects her in St Montague Village, *'then you hear a gun shoot and then you get scared. It's almost like, the gun is, almost like it's close there by you.'*

A sixth weed/worm occurs during these gang shootings. When the gangsters shoot, they often organize electrical blackouts for the duration of their attacks. Nicole recounted this experience, *'Sometimes they shoot, ne? Then the night then they shoot then the lights are on then they pull the lights out, the erm ...yes like the ropes and like that they pull it out then the whole place go dark.'* Not only does this exacerbate their fear but the darkness also usually means that the participants cannot continue doing what they are busy doing. Even when there are not blackouts however, some residents turn their lights off for safety purposes. Zilda described one such incident that had



occurred two days prior to her follow-up interview with the researcher, *'This is like our park. There's our Court, like we now like there. And then like two days ago and so there was a lot of gangsters in the Court, in the park. They were like shooting across the field and stuff and so we had to, so everybody had to put off their lights and stuff... It was about here half past seven side...We just like open the windows small.*

Open the curtain small and then we just like ... and then we watch what they do and stuff.... We watch them and then they like ... they just like shoot for an hour or so and they go home and so.' As Zilda illustrates, the shootings do not completely prevent her from doing anything, she just does something else – she *'watches the action.'*

Shootings are not the only acts of violence to which the participants are exposed. They also spoke of a number of stabbing instances. Unlike the shootings however, these incidences are not concentrated only in the courts. Nor are they restricted to gang activity. Stabbings are more random and often occur when people have been drinking alcohol or smoking tik. All of the participants were exposed to the dangers of stabbings, *'But they do stab knife there by us'*. Ashley, Nicole and Shereen all described a recent incident where a man in St Montague Village had been stabbed in the stomach for stealing a bicycle. Ashley described how they chased the man through her yard, which was a scary experience for her. She said that she had been particularly concerned that they might harm her mother.



Apart from people stabbing each other when intoxicated, Shereen also described how they became noisy and disruptive. *'Hulle is heel aand wakker en dan speel hulle die musiek klophard. Hard, hard, hard. En dan kan ons nie reg slaap nie. En hulle skel ook baie langsaan ons. Elke keer as ek vir hulle sien, en hulle skel. dan dink ek "Ag, kyk hoe gaan die mense weer aan. 'n Mens kan nie eens reg bly nie, want dit is gevaarlik daar.'* (*They're awake the whole night and then they play the music full blast Loud, loud, loud. And then we can't sleep properly. And they also scold a lot next door. Every time I see them, and they scold, then I think, "Ag, look how these people are going on. A person can't even live properly because it's dangerous there"*). Ashley's neighbours also smoke tik. Apart from the disturbance they cause when intoxicated, she also experiences the secondary effects of their smoke. She said that their smoke makes her feel dizzy.

Zilda has constant exposure to people who are addicted to drugs. Both her grandfather and her uncle smoke dagga. They both become aggressive when intoxicated. Her grandfather becomes verbally abusive, while her uncle becomes physically abusive. Zilda and her cousins often become the victims of this aggression. In addition, Zilda is also exposed to drug abuse in the courts. She took these two photographs, depicting the drug merchant's house and a house where addicts go to smoke.



The presence of these drug houses means that the police often search homes in the area for drugs (including her grandparents' house). She was at home during one such raid and witnessed the following incident, *'They just like, like the last time they came and so...so the police the police were throwing bomb in the*



court and so they shot the other man in the leg because he were running because he had lots of drugs on him and stuff.' She said that she disliked the invasion and violence associated with these raids.

The above discussion refers to a number of weeds/worms relating to safety, crime and violence as one might expect from a community such as Lavender Hill. In a rather different light, the final weed/worm comes in the form of boredom. Zilda only mentioned boredom once and said that she then goes to play soccer with the boys, as was mentioned previously. Nicole said that it is boring during break times at school because there is nothing to do. She also described Sunday afternoons as boring because all the children are indoors and St Montague Village is so quiet. Shereen said that, *'Is meestal van die tyd by die huis is boring. Daar kom niks meer lekker goed op die TV nie en as ek nou by die huis kom dan kom nie betyds vir die cartoons nie.'* (*'It's boring at home most of the time. Nothing nice comes on TV anymore and when I get home I don't get home in time for the cartoons.'*). The lack of meaningful occupations is often the cause for participants to experience boredom.

The worms/weeds have an impact on the participants' lives. Some worms/weeds restrict their ability to engage in occupations, while others impact on their subjective experience of their occupations. The participants' responses to (and ultimately their experience of) these situations will be presented in the subcategory **What I do** (see page 66).

4.3.1.3. Reflections on: Lavender Hill: Where it all happens

The participants described a number of ways in which they interacted with their environment. They described how their environment provided them with a range of opportunities to engage in activities and to experience meaning. They also described the various opportunities they had to learn new things within their community. On the other hand, they spoke about those factors that made living in Lavender Hill unpleasant. Some of these factors included the '*rude children*', the crime and gang-related violence. These all impacted on their ability to engage in their chosen activities. It is significant to note however, that these factors did not prevent them from engaging in those activities that hold meaning and purpose to the participants. This will be presented in the next category, Occupational beings: doing, being and becoming.

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4.3.2. Category: Occupational beings: doing, being and becoming

This category describes the participants as occupational beings by drawing on Wilcock's (1998b) notion of doing, being and becoming. In her presentation of these three states, Wilcock says that human beings spend most of their time 'engaged in purposeful "doing" even when free of obligation or necessity' (Wilcock, 1998a, p22). *Being* is experienced when one is true to the essence of oneself. It is those parts of oneself that people bring into their relationships as well as to the things that they do in the present. *Becoming*, on the other hand, is about the future although it is influenced by what a person does and who they are in the present (Wilcock, 1998b). The subcategories *What I do*, *A human being* and *A blossoming flower*, represent these three respective states. The subcategory *What I do* will be presented first.

4.3.2.1. Subcategory: What I do

Through the data, it became evident that the participants use their occupations for a range of purposes. These purposes in turn, enable the participants to engage in meaningful occupations. This subcategory will describe the purposes that the participants identified. These will be presented in the following six sub-subcategories, beginning with the sub-subcategory, *Making sense of my life*.

4.3.2.1.1. Sub-subcategory: Making sense of my life

According to Russell & Carey (2003), a common way that people make sense of their lives is by talking about their experiences. This is particularly true for females. Through this research process, the participants demonstrated this during the interviews. The first thing Shereen did in the initial interview was to recount the following incident, *'Uhm, laasweek en Donderdag. Ja, Donderdag. En toe baklei hulle dat twee ongelukke gebeur het. Aan die een kant het hulle 'n seun gesteek in sy sy in. Hy's nou in die hospital, ek weet nie as hy's dood nie, want daar's a rumour gewees hy's dood. En toe weer die ander man wat een huis weg van ons bly. My ma se vriendin se seun het baklei oor 'n, oor 'n bicycle wat gesteel is. Toe steek hy die man met a screwdriver, hier in sy skouer en in sy kop in. Maar dit was nie ernstig nie. Toe skel die mense elke keer. En daar's a vrou, ek weet nie hoe sy haar problems gaan solve nie maar dis nou nie vir my nie. Sy, sy, sy is ook my ma se vriendin. Sy skel elke, elke dag vir haar seun. En haar seun kan haar, sy nefies nie vat nie, want sy nefie, hy hou nie van sy nefie nie. En hy tik baie.* (*Uhm, last week on Thursday. Yes. Thursday. And then they fought so two incidences happened. On the one side they stabbed a boy in his side. He's now in the hospital. I don't know if he's dead but there's been a rumour that he's dead. And then again the other man that lives one house away from us. My mommy's friend's son did fight over a, over a bicycle that was stolen. Then he stabbed the man with a screwdriver, here in his shoulder and in his head. But it wasn't serious. Then the people scold every time. And there's woman. I don't know how she's going to solve her problems it's not for me. She, she, she is also*

my mummy's friend. She scolds her son every every day. And her son can't take her, his mummy take because his cousin, he doesn't like his cousin. And they ill a lot.)

As she spoke, it was evident that Shereen needed to express these experiences to someone. She seemed pressured to get all the stories out, while trying to make sense of them. She tried to make sense of the sequence of events as well as the reason for these different incidences. Ashley told the same story of the man being stabbed over a stolen bicycle, *'Cos last week they stabbed a man in his stomach just over a bike. I don't know why, cos the boy stole that bike and so it was his bike and so the man just stabbed him and so.'* Through Ashley's narration, it was evident that she was trying to make sense of the reason for the man being stabbed. She concluded that it was an irrational act of violence (*just stabbed him and so.*).

Zilda began her initial interview in a similar way to Shereen. When asked about living in Lavender Hill, she recounted the incident where her cousin was nearly hit by a stray bullet through their window (see pg 62). She followed this story with a description of the effects of tik, *'...And there's a lot of people in the courts that sell tik and drugs and that. And then the police always comes and then they say they don't sell the stuff but then they sell it, or the gangsters come to the house and that. And then the last time so they shot through the court and so they run just so open with all the guns and stuff.'* This short description is filled with many different experiences and events, which Zilda was making sense of. Firstly, she was making sense of the randomness of the instances. The fact that a stray bullet came through their window and her cousin just happened to bend down at the right time. Secondly, how the characteristics of the different people in her community affect her. For example, the tik dealers not only bring tik to her community, but they also bring police raids to her home. Thirdly, Zilda was trying to make sense of the gangsters' rationale for running through the courts with their guns exposed, shooting as they went. Zilda went on to take a number of photographs of the locations of these different experiences and described them (and others) in the follow-up interview.

