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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES**

**DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

**An understanding of the collective experiences of unemployed  
people with disabilities engaged in an employment assisted  
programme in the Eastern Cape**

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DRKJUD001

A mini-thesis in partial fulfilment of the degree in  
Master of Science: Occupational Therapy

**May 2013**

SUPERVISOR: Prof. Theresa Lorenzo

**Dedication**

*Commitment is the one quality above all others that enables*

To REHAB (East London) and their clients with disabilities.

Promoting an inclusive society and, building networks toward social transformation in the workplace.

University of Cape Town

## Declaration

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Date: 27 May 2013

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The participants: I gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by all the participants in this study. Without them this journey would not have been possible.

My family, Randall, Jordan and Lilly: Thank you for your support in helping achieve this milestone. To my dad (and my late mom): Basil and Anna, for your love and encouragement.

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Margaret Irvine: A special thank you for talking me through the last hurdle, for having confidence in me and sharing your delightful humour.

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## Definition of terms

**Disability:** For the purpose of the study, the research focuses on the social model of disability, which defines disability as

‘A complex system of social restrictions imposed on people with impairments by a highly discriminatory society. Disability is a concept distinct from any particular medical condition. It is a social construct varying across culture and through time, in the same way as, for example gender, class, or caste...In this sense, disability as a policy issue becomes a cross-cutting social one, rather than something primarily associated with health and individual well-being’ (Albert, McBride, & Seddon, 2002:16)

**Social exclusion:** Regarded as a web of interrelated problems associated with poverty, discrimination, unemployment, ill health, skills development etc (Sayce, 2000)

**Social inclusion:** Ensuring people with disabilities enjoy “full and fair access to activities, social roles and relationships” as non-disabled people do (Bates and Davis, 2004:196)

**Social transformation:** A process of transforming the way disability is viewed by society by challenging the barriers that exist to prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society.

**Occupation:** Occupation ‘is everything people do to occupy themselves, including...contributing to the social and economic fabric of their societies (productivity)’ (CAOT, 2002:34)

**Impairment:** Refers to an individual’s condition which can include physical, sensory, intellectual or behavioural impairment (Coulson, Napier, & Matsebe, 2006)

**Work:** ‘Activity...paid labour...employment...an expression of what people do to be truly human...an expression of human purpose...is the basis of social life...confers sense of identity, status...adds value to life’ (Pratt and Jacobs 1997:4)

**Unemployed:** Having no job; people who are involuntarily out of work; joblessness; not in gainful employment; actively seeking work but unable to find work. (<http://www.google.co.za/search?hl> Accessed: 09/05/2010)

**Employability:** The ability to become employed within a particular labour market (Pratt and Jacobs, 1997:235)

## **Abstract**

Disability impacts one's life and many South African people with disabilities remain socially excluded as they are denied access to employment. This research study was conducted to understand the experiences of a group of people with disabilities who were engaged in an employment assisted programme (EAP) as a means of accessing the open labour market.

The Literature Review provided a rich theoretical base by giving an overview of the concepts underpinning disability related issues within the social context of employment in the open labour market. A qualitative research approach was followed using individual descriptive case studies as the research design. Five unemployed young people with disabilities, who engaged an EAP, participated in the research study. Semi-structured interviews contributed to the rich information regarding their experiences relating to engaging in the EAP. Informed consent was obtained to ensure voluntary participation by the participants.

Data was analysed using thematic content analysis. Four themes relating to each of the corresponding objectives emerged from the findings. The themes were:

Theme One: *Vehicle of progression*

This theme highlights the expectations held by the participants as they entered and engaged the EAP.

Theme Two: *Belonging in the world of work*

This theme captures the process of engagement in the EAP. It encapsulates the collective experiences which reflect coping factors, benefits and challenges encountered in the EAP.

Theme Three: *Active participation begins with me*

This theme reveals action taken by participants' to promote personal progress relating to expectations and challenges presented in the EAP.