Nicole recounted fewer of these incidences in the community, referring only to incidences that occurred in her road, *'They said that there's people in our road they are selling stuff like that (tik), so the cops came there, so the one guy had a gun and so he wanted to shoot them, so the people say, "No! You can't shoot here in The Village because the people don't do that stuff here." And so after that the people say, "No, no, no!" The people went on but now, now the people say that this kind of people on this side they don't clean their yards, the fence looks dirty and they write on the fence, stuff like that. And then they write about God on the walls and they, stuff like that. And then they write on the walls and they paint it there. Then somma, like if they write, if they write now God's name they put a swearword there next to God's name and like that.'* Nicole held the perception that only good people lived in her road. She believed that these were people who did

not sell drugs or shoot, but who respected each other. She also believed that the people living in her road were all Christians who did not use God's name in vein. From the above description, it would appear as though the residents with whom Nicole socialised, shared these perceptions. In addition, it appeared as though Nicole was more protected from the events beyond her road. She was not aware of these other events and also seemed to have less need to recount incidents that she heard or witnessed.

The participants also told stories about the *'rude children'*, making sense of these behaviours in the process of speaking about them. They frequently described how the other children behaved and then contrasted these behaviours to their own. They also contrasted their own activities to those of the other children, highlighting when they did not do the same thing. This is linked to the participants' defining themselves as *good girls* (which will be described on page 77).

The participants similarly said that they talked to friends about the events of their day. They did not reflect on the events in the community but rather the events of their day, especially their school day, *'We talk about ermm, like, "No, we don't know how to do this, and we don't know how to do that. Miss just wanna give us difficult work to do and just wanna shout at us?" And that stuff.'* And Nicole said, *'If we talk about stuff. Like last year when we were in Mr Jacobs's class, so we like to take him for a fool and if he give us work and he makes fun and then we come at home and then we like, when the school is out, then we like to make fun of that whole day.'* These quotes illustrate how the participants were trying to make sense of their teacher's behaviour. In the latter quote, Nicole and her friends also used humour to make sense of their experiences.

This sub-subcategory illustrates how the participants use dialogue to make sense of their different experiences. At the same time, they were making sense of their relationship with these instances. In so doing, they were connecting and dissociating with different aspects of their community. This phenomenon will be discussed in the sub-subcategory *Complicated relationships* (on pg 79).

This sub-subcategory describes the participants' response to uncertain events in their lives. The next sub-subcategory contrasts with this as it describes the certain aspects of the participants' lives.

4.3.2.1.2. Sub-subcategory: Making things predictable: 'I'm just used to it'

A second purpose that the participants sought to meet through their occupations was an experience of predictability within their days. The participants experienced a certain amount of extrinsic predictability, mainly when they were at school. In addition, Zilda, Nicole and Ashley described the routine that they had developed for themselves when they get home from school. Nicole described her afternoons, *'Yes, after school I eat and when I'm finished that I do my*



homework and things like that, and then I watch television for only an hour... Because like if I go in at six o'clock then I wash me half past six, seven o'clock I eat and then I go sleep half past seven'. Zilda's routine was fairly similar, 'I first go home and then I eat and then I do my chores and then I'll go to my friend.

A predictable part of Ashley's day was playing soccer against the boys. These soccer matches take place every afternoon at half past four, when the boys have finished playing school soccer. One of the boys brings his soccer ball and if he cannot play, he sends it with his sister. All the other children in the neighbourhood are aware of this regular game and play on another field during this time.

Watching soap operas is another predictable activity in the participants' lives. Although they did not watch soap operas every day, they said '*...sometimes I don't watch it because I know what's gonna happen and like that... I watch it like, like if I watch it today and then I don't watch it tomorrow because I know what's gonna happen*'. The participants were able to know what to expect from these soap operas, something that is in contrast with their environment much of the time.

Nicole described the routine she and her family had on Saturdays. As a family, they all help clean the house before going to visit her uncle in Valhalla Park. Her father starts the car as they finish up their chores, which is their cue for what comes next in their routine.

Sundays is a day that all the participants seem to have a consistent routine. There were a number of parallels between the participants' routines. They all said that they go to church in the morning, after which they have a big family meal and a relaxing afternoon, usually watching movies. Ashley described her Sunday in much the same way as Nicole did, '*Sundays we go to church and then come home, and then we, and then we uhm, then we watch, then we wait till it's lunch, and then we, after lunch and then we rest a little and then after then we watch scary movies.*' Zilda also goes to church in the morning, followed by a family lunch and movies although she occasionally goes to the dance club instead of watching a movie. Although Shereen does not go to church every week, she and her family do also have a family lunch before watching movies.

It became evident that those participants who had more routine within their home environment also had more routine to their daily activities. In the previous two paragraphs, Nicole describes how she uses her time. She systematically described the different activities in which she engaged. Through

the structure that her parents had imposed on her, Nicole had developed the ability to structure her own time. Shereen, on the other hand, has less routine and structure imposed on her. It was noticeable that when she described her days, her approach was somewhat haphazard and she randomly spoke about her different experiences.

Routine is a source of predictability. Nicole, Zilda and Ashley have developed a degree of routine within what they do. In so doing, they have established their own experience of predictability within their lives. This predictability was one of the enablers to the participants being able to make choices relating to what they do. The next sub-subcategory illustrates the choices the participants make in order to bring about change in their lives.

4.3.2.1.3. Sub-subcategory: Making choices, making changes

The participants described a number of situations where the choices they made enabled them to engage in an activity or provided them with a positive experience. The choices they made represent their agentic capacity. Zilda in particular, described a number of these instances. This sub-subcategory will illustrate some of the instances where the participants took the initiative to make a choice in order to effect change.

Zilda often has to do the shopping with her cousins. As Zilda described earlier, she does not enjoy going to Foodworld because of the risk of being mugged (see page 60). However, she and her cousins had chosen to make shopping a fun experience by turning it into a game. *'It's fun to go shopping and you just like, you run around the isles looking for the stuff here and there and don't find the stuff and then just like, count the people and stuff and then sometimes and then we run down the isles and the stuff like fall out and then we laugh and we have to pack the stuff again right. But the stuff just fall out again and so.'*



Zilda and her cousin also have the task of hanging up the washing. *'When we hang the washing, and then some of the washing fly to this side fly to that side and then we just like laugh and then my grandpa stands on the stoep, ne? And then smoke his dagga, ne? And then erm, he just like "Gat tel op die wasgoed. Die wasgoed raak vuil!" ('Go pick up the washing. The washing's getting dirty!')* And



then we just like "Ja De. Ja De. Ons gat nou die wasgoed optel" ('Yes De. Yes De. We're going to pick up the washing now'). And then we just like make jokes with, he's stupid and stuff. And then he just like get cross and then he go tell my grandma and then my grandma just say "Los die kinders man" ('Leave the children man'). And then he just like get cross and he say "Oo! Die fokken vrou!" ('Oo! That fucking woman!'). And then he walk out and go smoke his dagga on.' Once again, Zilda and her cousin integrated playfulness into their chore. In addition, they chose to use their grandfather's objections as a source of amusement rather than as a scolding.

As the previous sub-subcategory illustrated, Nicole has fewer chores and more opportunity to play within her structured routine. This created few opportunities for her to effect change. She also expressed less environmental press for change. This is because her environment provides her with the opportunities that she requires to engage meaningfully in occupations. The following quotes illustrate Nicole's satisfaction within her family, community and school:

- 'Yes, (we) all together, a lovely family'
- 'But in the Village, the people they don't, they really nice.'
- 'It's fun here (at school), and we learn a lot'

Shereen however, repeatedly stated that she did not like living in Lavender Hill, *'Elke keer as ek speel en dan sê ek vir my ma, "Ek wil nie meer hier bly nie. Ek wil by my aunty gaan bly want daar is, daar is nie so baie gevaar by hulle in Michell's Plain". ('Every time that I play and then I say to my mommy, 'I don't want to live here anymore. I want to go live with my aunty because there is, there isn't so much danger by them in Michell's Plain').* Shereen's experience of her environment in turn, impacts her on ability to engage in occupations. It also influences the choices she makes in response to this environment, *'Meeste van die tyd is ek binne' ('Most of the time I'm inside')*. The choice to stay indoors however, brought about the change that she considered to be the best solution – avoidance of the *'rude children'*. Instead, everyday Shereen spent a number of hours watching television. As a result, when their television set broke, she chose to spend her savings to get it repaired.

Zilda provided two illustrations above of how the choices she made, enabled her to experience meaningful occupational engagement. This was not always the case for the other participants. Even though Shereen chose to stay indoors, she complained that this was boring. Boredom seems to be an indication that she did not experience meaning within the outcome of this choice. From this, it is evident that even though choices have the potential to create meaning and purpose, this potential is not always realised.

Further, when one compares Zilda and Shereen's experiences, it is apparent that they approached their situations with different attitudes. Zilda's positive, playful attitude enabled her to seek out meaning within activities that could otherwise be dull and boring. Shereen on the other hand, had a negative, victimic approach to her choices. She chose to stay indoors to avoid the 'rude children', but she said that staying inside was boring. It was as though, in her opinion, she was choosing between the better of two bad options.

This sub-subcategory has described some of the choices the participants made in order to bring about change. According to the participants, these choices did not always produce optimal outcomes. It does however indicate, that the participants are agentic within their daily lives. This will be illustrated further in the next sub-subcategory that describes the participants' responses to

4.3.2.1.4. Sub-subcategory: Working with the worms

The sub-subcategory (see pg 59) described those factors that restrict and/or hinder the participants' ability to engage in occupations. The participants' responses to these worms/weeds will be presented here.

Since being mugged last year, Shereen experienced fear and anxiety when walking through the alley where the incident occurred. She describes this reaction in the following quote, '*Elke keer as ek alleen daar loop dan loop ek so teen die kant. Dan is ek bang. Elke keer as ek sien iemand kom agter my aan, 'n man of 'n vrou en dan klop my hartjie pabak, dan loop my hartjie pabak. Dan raak ek bang. Dan wil ek omdraai maar ek loop straight.*' (Every time if I walk there alone then I walk against the side. Then I'm scared. Every time if I see someone coming behind me, a man or a woman and then my heart beats fast, my heart beats fast. Then I get scared. Then I want to turn around but I walk straight.). Although she continued to experience anxiety, Shereen had developed a strategy that enabled her to resume walking through the alley. '*Ek loop vorentoe of ek tel 'n stok op of 'n klip of iets en as hulle my, as hulle my gaan attack dan kan ek enigiets doen met daai stok of daai klip.*' (I walk forward or pick up a stick or a stone or something and if they, if they're going to

anything when I can do something with the risk in that sense. Shereen's coping strategy of self-defence equipped her with the security that prevented the incident from becoming a weed.

A second incident that was described in the previous category involved the risk of abduction. Zilda and Shereen's respective response to this threat illustrates how a situation can become either a weed or a worm. In Zilda's description of the risk, she said this meant that she did not walk alone during the day. At night, she stayed at home or played within their court. However, the risk of abduction did not prevent Zilda from engaging in activities that were meaningful to her. Shereen on the other hand, spent time worrying about what might happen to her or whether she might be next. The risk of abduction provided Shereen with a further reason to stay indoors. Worrying about this risk became an occupation for Shereen.

Boredom is a third factor that was described in the previous category. Here again, the participants' respective responses determined whether boredom restricted or impaired their occupational engagement. Shereen said that she watches television when she is bored. However, she also said that there was nothing interesting on television. Her response to boredom did not change her experience of it. On the other hand, Nicole said, *'I like reading and like when it's bored then I read and sometimes I read this when I bored.'* At other times, Nicole goes to her friend when she is bored. Zilda also finds children to play with when she is bored. Ashley never mentioned boredom during her interviews. This indicates that she too takes initiative so that she is able to engage in meaningful activities. From these situations, it is evident that boredom is an experience rather than the lack of opportunities to engage in activities.

The final response to be discussed here is the participants' response of escapism. The participants described using their imaginations to escape to another world for a while. Nicole described how she and her friends have fun imagining themselves as pop stars. Shereen and her friend also make use of their imaginations. They might imagine themselves going on exciting shopping sprees or that the world is made of chocolate. Shereen also described how watching television was a means of escaping for a while, *'As ek nou "Wild Room" kyk en dan, ek worry mos'ie...'* ¹ *I now watch "Wild Room" and then I just don't worry* ¹).

The participants' various responses to the different worms and weeds in their life, determined how they experienced that situation. The participants demonstrated that they have positive experiences within those factors that an outsider (including the researcher) might consider to be negative or harmful.

¹ "Wild Room" is a children's television programme.

The next sub-subcategory illustrates the meaning that the participants experienced through making a contribution in the lives of other people.

4.3.2.1.5. Sub-subcategory: Feeding other plants

All of the participants described instances where they were able to care for other people. The photograph alongside depicts a friend who Ashley cared for when she was ill. Ashley and her mother also care for those in need, *'...there's some people here in the community that don't have nothing, like, you see people who don't have houses and food and they just live here. And they don't have food and blankets to cover them at night. And sometimes me and my mommy go, we just walk sometimes then we take some food, because we know we are gonna find people there that don't have food and we take it and we give it to them.'* Ashley experienced a sense of worth in being able to make this contribution. She also experienced a sense of connectedness with her community.



Shereen and Zilda enjoyed being able to care for other people's babies. Shereen's neighbour has an infant and occasionally asked Shereen to care for the child when her mother was able to supervise her. *'Nee, ek vat haar oor na ons toe as my ma nou daar is. En dan speel ek nog saam met haar, maak haar aan die slaap, voer haar, gee haar botterl, maak haar skoon, was haar, laat haar weer slaap, daar gaan sy uit.'* (No, I take her to our house if my mommy's there. And then I play with her for a bit (put her to sleep, feed her, give her a bottle, change her, wash her, put her to sleep again, then she goes (out (home))).

In a similar way, Zilda cares for her one-year-old stepsister, *'I like push her in the pram and then we like go to the butcher and like buy Vienna's and stuff and then we sit outside and we eat the Vienna's just so. And then we like buy some Flyers or Spookies² or stuff.'*

The participants also valued being able to make a contribution in their homes. When asked what it was like having to do chores at home, Shereen said, *'Dit voel al soos jou eie huis'* (*'It feels like it's already your own house*). Nicole's description of helping her family with the chores (see page 46) illustrates the sense of connectedness this experience gives her, *'On a Saturday, we go, like Saturday we clean the house and after that then we go wash and do all that kinds of things that we want to like do.'*

² Flyers and Spookies are types of chips.

This sub-subcategory describes the meaning the participants derive from making a contribution to the lives of other people, particularly those in need. It also illustrates how they care for younger children. These are typical female activities. The subcategory *A blossoming flower* will discuss this further. The next sub-subcategory describes how the participants sought to be noticed through the things they did.

4.3.2.1.6. Sub-subcategory: Wanting to be picked

Girls, and particularly a young adolescent girl, often seek to be noticed and picked out by others. Three of the participants described instances where they would seek to be noticed and recognised by others, particularly by adults. Ashley used her schoolwork and sport as a means of being acknowledged and recognised. This is congruent with the value she holds of working hard and performing. In a similar way Nicole also worked hard in class in order to get her teachers recognition.



A strategy Zilda and her friends had developed to be noticed was through spontaneously initiating dancing competitions. The following is her description of these competitions, *'It's kind of fun because we challenge each other and then people they can't dance. They dance so stupid so funny dances and then they like say, "Nee, ons het gewen! Ons dans dan beter as julle. Nou ons het mos gewen."* (*No, we want! We dance better than you. Now we did win*). Then we say *"Nee, ons het dan gewen"* (*No, we did win*). And then they give the money to us and then we would like go buy the stuff that we want to buy.' Zilda and her friends not only created the opportunity to be noticed and judged but they also to persuaded the judges to pick them as the winners. In so doing, they were making themselves noticed and also ensuring acknowledgement for their performance.

Shereen, on the other hand, preferred to go unnoticed. She frequently made comments about preferring to stay indoors in order to stay away from the activities outside, preferring to remain unnoticed. In another instance where a younger girl wanted to meet her after school to fight, Shereen confronted her prior to the meeting telling her she was not interested in her challenge and avoided any fuss and attention that may have resulted. When asked if she was the top learner in her class, she quickly said, *'Nee, nie eintlik die beste nie. Ek doen maar net, ek doen maar net my werk wat hulle gesê het... Ek luister na my juffrou wat jy moet doen en wat jy nie moet doen nie.'* (*No, not actually the best. I just do. I just do what you have to do and what you mustn't do.*). This

is an indication that she did what was necessary without trying to draw attention to herself. Also, by working hard in class, she could avoid being noticed in the classroom.

4.3.2.1.7. Reflections on What I do

This subcategory describes a number of ways that the participants use their occupations to fulfil specific purposes in their lives. These purposes are not necessarily associated with a particular activity. Instead, the activities provide opportunities for the participants to use the activity as a means to addressing their particular purposes. In a similar way, the participants derived meaning from the process of engaging in activities rather than the specific activity necessarily holding meaning. Their occupations are often thus a means rather than an end to an experience of meaning and purpose in their daily lives. The next subcategory will describe the participants as *Human beings*.

4.3.2.2. Subcategory: A human being

As young adolescents, the participants are shaping their identities. This subcategory describes how the participants perceive themselves. It begins with the sub-subcategory *I'm just like any other flower. It's just so*, which describes how the participants perceive themselves to be like any other young adolescent girl in the world. This is followed by the sub-subcategory *אני סבבה* where the participants describe themselves and what they do in such a way that the people around them will perceive them as 'good girls'. In the final sub-subcategory, *Connected and disconnected*, participants illustrate how they feel connected to the people and situations around them. In addition, they describe those people and situations to whom they do *not* connect. This process informed the participants' experience of belonging to the people around them and their community as a whole.

4.3.2.2.1 Sub-subcategory: 'I'm just like any other flowers. It's just so'

In the sub-subcategory *Making sense of my life* (pg 66), the participants attempted to make sense of their experiences. In this sub-subcategory, they describe how they make sense of themselves. They also described themselves to be just like any other young adolescent girl.

The participants described their daily experiences as being '*just so*'. By not rationalising or explaining their experiences because they were '*just so*', the participants' descriptions were brief and to the point. As a result, this sub-subcategory is notably shorter than the others. They did however seem to want to convey that they engage in the same activities in which any other girl would engage. This was particularly noticeable during the initial interviews when the participants were not yet able to share in the depth with which the researcher was seeking. The limited depth was to be expected considering that the participants were still gaining familiarity with the researcher and the research process. The following description of Ashley's interviews illustrates

this. During her initial interview, Ashley repeatedly spoke of how she goes out to different places, *'Like sometimes I go to Milnerton and then I go to Wynberg or Muizenberg.'* Later on in the interview she said, *'Or we go to the movies in the Wynberg. Or say now that here's a carnival then we go to the carnival.'* She spoke more about going out than she did of the things she did within Lavender Hill. In the follow-up interview however, she spoke predominantly of her activities in and around Lavender Hill. Ashley seemed concerned about being judged by the researcher during the initial interview and so she wanted to be perceived to be just like any other girl. During the follow-up interview however, she was more comfortable to talk about her experiences that may have been different to those of girls living in other communities.

Nicole seemed to want to convey that her community is much like any other community and repeatedly stated that, *'The Village is very still'*. More specifically, she said that her road was



quieter and the people *'don't go on in my road'*. She went on to say that, *'it's almost like where the white people live and, it's very still there.'* This latter association is informed by her opinion that white communities are peaceful, *'It's very still...the people, they move in their houses. You never see children up and down, or going on in the road.'* All these descriptions of her road indicate that she sees the road in which she lives in isolation from the rest of

the community. It also indicates that she is not aware that Lavender Hill might have other roads similar to her own road.

4.3.2.2.2.5. Sub-subcategory: I'm a good girl

The notion of being a good girl was a value that the participants held. A good girl referred to those girls who:

- show respect for their parents, particularly their mothers,
- are not rude or disrespectful,
- do their chores around the house,
- work hard at school,
- have friends who are also considered to be 'good girls'
- do not fight, and
- do not have a number of different boyfriends nor engage in sexual relationships.