Theme Four: *Advancing Quality of life*

The final theme provides an awareness of personal change within participants as a result of their journey through the EAP.

The EAP was a joint initiative between REHAB and a company in the retail sector to assist people with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities in the open labour market. This research created the space for people with disabilities to share their experiences with a broader readership concerning their pursuit of access to inclusive employment.

The information will benefit REHAB and other disability stakeholders such as employers in the East London business sector, Disabled Peoples' Organisations as well as the Premiers Office in the Eastern Cape Province, so as to inform future employment initiatives that would create access for people with disabilities.

The study findings hope to offer occupational therapists and related professionals working in the field of disability and employment, an appreciation for working with people with disabilities and a deeper understanding of their lived experiences and occupational choices.

Future publication of the research findings will aim at broadening the concept of enabling disabled people's participation in meaningful occupation and relevance to Occupational Therapy practice.

# CHAPTER ONE

## *THE STUDY IN CONTEXT*

### 1.1 Introduction

Disability changes one's life forever. It becomes a lifelong battle to overcome all obstacles and limitations one is faced with, and still rise to the challenge of daily living. However, we each have the choice of being a victim or a victor... (Lugli, 2009:10)

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The quotation by Lugli (2009), nearly fifty years after disability issues had been brought to the forefront by activists such as Goffman, is a reminder of how disability impacts one's life.

The concept disability, and accompanying discrimination and stigmatisation have their origins in deeply rooted biomedical perspectives (Goffman, 1963) which views disability through a medical lens. As long as this ideology persists in our society, people with disabilities will be expected to "come to terms" with an assumed disadvantage by "negotiating devalued roles" labelling them differently (Schneider, 2006:22). Stigmatisation and discrimination are considered unique barriers that feed widespread misconceptions and restrict public awareness about disability issues suggesting that the job-seeking behaviour of people with disabilities becomes limited, therefore restricting participation in realising employment goals (Barkey, Watanabe, Solomon, and Wilkins, 2009).

Many people with disabilities are excluded socially as they are denied equal access to opportunities in society (Diamant and Waterhouse, 2010). Being socially excluded means people with disabilities experience a myriad of interrelated challenges such as discrimination, stigmatisation, poverty, limited access to education, poor skills development as well as unemployment (Sayce, 2000).

The South African Constitution acknowledged inequalities enforced through discrimination related to disability, race, gender and religious beliefs (Constitution, 1996). The Census (2001) reported on the prevalence of disability in South Africa (Stats SA, 2005) highlighting economic disparities faced by people with disabilities.

The Commission for Employment Equity (Department of Labour 2003a) allocated a two percent representation target to people with disabilities in the open labour market. In South Africa, employment opportunities for people with disabilities are well below this target level. Significantly the Census report showed the intersectionality between gender and economic disparity; that “being disabled and female” is the category most affected by these economic disparities; disabled females having even less chance of being employed (Stats SA, 2005:22). The Census report contended that its findings lacked accuracy because people with disabilities felt devalued and socially excluded; and therefore denied their disability which resulted in many not being counted as disabled. The report also argued that since there were inaccuracies, findings could not be used for targeted interventions. The fact that disability research studies are lacking in South Africa, Sipuka (2011), counter-argued that the Census report findings should indeed be used for targeted interventions.

The former State President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, addressed the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, (INDS) (ODP, 1997) and called on South Africans to be more socially conscious and embrace the concept of a “caring society”. His statement sent out a strong message: “Recognise that disabled people enjoy the same rights as we do and that we have a responsibility towards the promotion of their quality of life” (ODP 1997: pi).

Social inclusion, as Sayce (2001:122) explained should promote “improved rights of access to the social and economic world, new opportunities, recovery of status and meaning and reduced impact of disability”. Addressing the needs of persons with disabilities, which includes social inclusion in the public arena, takes effort, commitment and leadership. Social inclusion calls for an integrated approach on multiple levels (Watson and Lagerdien, 2006), and the political mobilization of various social networks (Frank and Zemke, 2008).