This notion of being seen to be a good girl was a message initially conveyed by their mothers who instructed them to associate with respectable children. *'They, they rude. My mother says that if we play with children like that then gonna, like, then our manners change and like we come at home*

and we talk like that and when we get cross for our sisters or like that, then we say the same words to them, like that. That's why... There's children my age also but they, they are very, they wanna keep them big and they like children of my age.' They were also told not to get into trouble or to be rude. Instead, they formed friendships with girls who they also considered to be good girls.

The above quote indicates Nicole's mother's influence in defining rude or unrespectable behaviour to her. Zilda illustrates that their mothers were not the only one's responsible for defining the notion of being a good girl. She had acquired these values from other adults and from her church. Participants internalised these values, using them to inform their behaviour and associations. Zilda illustrates this in her description of some of the older children in her church's youth group, *'And then we don't like interfere with them. They're like rude children and they swear in front of the priest and stuff. ...they were really rude to me...they were yelling at me and all that stuff...It's rude to fight ...but some of the children they very rude and then they just want to fight with you and stuff.'*

One of the defining features of being a good girl is that a good girl works hard at school. Doing her homework was one of the first activities Ashley described. She later said, *'I always do my homework...And in the night, then I always make sure I done my homework – just in case.'* All of the participants described doing their homework and chores before going out to play. *'I first go home and then I go eat and then I do my chores and then I'll go to my friend.'* This is another defining feature of good girls.

It must however be noted that there was also an extrinsic motivator for doing work apart from the desire to be seen as a 'good girl'. This motivator was the avoidance of punishment. *'I never miss out anything or I never, I always do my homework – I never get hidings.'* Although corporal punishment has been outlawed in schools, the participants spoke of teachers using this as a strategy for punishing learners. Teachers also used corporal punishment when learners did not complete their work, *'En toe was my werk nie voltooi nie. En toe slat sy (juffrou) my op my skouer met 'n lat. Dit was pyn gewees.'* (*And then my work wasn't finished And then she (teacher) hit me on my shoulder with a cane. It was sore*). In this situation, the teacher serves as a means of external authority in their moral development. Through this fear, the participants internalised the morals of working hard and being compliant.

Corporal punishment was not exclusive to the school environment however. Zilda described how parents frequently hit their children. None of the other participants referred to such incidences. Zilda also described occasions where children would hit back because they had had enough of their parents hitting them. Zilda, however, said that she would not do this because, *'...my grandma will hit me and that and my grandma will call my daddy. My daddy will also hit me and stuff like*

that.' The fear of receiving a hiding was enough of a deterrent for Zilda to not respond, as she might have wanted to.

It is evident that the participants' values associated with being considered a good girl informed many of their behaviours and actions. Some of these values were informed by the positive interpretation of being a good girl. Other values were informed by their fear of being punished. It was evident however, that the participants had internalised these values, while striving to display these characteristics to others.

4.3.2.2.3. Sub-subcategory: Connected and disconnected

It was important to all of the participants to be part of their families. They also described being part of an extended family, which played a significant role in their lives. The participants frequently spoke of engaging in activities with siblings and cousins. Even though Shereen was not able to visit her grandparents and cousins, she described how she arrives at school at seven o'clock in the morning and waits for her cousin to arrive. She then asks her cousin for news of her grandmother. It was clear that it was important to Shereen that she continued to feel connected to her family. It was also important to all the participants that they were able to rely on their family for assistance and support.

In a similar way, having friends and being connected to friends was important. Shereen even considered her friends to be like siblings to her, '*Amper soos 'n broer en 'n suster*' (*Almost like a brother and a sister*). Zilda's friends also play a significant role in her life, '*They mean a lot to me. Candice is like a sister to me, we do everything together.*'

Nicole makes an association and connection between herself and the street in which she lives (see page 46). She also connects to St Montague Village, while she dissociates herself from the people who live in the courts in Lavender Hill. Her main motivator for this dissociation is linked to her perception of how the people in the courts behave. This perception conflicts with her definition of being a good girl (see page 77).

On the other hand, Zilda associates with her community in the courts. She engages with '*the action*' by watching it and being familiar with the various incidences. The stories that she tells are a part of who she is. However, as the previous sub-subcategory illustrated, Zilda dissociates herself from the '*rude children*'. She also describes the gangsters and drug dealers in terms of '*them*'. This indicates her dissociation with specific people who engage in activities with whom she does not agree.

On a higher lever, the participants spoke of their connectedness to their church and God. All the participants spoke of attending church on Sundays. Two of them also spoke of attending youth groups at their churches during the week. For Shereen and Zilda this seemed to be more of a routine activity rather than something they chose to do. Nicole and Ashley on the other hand, valued going to church and anticipated attending each week. It became apparent however, that they all found significance in belonging to their church and in being able to learn about God, as Ashley said, *'I feel special. I feel happy cos, then I, just I like going to church. I like learning stuff about God and how He discovered the world.'* When asked what church means to her, Nicole said, *'Like God and like that, um, it means a lot to me.'* For Shereen, it was more about connecting to the people at church and hearing their experiences than necessarily connecting with God, while Zilda also enjoyed the fun manner of learning in their confirmation class.

This sense of belonging and connectedness is essentially about spirituality – being connected to self, others, the community and God. The participants found significance in being a part of something greater than themselves and they generally sought out connection with others instead of spending time alone.

4.3.2.2.4. Reflections on *A human being*

The essence of this subcategory relates to the participants' identity. Their identity is informed by the value system associated with *being a good girl*. Their definition of self is also defined in relation to the participants' families, community and God. In turn, the participants then share this sense of self with the people around them. They share and express themselves through engaging in activities with other people. These relationships will be discussed in the next category, *The people in my life*. Before that however, the next subcategory will describe the participants' *becoming*.

4.3.2.3. Subcategory: *A blossoming flower*

As the previous subcategory illustrated, the participants are already developing a sense of identity. Their experiences and the people around them constantly inform their definition of self. As they enter adolescence and develop, their activities and roles begin to change. Many of these changes are gender-related changes. The process of 'acquiring their gender' will be described in the sub-subcategory, *Gendering*. In addition, the transition into adolescence leaves the participants with a number of contradictions. They are distinctly children in some situations, while in other situations they are expected to be adults. The participants' experiences of this phenomenon will be presented in the sub-subcategory *girl-woman*.

4.3.2.3.1. Sub-subcategory: *Gendering*

The term 'gendering' has been used here to depict the process of developing their female gender roles and identity. Aspects of this have already been evident in the stereotypical female

characteristics of many of their activities, such as caring for infants, talking to friends and cleaning the house.

The participants described how their mothers taught them the skills required to undertake these tasks, making their mothers³ the key role-player in this gendering process. This was indicated by the frequency with which they spoke about their mothers. Both Shereen and Ashley's parents were separated/divorced, which meant they lived with their mothers making it more natural for this to occur. Nicole however, lived with both her mother and father and spoke fondly of both of them. Despite this, she never spoke of how her father influenced her life, while she readily spoke of her mother's influence.

It was also evident that their mothers played a protective role in their lives. Zilda and Ashley described how they would call for their mother's help when other children or neighbours were picking them on. At other times, their mothers would simply step in and defend their daughters. This is illustrated in this quote from Zilda, *'The boys, they touch a person all over and then we go tell our grandma and then my grandma confront them and then they say, "No! Nee, hulle lieg. Ons hoeke daai geode gedoen het."* (*'No! No, they're lying. We wouldn't do things like that.' And all that stuff. And then my grandma just say, "Jy! Jy moet nie nonsense kom praat nie. Dié kind sal mos nie meniet so kom sê nie."* (*'You! you mustn't come with nonsense. The child wouldn't just come say things like that.'*) *And then we just walk on.'*

There were also occasions when Zilda's grandmother would defend her and her cousins when their grandfather picked on them, *'And like, we like wash the walls and the doors and that. Then we just like wet the floors and then my grandma say, then my grandpa comes again and he skel (scolds) and then my grandma say, "Stanley, los die kinders af man!"* (*'Stanley, leave the children alone man!'*) *My grandma just like that and then he gets cross for my grandma.'*

In this subcategory it is evident that their mothers' play a valuable role in the participants' socialisation process. The participants reinforced this learning within their peer relationships by drawing on the values their mother's had taught them about being a girl. The next subcategory looks at the changing responsibility of being a **girl-woman**. This subcategory considers the changes that occur in the process of growing up and how the participants responded to this.

4.3.2.3.2. Sub-subcategory: Girl-woman

One of the characteristics of growing up is the increase in responsibility associated with adult life. Although the participants experienced slightly different degrees of responsibility, they all held some responsibility in their homes. Zilda spoke of her daily chores of washing the dishes, hanging up the

³ Zilda's grandmother played this role in her life.

washing, cleaning the patio, scrubbing the walls, cooking meals and doing the shopping. Nicole however, only spoke of helping to clean the house on a Saturday, which they did as a family.

Although they seemed to value this responsibility, they also held on to the experience of being a child. This was seen in the ways that they integrated play into their chores. In addition, Ashley repeatedly emphasized that she played a lot. The contrast of having adult interests as well as a child's interests was seen in the television programmes that they chose to watch. Like Ashley, all the participants said, *'I watch all the soapies and some cartoons.'* Soap operas relate to their adult experiences because of the relationships and issues that soap operas depict. Cartoons on the other hand, relate to their child interests and experiences, as Zilda described, *'Because it's more for kids and stuff. Sometimes my Grandma them all watch our kids programmes and stuff. ... you learn lots of different stuff on the TV and so on.'*

Apart from television programmes, the participants' friendships also reflect their different roles. It is interesting to note that, other than their same-aged friends, the participants chose to play with children who were younger, rather than older than themselves. They described how the older children (usually only two or three years older than themselves) would engage in risk behaviours such as smoking, drinking and engaging in sexual relations. They also stated that these older children were rude and forward. In the same way, they explained that they did not want boyfriends because boys were more interested in sex. *'They told me and my cousin that they want to have sex with us... It's not nice because we not that kind of girls that just want to have sex and stuff.'* This is an indication of the participants preferring to remain children and not being ready to enter such aspects of an adult's experiences.