In keeping with the global approach as recommended by the United Nations; to focus on employment and promote inclusive development, the South African government adopted a new legislative process with an improved policy framework as a proactive response towards equal employment opportunity for persons with

disabilities in South Africa (Engelbrecht & Lorenzo, 2010). These laws sought to redistribute wealth and redress employment opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities. Synergy between the White Paper for Integrated National Disability Strategy (ODP, 1997), the Employment Equity Act of 1998, the Skills Development Act (Dept. Of Labour, 2001) and supporting documentation (Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects of Disability) addressed equal opportunity, unfair labour practice and employability (Groener, 2006). Thomas & Hlahla (2002) raised concerns with regard to the employment of people with disabilities in South Africa, and cautioned against an expectation that employment legislation introduced in South Africa for the achievement of equitable opportunity would be quick in yielding the anticipated equity changes.

The aspiration of former State President Mbeki for people with disabilities to be socially accepted remains the same today, as the struggle continues in changing attitudinal barriers, improving the quality of life for people with disabilities, and ensuring they indeed become victors rather than remaining victims.

## **1.2 Background into disability perspective**

The international disability movement proposed that people with disabilities are not necessarily disabled as a result of their bodies, but through the discriminatory barriers that society erects, resulting in inadequate social awareness and perpetual social exclusion (Barkey et al., 2009). Researchers Alant and colleagues (2007) focused on disability issues in South Africa and concurred with Albert (2005), that disability is due to limitations imposed by social, cultural, economic and environmental barriers impacting people with disabilities in their communities. Taub and Fanflik (2000) found that people with disabilities, who are continually devalued, stigmatised and socially excluded, experience high unemployment rates, poverty, and lack educational and vocational training. The resultant effect on people with disabilities has been conceptualised as “learned helplessness” (Boshoff and Wolmarans, 1998:11).

Having researched economic challenges faced by black disabled women in South Africa, Sipuka (2011) drew a parallel between the developed and developing worlds.

Despite the economic strength of the United States as a developed country and the economic growth and service development of India as a developing country, both continue to experience unemployment challenges. People with disabilities remain excluded economically and, as in so many developing countries, women bear most of the cost of socio-economic exclusion (Sipuka, 2011).

As a developing country, South Africa has been lauded for its steady progress in economic growth by the International Investment community. This economic growth has been linked to employment development (The Presidency, 2005). Sadly development remains at a macro level, as people at grassroots have not yet reaped these benefits. The unemployment rate in South Africa remains very high and people with disabilities, like so many other unemployed South Africans, are unable to support themselves. Broader macroeconomic issues have highlighted the fact there are insufficient jobs for people in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2006).

I identify with the image depicted by the developed Vs developing country comparison. South Africa is developed and developing when one looks at the level of growth in the different provinces. The Western Cape Province may be considered more advanced in terms of its economic and services access as compared with a developing province such as the Eastern Cape Province which has a larger rural based population. Bank and Kamman (2010) found that 97% of the Eastern Cape migrants lived in Cape Town shacks, eagerly pursuing better housing and employment opportunities. The Eastern Cape Province experiences high volumes of people with disabilities (Stats South Africa, 2005) and high concentrations of poverty stricken households (Loeb, Eide, Jelsma, Ka Toni and Maart, 2008). Disability together with poverty, show a strong association with unemployment rates prevalent in South Africa especially in the Eastern Cape (Emmet, 2006).

I have lived in both provinces, and I have worked as an occupational therapist in the disability sector for the past 21years, engaging city and rural inhabitants with disabilities. This has allowed me to observe the disparities in accessibility of services and socio-economic development. Working in this field has developed and shaped

my perception of disability issues, particularly in working towards advancing social change and addressing employment issues.