There are aspects of the adult world that they did value however. They seemed to appreciate their ability to be more independent. They all described walking (usually with a friend) to various places in the community such as the shops, the library or to church. Zilda and Ashley both spoke of going to places like Wynberg and Blue Route Mall in Tokai (approximately 5 kilometres away). Ashley however stated that she had to travel to these places with someone who was older than herself.

Zilda also described going to a dance club in Retreat with her cousins. She would go there some afternoons to dance. Some of her cousins drink alcohol and smoke at the club but she reported that she did not join them in such activities. Her grandmother knew that they frequented the club and was concerned about this club after someone was shot. Instead of stopping her grandchildren from attending dance clubs, she told them to find a new place. This is an indication of how she trusted Zilda and her cousins' sense of responsibility and considered them to be transitioning from girlhood to womanhood.

4.3.2.3.3. Reflections on A blossoming flower

This category has described some of the gender-related aspects of growing up. In addition, it has described some of the role transitions that participants are making as they enter adolescence. Although they are still largely at the beginning of this transition into adolescence, it is evident that they are experiencing changing responsibilities, interests and occupational engagement. Despite this maturation process however, it is evident that the participants are still children who enjoy playing and having fun.

The findings so far have described a number of situations in which that participants engage with other people. The next category, The people in my life, will describe the significant relationships in their lives.

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4.3.3. The people in my life

In the introduction, it was stated that this category is notably smaller than the previous two. This is because the previous categories and sub-categories have already introduced some of the participants' relationships and associations. It has also been noted that it is within these relationships that many of the above processes and experiences occur. This category will describe the participants' specific relationships. It will also describe the impact these relationships have on their lives. This again draws on the analogy of a flower where a plant's ecosystem has an impact on its growth and development.

4.3.3.1. Sub-subcategory: My family

It has been identified previously that the participants' families play a significant role in the participants' lives. It was described how the participants used their mother/grandmother's values and opinions to inform their own. Apart from acquiring values and opinions from their families, the participants also described spending time engaging in activities with them. The specific family members that participants engaged with depended on the structure of their family and the availability of individual(s). Nicole spent her evenings and weekends with her parents and siblings. When Zilda was not at school, she spent most of her time with her cousins. Shereen did not report to engage in activities with her family even though she said that she spent most of her time at home. This was mainly due to her mother and sister not being available as her mother managed the *huiswinkel* and her sister was kept busy with her schoolwork or friends. Ashley on the other hand, only spent weekends with her mother because of her mother's long work hours. Ashley spent most of her time engaging with peers.

Family however, was also a source of conflict for some of the participants. In the sub-subcategory *THE MOTHER AND THE MOTHER*, it was described how Zilda's grandfather and uncle become abusive after smoking dagga or drinking alcohol. She described how she and her cousins would retreat to their grandmother's room when this happened. They would lock themselves in the room and watch television until their grandfather or uncle fell asleep. In addition, Zilda described a number of instances where her grandfather would shout and swear at her. The following is one such instant. *'That is my grandpa that fight so a lot and when we clean the kitchen né, and then he is drunk and then he come in and everything is clean and then he say "Kom maak die Fokken kombuis skoon" (Come clean the fucking kitchen)' and that. And then the house is clean and then we say "Dad, nee, die kombuis is skoon" (Dad, no the kitchen is clean). And then he saying "Nee, dat. En dan nog 'n klomp skottelgoed" (No, that. And then another pile of dishes) then there is nothing on the tables.'* This verbal abuse had a negative effect on Zilda, *'...my grandpa em like to em yell at a person...It make a person very sore inside.'*

Shereen also reported that her mother abused alcohol. She said, *'En my ma se drinkery, kan ek nie vat nie... My ma se vriend langs, twee huisies van ons langsaan af. Nou, sy verkoop tik en die dagga goete en daai en sy verkoop daai en dan sit my ma daar by haar en dan koop hulle biere en dan drink hulle elke keer, elke keer, elke keer, elke keer. En dan stry hulle nou maar hulle baklei nie en dan stry hulle nou... Dan maak my ma somtyds nie die kos klaar nie Sondags nie dan gaan drink sy. Dan kom sy dronk huistoe, maar sy's nie skandalig as sy dronk is nie.* (And my mom's drinking, I can't take it... my mommy's friend next door, two houses across from us. Now, she sells tik and the dagga things and that and she sells that and then my mommy sits there by her and then buys beers and then they drink every time, every time, every time, every time. And then they argue but now they don't fight and then they argue... Then sometimes my mommy doesn't finish making the food on Sundays then she goes to drink. Then she comes home drunk but she's not disgraceful when she's drunk). Although her mother's drinking did not interfere with what Shereen was doing, it did mean that her mother was less available to her.



'Hier het my ma-hulle voor die deur gestaan. Hulle het gedrink' (Here, my mom and them stood in front of the door. They had been drinking)

It is known that as a child enters adolescence, they start breaking away from their family relationships, seeking out peer relationships instead (Markiewicz et al, 2001). These peer relationships become the primary means for an adolescent's psychosocial and moral development. This process was evident in the participants' lives. The following sub-subcategory will describe the participants' relationships.

4.3.3.2. Sub-subcategory: My friends

Friends were evidently important to the participants. As described in the sub-subcategory *Connected and disconnected* (see page 79) the participants experienced a sense of belonging and connectedness through their friendships. The first thing Nicole spoke about when describing her activities, was her friendships. She described her friends as respectable friends who are not 'old fashioned', the descriptor she used for the other children in the community. This phenomenon was described in the sub-subcategory *I'm a good girl* (see page 77).

The participants experienced a sense of interdependence with their friends. They help each other with chores, schoolwork and homework, even taking their homework to each other's house in the afternoon if they needed help. The participants also said that their friends defended them if other children picked on them or wanted to fight with them, and they would do the same for their friends. A level of trust and respect existed between friends. Nicole described, *'This photograph I took,*

uhm, of my friends because I love them and it's the only friends I have because I can trust them and not like my other friends because they like talk about each other and if you now owe them money and then like that and then they want to hurt you after school. That's why I took this photo, to remember, like that. Cause we trust each other and then if we now like, if we go to the library and some of the children, some of our friends don't have enough money then we the others will pay'



Zilda experienced this interdependence with her cousins and particularly valued the role that her cousin Chantell played in her life, 'This is my cousin and her sister. Chantell is not so rude like Michelle and Shanelle and Kim because, erm, when we ask her to walk with us to go buy electricity or shopping and then she will walk with us, but the others are very rude. That's why I like her the most under all my cousins.' It would seem as though Chantell played more than just the role of a peer support. Zilda also considered her a mother figure even though she is only a few years older than herself. Zilda described a number of situations where she asked Chantell for help and support resulting in Chantell assuming a protective role.

The friendships that the participants referred to above were gender-based i.e. they mainly had girl friends. Shereen, Ashley and Zilda said that they did have boy friends but that they interacted with these boys within a group context. The participants also engaged in gender-based activities. They engaged in activities such as playing with a skipping rope, 'sometimes I have to do her hair for her', playing pen and paper games such as 'boys and girls', 'sometimes (we) just walk around' or 'we talk about stuff'. These activities enable the participants to pamper and care for each other, be creative and build relationships, which are characteristics of female activities.

Friendships are also based on common interests. Shereen had a best friend when she was younger but as they grew older, they developed different interests, 'Ek het eintlike nie lus gehet vir haar en toe speel ek nie meer saam met haar nie. Maar sy is ene wat baie lief is vir buite speel en so aan. Soos ek is lief om in die huis te sit, sy hou nie van om in huis te sit nie. Sy wil nou saam met die jongetjie sokker gaan speel. Ek wil nie saam met die jongetjies sokker gaan speel nie. Ek speel meestal hier by die skool sokker.' (I didn't actually feel like playing with her and so I didn't play with her. But she's one who likes to play outside and so on. Like I like to sit in the house, she doesn't like to sit in the house. She wants to play soccer with the boys. I don't want to play soccer with the boys. I play mostly here at the school.). Shereen was no longer interested in the same things as her friend who, according to Shereen, preferred playing outside and was interested in

boys. Her friend also enjoyed spending time with the other children outside. As a result of these discrepancies, they had simply drifted apart.

It is clear from the participants' dialogues that their friends meant a great deal to them. The participants spent a large portion of their day with their friends i.e. at school and at home in the afternoons and over weekends. It was evident that these friendships brought meaning to the participants' experiences. Shereen illustrated this when she gave the following description of what she does with her two friends at school. *'Ek het twee beste vriende...hulle is amper soos 'n broer en 'n suster...Ons speel saam. Ons speel in die rondte. Ons speel aan-aan of ons jaag mekaar en so. En as ons in die klas in is, soos ek en Roland is in een groep in, en dan help ons mekaar met onse werk.'* (I've got two best friends, they're almost like a brother and a sister. We play together. We play around. We play on/on or we chase each other and so. And if we're in class like Roland and I are in the same group, and then we help each other with our work.). Shereen became noticeably animated while describing this experience and it was evident that these were meaningful friendships.

All of these relationships existed within the context of the participants' community. The participants referred to people in their community who had an impact on their lives, particularly their neighbours. These people will be presented in the next sub-subcategory.

4.3.3.3. Sub-subcategory: My neighbours

The sub-subcategory *The walls and the road* described the various environmental factors that restricted or hinder the participants' occupational engagement. The description in that section included how certain people in the community have an impact on the participants' lives e.g. gangsters and substance abusers. This sub-subcategory will present those people in the community with whom the participants had direct contact. It will also describe the role these people played in the participants' lives. Of these people, the participants' neighbours were the most significant.

As was described previously, the participants had friends who lived next door or in their road. They would also care for and play with neighbour's infants. Apart from this, Shereen also described how she ran errands for some of her neighbours, *'...ek gaan baie. Altyd, baie vir die mense in die pad in...ek gaan hier by die huiswinkel...een vrou wil miskien rys hê, dan wil die ander vrou miskien sout hê, so... As enigteen vir my vra om hulle winkel toe te gaan, dan gaan ek vir hulle winkel toe... miskien as ek nou met 'n R10 winkel toe om 'n brood of a pakkie sout, die sout is 80 sent en die brood is R4,50. En dan gee hulle miskien vir my 'n R2.'* (I go a lot. Always a bit for the people in the road. I go here by the home shop...one woman maybe wants rice, then the other woman maybe wants salt, like that. If anyone asks me to go to the shop for them then I go to the shop

for them: maybe (if not) go to the shop with a R10 to get a packet of salt. The salt is 20 cents and the bread is R4,50. And then they maybe give me a R2). Going to the shop for neighbours was mutually beneficial. Shereen's neighbours were able to get the goods that they required, while Shereen was able to help out and earn some money at the same time. This income in turn provided Shereen with the means to access resources and opportunities. On page 71 it was stated that Shereen had recently used her savings to help pay for their television set to be repaired. She was thus enabled to resume engaging in a regular activity.

In the sub-subcategory *Food for growth*, it was described how Ashley's neighbours afford her and her friends with the opportunity to play games at night (see page 56). In a similar way, Zilda and her friends were provided with the opportunity to go to Muizenburg Beach⁴ during summer. *'And the last time when we went with Sakkie to Muizenberg and so...we go with the car...it's me, it's Sakkie, it's uhm Darryn, it's Audesha, it's Lucian, it's Chantell, Kim, Dylan, and Shamiel and Xavier.'* Sakkie provided the adult supervision and the car that enabled Zilda and eight other children, to go to the beach during summer.

Interactions with neighbours were not however, always pleasant. Shereen and Zilda described similar experiences where their mother/grandmother sent them to ask neighbours for food because they did not have. *'...we have to go lend stuff here and there (when the money's finished)...It's not nice because all the people look at you. it's almost like they, they like ask in their minds, "Nee, waantoe gaan dié kinders met 'n sakkie?"* (*No, where are these children going with a packet?*) *and stuff like that.'* From Zilda's description of this experience, it is evident that she was ashamed of having to borrow food. She was particularly concerned about what other people thought of her as a result. Neighbours in this situation, are a resource that the participants do not like to access.

Although there were occasions when the participants' neighbours were unsupportive of them, they still served as a resource in terms of friendships, opportunities and accessibility. In addition, relationships with their neighbours provided the participants with the opportunity for connection and belonging.

4.3.3.4. Reflections on The people in my life

The people in the participants' lives play a valuable role in their growth and development. These relationships also fulfil different purposes in the participants' lives, from their family who provide and care for them to friends with whom they can share and play. In addition, these relationships bring meaning to the participants' experiences.

⁴ Muizenburg Beach is approximately 5 kilometres away

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The findings of this study described how young adolescent girls experience their occupations. It elaborates these experiences contribute towards their development as occupational beings. Humphrey (2005; 2002) draws attention to the *process* of the development of occupations, rather than the outcomes of occupational development described in previous literature (Davis & Polatajko 2004; Wiseman, Davis & Polatajko 2005). Her 'Processes Transforming Occupations' (PTO) model explains how occupations emerge through the synergistic interaction of dynamic forces, which also transform performance or alter experiences of meaning (Humphrey, 2005). The model 'seeks to explain the systematic emergence of, and transformation in, children's performance of and experienced meaning in occupations' (Humphrey, 2005, p. 38). Although the model has been developed through her work relating to early childhood, it is intended to help to understand the systematic changes that occur in occupations across the lifespan (Humphrey, 2005). This discussion will consider how young adolescent girls' experiences of occupational engagement influence the development of their occupations. Relevant principles from the PTO model will be highlighted. These experiences will be discussed in relation to three factors that influence young adolescent girls' occupational engagement: 1) the influence of an affirming environment, 2) the role of belonging, and 3) how young adolescent girls draw on their own capacities to influence their experiences.

5.1. The influence of an affirming environment on occupational engagement

Occupational engagement always occurs within a context (Dunn, Brown & McGuigan, 1994). Rebeiro (2001) describes how an 'affirming social environment' (p. 80) enables occupational engagement. Numerous factors contribute towards creating an affirming environment. Rebeiro (2001) elaborated on these in a study conducted with women with mental illness. The factors that are consistent with the experiences of young adolescent girls in Lavender Hill will be presented here. Furthermore, factors within the physical environment of Lavender Hill that influence young adolescent girls' experiences of occupational engagement will be discussed.

The participants in Rebeiro's (2001) study described the importance of having a safe space for their group meetings, which allowed them to feel comfortable and accepted. This enabled them to share their experiences more openly, making it possible for them to fulfil the purpose of their group. In a similar way, young adolescent girls in Lavender Hill need to feel safe within their environment so that they can engage in meaningful and purposeful occupations. When they feel safe their occupational engagement reflects characteristics such as playfulness and creativity. On the other hand, engaging within an environment that is unsafe leads to occupational engagement that is

restricted and health compromising. In order to limit this, they seek out spaces that they consider to be relatively safe from crime, violence and threats. They identify places where they can engage in activities with minimal disruption from factors such as traffic and aggressive and violent people. Physical safety thus includes protection against personal violations as well as feeling physically comfortable and at ease. Apart from physical safety, an affirming environment also offers emotional safety. There are times when physical spaces provide emotional containment. For young adolescent girls however, emotional safety is mostly facilitated through support from people. When they do not find the necessary emotional containment that they are seeking, they are susceptible to placing their mental health at risk. This is reflected in the sub-subcategory *The weeds and the worms*.

One of the strategies that the participants in this study had developed to facilitate emotional safety was to avoid harmful experiences. When faced with conflict, they avoided the confrontation by relying on others to address the conflict on their behalf or by avoiding the situation altogether. Avoidant behaviour is not a constructive approach in the long term, as it rarely provides genuine solutions (Weiten, 2001). However, avoidance has a positive outcome when young adolescent girls avoid a health-compromising experience, such as physical or verbal harassment. They avoid these experiences by seeking out alternative locations and relationships to engage in their occupations.

From this study, it was also apparent that those participants who accessed a range of different places, both within and outside of Lavender Hill, described engaging in a greater range of occupations. Davis and Polatajko (2004) state that it is necessary to have access to resources such as recreational facilities, as these are the means through which children learn and develop. Humphrey (2005) notes that 'communities invest economic and social resources to support the development of occupations' (p. 39). Lavender Hill however, does not have many resources to be able to invest in the optimal development of children and youths' occupations. Humphrey describes this as part of the sociocultural construction of occupational opportunities (Humphrey, 2005). The restricted social construction of occupational opportunities of Lavender Hill is reflected in the social construction of young adolescent girls identity. Furthermore, Wiseman *et al* (2005) state that the identity of individuals, communities and societies are defined by their occupations. The positive attributes of Lavender Hill include the opportunities (such as church activities) and resources (such as well maintained parks) for young adolescent girls to engage in meaningful occupations. Unfortunately, these opportunities are restricted and as a result, young adolescent girls are susceptible to experiencing occupational deprivation. This places them at risk of developing health risk behaviours, which can lead to preclinical health disorders such as boredom, burnout and depression (Wilcock, 1998a).

Besides there being few opportunities for young adolescent girls to engage in meaningful occupations, those that are available are often of a restricted quality. The participants seldom complained of the limited resources and opportunities in Lavender Hill. This is to be expected however, since they are seldom aware the opportunities their community denies them. This limitation could restrict their potential to capitalise on their inherent physical, psychological and social capacities. It also restricts their ability to develop competence in shaping health-enhancing patterns of occupational engagement. As occupational therapists, we need to address these issues by ensuring individuals and communities access a range of opportunities and so experience meaningful and enriching occupational engagement (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004b).

Apart from the environment shaping the occupational opportunities and development of young adolescent girls' occupations, the environment is also a source of belonging. The next section will consider how they experience this sense of belonging through their occupations. It will also discuss how they experience a sense of belonging through the people in their life.

5.2. The need to belong and how this influences occupational engagement

Young adolescent girls need to feel connected and experience a sense of belonging. These are important enablers to them engaging in meaningful and purposeful occupations. They experience a sense of belonging through familiar environments with which they were able to identify (such as their street). Many of these places are in the vicinity of their homes, which serve as a means for defining the physical area to which they belong. In addition, they choose to engage in spaces that are consistent with their identity, such as their homes, their court or their church. Each of these places projects values and norms that guides how a young adolescent girl is to engage in her occupations. They experience a sense of belonging when there is a goodness of fit between their own values and norms, and those ascribed to by the place in which they engage.

In a similar way, occupational engagement is enabled through a sense of belonging with the people in the young adolescent girl's life. Deković and Buist's (2005) study of family relationships, found that parental and family influence is still important to young adolescents (the average age of their participants was 12 years of age). It is evident from the present study that a young adolescent girl's family plays an important role in her life. It is also evident that those young adolescent girls who experience a greater sense of belonging and connectedness with their family, engage in more activities with their families. As a result, they have more access to opportunities to engage in activities. Similarly, the participants in Rebeiro's study experienced a sense of belonging to their group, which enabled them to be able to share their experiences with each other (Rebeiro, 2001). The challenge for occupational therapists then, is to promote inclusivity through belonging for individuals and groups.