### **1.3 The disability organisation**

I worked for REHAB, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the Eastern Cape Province, which provides a service to people with disabilities from various neighbouring communities, especially township settlements. The mission and vision of REHAB is to promote social inclusion and integration of people with disabilities into society. REHAB offered a volunteer outreach programme for people with disabilities registered on the REHAB employment database. People with disabilities met regularly to discuss various disability related issues and received and shared information in disability awareness and community development, which include job preparation and negotiating for employment access in the workplace. REHAB is a disability stakeholder within the disability sector in the Eastern Cape responsible for implementing strategies and promoting mainstream economic activity for people with disabilities.

I chose this study because I hope the findings will be utilised in strengthening employment equity policy and interventions planned for persons with disabilities. I hope to ensure the research findings filter into other organisations for people with disabilities, the government Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Disabled People, the Premiers Office in the province, making a difference in the Eastern Cape business sector.

### **1.4 The Employment - Assisted Programme (EAP)**

REHAB embraced different innovative strategies in assisting people with disabilities; seeking to develop their skills and helping them access the employment sector. In 2009, REHAB introduced an employment challenge for the Eastern Cape public and private business sector. By using this strategy, REHAB hoped to promote inter-sectoral partnerships with local employers willing to implement employment equity policy and work towards transforming employment equity. The purpose of engaging a group of unemployed people with disabilities in an employment assisted

programme (EAP) as a means of accessing job opportunities was in keeping with developing integration and social inclusion.

The EAP was a joint employment training programme with an employer in the private sector, aimed at developing the skills of people with disabilities, facilitating access to the workplace and, creating a pathway to economic empowerment. The EAP drew on some of the core principles of other employment models such as the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), the Supported Employment (SE), and the Transitional Employment (TE) models (Pratt and Jacobs, 1997; Bond, 2004). Like these service models aimed at facilitating access into employment, the EAP attempted to improve work abilities and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The EAP differed from learnership programmes established by the South African government. The nationally accredited learnership system based on the Skills Development Act, Act No 97 of 1998 (Dept. Of Labour, 2001), is a work-based, dual vocational-training model. The 12-month learnership programmes offer a structured, theoretical learning component with relevant practical on-the-job training in the workplace. Candidates receive a nationally recognised occupational certificate linked to a qualification registered with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (W&RSETA, 2012). Learnerships are only recognised if workplace skills development accompanies on-the-job practice. The quality of the learnership system is overseen by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (W&RSETA, 2012). The learnership programme is a formal contract arrangement between the learner and the employer and includes a learnership agreement between the employer and an approved training or service provider (providing the theoretical training).

The EAP in the context of this study was not an accredited, SETA approved learnership. It did not include a structured theoretical component; most of the training was practical on-the-job training done by the host company affiliated to the wholesale and retail sector. The training period was six months and, while the participants signed a learnership agreement with the employer, this did not represent a contract as prescribed through the Skills Development Act (Dept. of Labour, 2001).

The main difference being the participants in this study did not qualify for the nationally (SETA approved) recognised occupational qualification; instead they received a certificate from the employer acknowledging the training and employment experience.

In implementing the EAP within the private sector, REHAB hoped to promote people with disabilities as a viable labour source, encourage collaboration with a host company in the open labour market in order to facilitate entry of persons with disabilities into the job market and at the same time boost employment policy and employment equity in South Africa. This research may provide additional advantage by creating awareness of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) and their role in supporting employees with disabilities and their employers in the open labour market which would encourage employers to recognise and value learnership programmes.

### **1.5 Research Problem**

The experience of disability 'is not a random occurrence, but is strongly patterned by social and economic circumstances' (Burchardt, 2003:64). The majority of people with disabilities, who come to REHAB for assistance, have no work experience and therefore no work history. Many have not finished formal schooling and subsequently are unskilled. The majority of the people with disabilities who are known to REHAB, have experienced the cumulative effect of exclusion (unemployment, social discrimination, isolation and poverty) which compounds their disablement and renders them unlikely candidates for opportunities in the labour market.