The people with whom young adolescent girls experience a sense of belonging also provide opportunities for them to engage in occupations. Humphrey (2005) found that the agents (referring to individuals) in a child's life, create and adapt niches that promote the development of, or transformation in occupations (Humphrey, 2005). For young adolescent girls however, this is not an 'either-or' process but rather a dual process of development *and* transformation. The reason for this is that they are not only acquiring new patterns of occupational engagement, as in the case of young children, but are developing and transforming their current occupational profile. The most prominent agents facilitating this process for young adolescent girls' are their mothers, grandmothers, older sisters, cousins and teachers. It is interesting to note that all of these agents are older females. Through these people, young adolescent girls develop new skills and abilities that enable them to engage in occupations. Agents who have more skills strive to alter the performance and situation definition of those who are less skilled (Humphrey, 2005). This transmission of skills and abilities is evident in how the participants' occupations were developed and transformed by the agents in their lives, such as through learning culinary skills from their mother/grandmother.

Apart from parental and family influence, peers also serve as agents in the young adolescent girl's life. When participants experienced a sense of belonging with their friends, they engaged in a greater range of occupations with these friends. They also experienced meaning through engaging in occupations with friends. Pettitt (2004) states that peer relationships are an important source of meaning for young adolescent girls. During shared occupations, the doing and meaning elements are distributed between participants. This results in new performance patterns and experiences of meaning being created (Humphrey, 2005). This study illustrates that when young adolescent girls do not experience a sense of belonging, they either avoid engaging in those occupations or seek out opportunities where they do experience a sense of belonging and meaning.

A further source of relational belonging for meaningful and purposeful occupational engagement is through community members and neighbours. They engage in occupations with these people by watching what they do and sharing these experiences with them. Through these observations and interactions, they learn how to engage with others, deal with conflict and cope with the stressors imposed by their community. Humphrey (2005) considers this to be a form of occupational engagement that contributes toward the development of an occupation. The concern for young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill is that the outcome of this development often undermines their health and well-being. There are ways however, that they minimise this effect by using themselves to effect change, which will be discussed next.

5.3. The use of self in determining experiences of occupational engagement

It has become evident that there are range of situations in which young adolescent girls seek to experience a sense of belonging. In seeking out such opportunities, they are drawing on their agentic capacity i.e. their ability to take action (Christiansen & Baum, 1997). This was illustrated in the sub-subcategory, *Making choices, making changes*. Young adolescent girls display their agentic capacities in how they overcome the obstacles in their lives. The changes they make, range from a change in attitude (e.g. from fear to playfulness), to a change in the actual activity (reading instead of being bored). These changes allowed them to experience meaning and purpose in what they do. Polkinghorne (1996) states that 'as people strengthen their sense of agency, they are more able to engage in occupation, and as they engage in occupation, they are more able to conceive of themselves as agentic' (p. 302). Being agentic is characterised by taking responsibility, active striving, purposefulness and meaningfulness (Polkinghorne, 1996). In addition, Humphrey (2005) states that as a child changes their reason for doing an activity, the altered experience of meaning and purpose triggers a reorganisation of intrinsic capacities into new performance patterns, thus leading to the development of their occupations. When a child uses their intrinsic capacities in occupations, they promote changes in their function so that when the capacity is recruited at a later stage, they experience an enhanced performance. In a similar way, as young adolescent girls experience meaning and purpose through altered motivations, they develop their intrinsic capacities, which influences how they engage in their occupations.

However, these altered motivations do not always produce positive outcomes. Rather than seeing their own potential to affect change, a victimic individual is passive and considers their life to be beyond their control (Polkinghorne, 1996). This compromises their occupational engagement because they do not actualise possible opportunities, nor do they seek out experiences that are personally purposeful and meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1996). Rebeiro and Cook (1999) state that actualisation is the collective impact of the social environment and the occupation. Actualisation leads to an individual feeling valued, competent and productive (Rebeiro & Cook, 1999). This study illustrated how victimic individuals believed that they had no control over their experiences. They did not experience a sense of actualisation that reinforced their competence as occupational beings. They also engaged in fewer occupations, experienced boredom and expressed a sense of hopelessness. According to Duncan (2004), mental health is characterised by the desire to engage in a range of experiences of meaningful, purposeful and productive occupations. Furthermore, Wilcock (1998a) states that 'mental well-being will be enhanced if people choose their occupations so that they are able to develop spiritual, cognitive, and emotive capacities; to experience timelessness and "higher-order meaning"; and to adjust their capacities to achieve a balanced combination of mental, physical, and social use.' (p. 103-104). What then, do young adolescent girls need in order to be able to choose occupations that develop health-enhancing capacities? What opportunities do they need to be able to engage in meaningful and purposeful occupations

that lead to the healthy development of their occupations? As occupational therapists, it is our responsibility to ensure that individuals have equal privileges to participate in diverse occupations (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004b). This is particularly pertinent for young adolescent girls because they are such a vulnerable population.

From this discussion, it is evident that there are many factors that influence young adolescent girls experiences of occupational engagement. It is also evident that the processes of occupational engagement are influenced by a number of synergistic forces identified through the PTO model. This has helped to identify target areas for occupational therapy intervention to promote health-enhancing occupational engagement so that the optimal development of occupations can be enabled.

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Chapter 6 IN CLOSING

6.1. CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand how young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill experience their occupations. Previous research has found that the environmental characteristics of Lavender Hill restrict children's opportunities to engage in occupations (Mapham et al, 2004; Galvaan, 2004b; Galvaan, 2003). The findings from this study confirmed these findings but also revealed how occupations play a significant role in the development of a young adolescent girl. It found that young adolescent girls' relationships and individual attributes influence their experience of occupational engagement. Individual attributes have previously been found to contribute towards youth in Lavender Hill engaging in risk-taking behaviours (Carrier *et al*, 2003). The resultant challenge is to develop ways to enable young adolescent girls to develop health-enhancing means of engaging in occupations where they can develop their capacities and capitalise on their potential. This is a complex process but this study has identified some of the target areas for such intervention i.e. developing role models who can inform young adolescent's occupations, and develop young adolescent girls' capacities so that they have the individual attributes to affect healthy outcomes. By addressing all the synergistic forces that influence the development of occupations, occupational therapists have the opportunity to enable the youth of this country to become healthy and effective occupational beings.

6.2. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

1. Due to the limited time frame of this study, the researcher was unable to experience prolonged engagement with the participants. This limited the depth with which the participants shared their experiences. It also impaired the accurate reflection of their occupational engagement as some of the more negative experiences may have been withheld. In addition, the limited time only provided the researcher with a transient view of the participants' experiences.
2. Direct observation would have enhanced the photographic observations by providing the researcher with a more thorough perspective of the participants' experiences.

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6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Role models (or agents) need to be equipped with knowledge and skills so that they can create and adapt niches for health-enhancing development and transformation of occupations for young adolescent girls. Knowledge and skills should pertain to enabling health and well-being through meaningful occupational engagement as well as to means of safety as females.
2. Opportunities need be created to enable young adolescent girls to engage in health-enhancing occupations that develop their capacities to affect change within their lives and their community. This should take the form of an occupational enrichment programme. These opportunities need to provide a safe place where young adolescent girls can experience a sense of belonging.
3. Current insights into the participants' adaptive responses should be used to guide intervention with young adolescent girls from Lavender Hill. More specifically, intervention should consider ways to nurture these responses so as to enable individuals to produce optimal outputs.
4. Research needs to be conducted to explore the intrinsic processes of self organisation that underlie the transformation of occupations. By understanding these processes, intervention can more effectively enhance the health enhancing aspects of these processes.
5. In addition, research needs to be conducted to understand how young adolescents construct and express meaning (Burgman & King, 2005). Further, it needs to be established whether children define 'experience' in terms of meaning and purpose or whether they define it in some other way.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1 Aerial photograph of Lavender Hill



APPENDIX 2: Sampling letter for educators

4 April 2005

Dear Grade 7 educators

I am an occupational therapist and work within some of the schools in the area. In development of this work, I am currently doing a research project as part of my Masters degree. For this research, I am looking at how young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill experience the things they do in their daily lives. I will start by interviewing four girls but may need to select one or two more if I need more data later on. I would appreciate it if you could assist me in selecting participants for this study as you are familiar with the girls in you're your grade. I am looking for 4 girls who fit the following criteria:

- 12 years of age (until at least the end of May 2005)
- Attend Grassdale Primary School and live in Lavender Hill
- Have no suspected intellectual impairments so as not to impair reporting ability
- Should be able to engage in one-on-one conversations with adults
- Should not have been part of the related research study conducted last year

I would like the group of girls to be representative of the range of girls in the community so ask that you consider girls who you feel would provide me with this variation. In addition, it would be valuable to work with girls who come from a range of family structures.

I would appreciate if you could provide me with the names of these learners by Thursday the 7th of April. I really value your support and assistance in this, especially considering the pressures under which you are currently working.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the below details.

Thanking you in anticipation

Kind regards

Heather Wonnacott

Occupational therapist

Tel: 701 9824

Cell: 072 243 7526

E-mail: hwonnacott@xsinet.co.za

APPENDIX 3: Parent information letters

INFORMATION SHEET

Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am an occupational therapist and am currently conducting a research project as part of my Masters degree through the University of Cape Town. The research concerns the experiences that young adolescent girls living in Lavender Hill gain from the activities they do. Information will be gathered from 12-year-old girls living in the community who attend Grassdale Primary School.

I will conduct between two and three, hour-long interviews with your daughter to learn from her about her experiences. These interviews will be tape recorded to ensure accurate recording of information. Your daughter will be given the option to take photographs and keep a journal of a range of activities she participates in during the two weeks between interviews (disposable cameras and journals will be provided). Although interviews will be conducted during school time, your daughter will not miss schoolwork, as times of interviews will be negotiated with her teacher.

Interviews will be conducted between March and April 2005. Results will be used to develop an occupational therapy, health promotion programme that is currently based in two primary schools in Lavender Hill. Results will be accessible to those who participate. The names and details of your child will be changed to ensure her safety and to maintain confidentiality (no one knows who she is). However, if information of possible abuse or suicidal tendencies is reported, I will be required to contact the relevant authorities.

Children's' participation in the project is voluntary and both you and they have the right to refuse to join in or withdraw at any time. Information as well as participation may be withdrawn with no consequences to them.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 701 9824 during school hours.

Thank you in anticipation

Regards

Heather Wonnacott

INLIGTINGSTUK BLAD

Ouer/Voog

Geagte Ouer/Voog

Ek is 'n arbeidsterapeut en ek is tans besig navorsing as deel van my Meestersgraad deur die Universiteit van Kaapstad (UK). Die doel van die navorsing is om te bepaal hoe jong adolessent meisies in Lavender Hill alle daagse ervaar. Inligting sal bepaal word deur meisies wie 12 jaar oud is, in Lavender Hill bly en by Grassdale Primêr skool bywoon.

Ek sal tussen twee en drie, uur-lank onderhoude voer met u dogter en meer uitvind van haar ervaringe in Lavender Hill. Dië onderhoude sal op 'n kasset wees om te verseker dat alles korrek versamel is. U dogter sal die keuse kry om fotos te neem en in 'n dagboek te skryf oor die aktiwiteite waarin sy deelneem in die tyd tussen die onderhoude (omtrent twee weke). Ek sal vir haar 'n kamera en dagboek gee. Alhoewel onderhoude binne skool tyd plaas sal vind, sal ek verseker dat u dogter nie skool werk sal mis nie.

Onderhoude sal tussen Maart en April 2005 plaasvind. Uitslae sal gebruik word om die arbeidsterapie program wat by twee laerskole in die gemeenskap is vlot te laat verloop. Die inligting wat ek kry, sal beskikbaar aan almal wat deelgeneem het. Al die name en besonderhede van u kind sal verander word om te verseker dat sy vertroulik bly (niemand sal weet wie sy is nie). Die inligting wat van die leerders ontvang word sal geen impak hê teenoor hoe hulle opgetree sal word nie. Maar, as die kinders gedurende die onderhoud laat blyk dat hulle fisies of seksueel aangerand word of daaraan dink om self moord te pleeg, is dit dan my plig om dit aan die toepaslike departement aan te meld.

Die kinders se deelname aan die projek is vrywillig en beide u en die kinders het die reg om teen enige tyd te weier of te onttrek aan die projek.

Indien u enige vrae het in verband met die navorsing, voel vry om my te kontak by 701 9824 geburende skole tye.

Dankie vir u samewerking

Heather Wonnacott

APPENDIX 4: Consent forms

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Parent/Guardian

I, (name of parent/caregiver) **agree / disagree** (circle which one) to my child, (child's name) being part of the research study by Heather Wonnacott, a Masters student from the University of Cape Town.

I have read the accompanying information sheet detailing the project. I understand the purpose of this study and that I may withdraw my child's participation or any information at any time. I understand that the research has no bearing on my parenting and that I have the right to refuse consent without penalty.

Please mark the boxes according to your agreement:

- Yes**, I agree to allow my daughter to participate in the **interviews** about her experience of the activities she participates in.
- No**, I do not agree to allow my daughter to participate in the **interviews** about her experience of the activities she participates in.
- Yes**, I agree to allow my daughter to take **photographs** of the activities she takes part in
- No**, I do not agree to allow my daughter to take **photographs** of the activities she takes part in
- Yes**, I agree to allow my daughter to keep a written and/or audio **journal** relating to the interviews and/or photographs
- No**, do not agree to allow my daughter to keep a written and/or audio **journal** relating to the interviews and/or photographs

Signature:

Date:.....

TOESTEMMING FORM

Ouer/Voog

Ek, (naam van ouer/voog) **stem saam / stem nie saam nie** (kring watter een) dat my kind (kind se naam) deel kan wees van die navorsingstudie wat deur die arbeidsterapeut, Heather Wonnacott, 'n Meesters student van die Universiteit van Kaapstad gereël word.

Ek het die inligtingsblad van die projek gelees. Ek verstaan die doel van die ondersoek en dat ek my kind op enige stadium van die projek mag uittrek. Ek is bewus dat my integriteit as ouer nie ter sprake is nie.

Merk asseblief die blokkies waarmee u saamstem:

- Ja**, ek gee toestemming vir my dogter om deel te neem aan die **onderhoude** van haar ervarings van die dinge wat sy doen.
- Nee**, ek gee nie toestemming vir my dogter om deel te neem aan die **onderhoude** van haar ervaring van die dinge wat sy doen nie.
- Ja**, ek gee toestemming vir my dogter om **foto's** te neem van die aktiwiteite waarin sy deelneem.
- Nee**, ek gee nie toestemming nie vir my dogter om **foto's** te vat van die aktiwiteite waarin sy deelneem.
- Ja**, ek gee toestemming vir my dogter om 'n **dagboek** te hou in verband met die ondersoeke en/of die fotos wat sy neem.
- Nee**, ek gee nie toestemming nie vir my dogter om 'n **dagboek** te hou in verband met die ondersoeke en/of die fotos wat sy vat.

Handtekening:

Datum:.....

APPENDIX 5: Participant information letter

INFORMATION SHEET

Participant

Dear Learner

I am an occupational therapist and run a programme in some of the primary schools in Lavender Hill. I am doing some research where I want to learn about the experiences of young adolescent girls relating to the things that you do. If you agree to take part, I will interview you two or three times where we will talk about your experiences. We will meet for about an hour each time and we will record what you say using a tape recorder. I would like to record what you say so that I am sure I get everything you say. If you are willing, I would like you to take photographs of the things you do using a disposable camera that I will give you. I would also like you to keep a journal between our interviews either by writing things down for me, or talking into a tape recorder that I will leave at your school.

Your parents, teachers and principal will not be told about anything you tell me unless you give permission. However, if you report on physical or sexual abuse, I have to report it. Information from this research will be used in a research report and maybe in a newspaper or magazine. Your name and details will be changed so that your information remains confidential (no one knows it is about you).

You have the right to chose to participate in this project if you want to, and can also refuse. You can withdraw any information, as well as your participation at any time during the study with no consequences to you. Although we will meet during school time, you will not miss any schoolwork, as I will negotiate times with your teacher.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at 701 9824 during school hours.

Thank you in anticipation

Regards

Heather Wonnacott

INLIGTINGSTUK BLAD

Leerling

Geagte Leerling

Ek is 'n arbeidsterapeut en ek werk in twee van die laer skole in Lavender Hill. Ek is besig met 'n navorsings projek om te leer van jonk adolessent se ervarings van die dinge wat hulle doen. As jy wil deelneem, sal ons twee of drie keer ontmoet. Ons sal vir omtrent 'n uur op 'n keer ontmoet and ons sal alles op 'n kasset. Ek wil alles vaslê sodat ek alles kry wat jy vir my sê. As jy wil, wil ek hê dat jy fotos vat van al die aktiwieteite waarin jy deelneem. Ek sal vir jou 'n beskikbare kamera gee. Ek wil ook hê dat jy 'n dagboek hou tussen onderhoude deur om in 'n dagboek te skryf (ek sal jou 'n dagboek gee) of deur om op 'n kasset te praat wat ek by jou skool sal los.

Ek sal nie jou ouers, onderwyser en hoof enige iets vertel behalwe as jy my toestemming gee. Maar, as jy my iets van fisies of seksuele misbruik vertel, moet ek dit rapporteer. Inligting van die ondersoek sal in 'n verslag en ook miskien in 'n tydskrif of keorant gebruik word. Jou naam en besonderhede sal verander word sodat niemand weet wie jy is nie.

Jy het die reg om deel van die projek te wees, en mag ook weier om deel te neem. Jou samewerking is vrywillig en jy het die reg om uit te trek teen enige stadium. Alhoewel ons gedurende skooltyd sal ontmoet, jy sal nie skoolwerk mis nie, want ek sal eers met jou onderwyser praat sodat ons op die beste tyd ontmoet.

As jy enige vrae oor die ondersoek het, voel vry om my by 701 9824 gedurende skool tye te bel.

Dankie vir jou samewerking

Heather Wonnacott

APPENDIX 6: Assent forms

INFORMED ASSENT FORM

Participant

I, (your name) **agree / disagree** (circle which one) to being part of the research study conducted by the University of Cape Town, occupational therapy Masters student Heather Wonnacott.

I have read the information page and understand the purpose of this study and that I may withdraw my participation or any information at any time.

Please tick the blocks you agree with:

- Yes, I agree to participate in the interviews**
- No, I do not agree to participate in the interviews**
- Yes, I agree to take photographs of the activities I take part in**
- No, I do not agree to take photographs of the activities I take part in**
- Yes, I agree to keep a written and/or audio journal relating to my interviews and/or photographs**
- No, do not agree to keep a written and/or audio journal relating to my interviews and/or photographs**

Signature:

Date:

TOESTEMMING VORM

Leerling

Ek, (jou naam) **stem saam / stem nie saam nie** (kring watter een) om deel van die ondersoek te wees wat deur die Universiteit van Kaapstad, aardbeisterapeut student, Heather Wonnacott gedoen word.

Ek het die inligtingsblad gelees en verstaan die doel van die ondersoek. Ek verstaan dat ek mag my samewerking op enige stadium onttrek.

Merk asseblief die blokkies waarmee jy saamstem:

- Ja**, ek stem saam om deel van die **ondersoeke** te wees
- Nee**, ek stem nie saam om deel van die **ondersoeke** te wees nie
- Ja**, ek stem saam om **foto's** van my aktiwiteite te neem
- Nee**, ek stem nie saam om **foto's** van my aktiwiteite te neem nie
- Ja**, ek stem saam om 'n **dagboek** te hou van die onderhoude en/of fotos wat ek neem
- Nee**, ek stem nie saam om 'n **dagboek** te hou van die onderhoude en/of fotos wat ek neem

Handtekening:

Datum:

APPENDIX 7: Photographic Triggers



(Facing Up, 2003)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Facing Up, 2004)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Facing Up, 2004)



(Facing Up, 2003)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Facing Up, 2003)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Facing Up, 2004)



(Galvaan, 2003)



(Facing Up, 2003)

University of Cape Town