Despite policy guidelines facilitating the integration of disability issues, unemployed people with disabilities continue to struggle to "occupy their equal and rightful place in society" (Howell, Chalklen, and Alberts 2006:47). Now, more than a decade after the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) was introduced in South Africa, public and private organisations are beginning to view the issue of disability equity more seriously, albeit passively rather than actively. Changing attitudes towards disability in the workplace has remained a key element in transforming the perspective of the various employment partners in our society (Alant, Emmett, and Samuels, 2007; Opperman, 2009).

Alant et al. (2007), urges prospective researchers to prioritise the availability of work opportunities and job support to enhance social awareness and inclusion, to impact economic advancement of people with disabilities.

## 1.6 Research Question

This study proposed to address the social transformation process regarding employment equity for people with disabilities.

Therefore the research question was:

- What potential benefits or harms does an EAP hold for people with disabilities, as a means of gaining access to opportunities in the open labour market?

## 1.7 Aim of the study

To gain an understanding of the individual experiences of a group of unemployed people with disabilities as they actively engage an EAP as a means of accessing job opportunities in the open labour market.

## 1.8 Study Objectives

1. To identify the expectations identified by the participants *at the start of their engagement* of the EAP
2. To explore the different facets the participants encounter during the employment assisted programme, namely what they see as:
  - a. facilitating factors for engaging in the EAP;
  - b. perceived benefits and,
  - c. challenges of participating in an EAP
3. To explore the participants' personal actions taken to promote their progress relating to aforementioned challenges
4. To describe the changes experienced by the participants, relating to their experiences in the EAP

## 1.9 Purpose of study

This study addressed the social transformation process regarding employment equity for people with disabilities striving towards inclusive employment. The overall purpose was to understand the experiences of a group of unemployed people with disabilities, as they actively engaged an EAP as a means of accessing job opportunities in the open labour market. The concept of engaging an EAP was a unique experience for each participant; each experience was viewed as an embedded unit (Yin, 2003).

This study draws on the understanding that meaning is derived from social constructs and that people are a source of meaning (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon 2003). In this context, the study concerned itself with the “understanding of human nature”; understanding the participants and the “nature of their transactions with themselves and their surroundings” (Polit and Hungler, 1987: 349), as they engaged the EAP.

In striving for inclusive employment, the purpose of the study aimed to have an impact in three ways. First, the findings of the study will contribute to the body of knowledge of existing employment assisted strategies as interventions aimed at advancing human development and potential for occupational enrichment. Second, these findings will influence the practice of REHAB and occupational therapists working in this field. Third, the findings will inform the implementation of Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998 at local government level, and improve service delivery in public and private work sector.

## 1.10 Significance of the research study

The International Day of Disabled People serves to remind South Africans of the daily challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Many people with disabilities still feel marginalised. A local Eastern Cape newspaper featured a story that expressed the realities of having a disability:

We are always last in line for everything, especially jobs...we get told that they (employers) are not charities'. 'We are not treated the same because of this stigma'. How does society ever expect us to make a living for ourselves, if this is its attitude? (Tyhatyha & Dyani, 2011)

This study supports two assumptions in creating and constructing knowledge. First, a person's subjective experiences are real, which warrants serious consideration and second, as we engage people, listen to them and ask them about their experiences, we are able to explore their constructed reality and understand their lived experience (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 1999). Similarly, Maree (2007) wrote about the experiences, the voices of participants and their stories being the avenue through which reality could be explored and known. This approach, focusing on people's constructed reality reflects the paradigm which underpinned this study.

Insight into everyday occupation, which is inherently linked to human identity development, needs to be addressed and appreciated. In promoting the development of occupational and social participation of people with disabilities, and advancing quality of life, consideration needs to be given to the complexity of societal-disability related intersections. This is important in advancing social change and addressing disability and poverty issues in South Africa (Emmet, 2006).

According to the Canadian Labour Congress (2008), many persons with disabilities are still being refused work opportunities because of impairment. Ross (2007) writes that despite legislative progress, persons with disabilities continue to encounter stigma and discrimination and fewer opportunities in securing employment. The Canadian Labour Congress (2008) reasons that diminished access and support within the workplace is considered a primary reason for the exclusion and marginalisation of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, many people with disabilities have a desire to work, and are very capable but they are prevented from securing employment opportunities due to physical and attitudinal barriers (Canadian Labour Congress, 2008) which impact their 'job-seeking behaviours' (Barkey et al., 2009:270).

Sipuka (2011) noted that African academic resources pertaining to disability and employment are not well documented. Similarly, Priestley (2006), urged fellow researchers to strengthen the body of knowledge of disability issues in Southern Africa with locally resourced data.

Engelbrecht (2006), a qualified Occupational Therapist, focused her research on the experiences of people with disabilities relating to their work experience at a company

in the Western Cape, South Africa. She was employed at this company as a Human Resource manager and as such recruited and engaged directly with the employees with disabilities.

I believe that the background of my research topic held similarities with that of Engelbrecht (2006). I had been employed at REHAB since 2008 as a community development / employment liaison, I felt familiar with my participants, and could select appropriate candidates for the study. I viewed the employment placement programme at REHAB as providing similar exposure to the concepts of disability and work, especially the ability to access work in the open labour market. I chose to emulate the following recommendations set out by Engelbrecht (2006:90/91) in order to contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to disability and work in a South African context:

- Promote people with disabilities as a viable labour source by using an EAP to facilitate the gradual integration into the workforce
- Promote the desirability of inclusion and integration of people with disability in the workplace as perceived by people with disabilities themselves
- Promote Disabled People's Organisations (DPO) and their role in collaborating with companies in the open labour market in order to facilitate entry of persons with disabilities into the job market.

### **1.11 Summary of Chapter One**

This chapter introduces the research study by giving a brief perspective of disability in relation to South African policy and the legislative framework. The chapter continued by introducing the reader to the limitations imposed on people with disabilities which impact their ability to participate in society. The chapter then shared information about a disability organisation and the EAP which forms part of the contextual background of this research study. It then introduced the research problem, outlined the aim, set out study objectives and, concluded by talking about the significance of this study in the context of South African research. In Chapter Two, the Literature Review, I present an overview of the concepts underpinning disability related issues within the social context of employment in the open labour market.

# CHAPTER TWO

## *LITERATURE REVIEW*

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter Two gives an outline of the literature that informed my knowledge and understanding as well as insight into the concepts related to the purpose of the study. This chapter follows the set of objectives which guide this study: exploring the active engagement of a group of unemployed people with disabilities in an EAP who wish to access jobs in the open labour market. Accessing employment and social inclusion is fraught with a myriad of challenges as depicted below.

### **2.2 The Intersectionality of Disability**

The term intersectionality in this context, relates to the challenges pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities. Intersectionality, conceptualizes the interrelationships of the various psycho-social–emotional-political–economic discriminations impacting disability. People with disabilities are human beings and are therefore social beings. As part of society, they should be allowed to experience fluid and multiple identities (Yuval-Davis, 2006); appreciated for their particularity, diversity and differences (Groenhout, 2004:32). Intersectionality intends to show the challenges people with disabilities have to navigate as a minority group in society. Intersectionality of disability demonstrates there is not only one form of oppression but a ‘layered blanket’ of interwoven oppressions (Yuval-Davis, 2006:196/197) people with disabilities have to navigate when accessing employment.

Perceptions that underpin disability have their origin rooted in the ideologies that dictate how society relates to disability issues and they influence the sense of value assigned to disabled persons. Yet, people with disabilities persevere, challenging existing bias and prejudice, pursuing economic opportunity, social progress and human rights in an attempt to connect with others and fit into society.

### **2.2.1 Ideologies and Disabilities**

There is a close relationship between poverty and disability...disability exacerbates and creates poverty by increasing isolation and economic strain...little doubt that disabled people are amongst the poorest in poor countries (Coleridge, 1993:64)

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The medical model of disability, a dominant ideology stems from a deeply rooted biomedical approach, portraying disability through a medical lens (Goffman, 1963). This model focuses on impairment; that which is medically wrong with the person (who requires a medical solution) thereby reducing disability to the person's physical, psychological and or neurological deficiency (Albert, 2005; Soudien & Baxen, 2006).

The underlying ethical assumption is care; a relationship within society based on caring for a person with a medically defined impairment. An Ethics of Care approach responds to those in society considered as vulnerable, a concept that Groenhout (2004:15) considered an "oppressive social construct". The medical impairment as the disabling factor leaves the person with an assumed disadvantage labelling them different, and having to "negotiate devalued social roles" (Schneider, 2006:22). This results in people with disabilities facing "economic strain" (Coleridge, 1993:64) and being on the socio-economic periphery (Sipuka, 2011).

The social model of disability is the school of thought put forth by the international disability movement which argues that it is "society that disables people through negative attitudes, environmental barriers and institutional discrimination" (Stone, 2001:51). This results in people with disabilities being socially excluded, impacting negatively on their participation in socio-economic activity in the community. This model draws the understanding of disability away from the concept of an individual impairment issue towards a social context; that disability functions within environmental and social constraints (Davis, 2007). The underlying ethical assumption is based on justice and rights which underpins a moral theory of justice and, contrasts the Ethics of Care approach (Gilligan, 1982; Baier, 2005:245). This ethical approach can be seen as a form of political challenge against the oppression and exclusion of disabled people (as vulnerable others) from full humanity ensuring that they become socially accepted and included in society (Baier, 2005:247).

An underlying assumption of the social model paradigm is based on a perceived problem between the impaired person and the labour market. Berthoud (2008) was of the mind that employers are reluctant to employ people with disabilities due to ignorance of their capability or, unwillingness in adapting labour practices to accommodate the needs of potential employees with disabilities. The resulting implication is that disability is associated with poor job prospects (Berthoud, 2008). Driving this ideology, says Davis (2007) is a rights issue philosophy based on the premise that it is society that has an obligation to assist those with a disability. The relationship between ethics and politics from a social justice perspective, deals with moral dilemmas using principles of rights and obligations. In this type of social model approach, legislation is the moral guarantors for individualised rights and responsibilities (Sevenhuijsen, 2000).

Davis (2007) stated that corporate social responsibility perpetuates the social model and encapsulates rights issues. She contended that when change is propelled by rights, government legislation and compliance, the result is procedures and policy rules that ensure obligations are met. As Davis puts it, this lends itself to the idea that the social model is prescriptive. A set of rules and regulations prescribed by policy defines requirements for both technical and percentage levels. This results in ramps, building codes, signage etc., being put in place, or it amounts to the total percentage cap spaces for people with disabilities in employment sectors which demonstrates these regulations are motivated by social expectations and translated by politicians (Davis, 2007). There is also argument pointing to the shortcomings of the social model in that social change is spurred on by the issue of rights and compliance which is ultimately considered a “cost that society demands of a business” (Davis, 2007).

Another observation that Davis (2007) made about disability was the nature of change that took place when the focus shifted from the medical model of disability to the social model of disability. Her impression was, although the social model contextualised attitudinal change and improved environmental accessibility, the essence of embracing a person with a disability as a citizen of economic potential and value had not yet sufficiently been addressed.

This echoes the sentiment by Coleridge (1993) who spoke of people with disabilities facing poverty and being economically isolated in society.

The perception of disability has influenced the link between poverty and disability highlighting how thinking in society has been structured and, how we relate to disability. Disabled People South Africa (DPSA, 2001) linked with Coleridge’s view in relating their understanding of the economic model of disability. They are of the opinion this ideology also isolates people with disabilities from society and in particular, from the economic community. The perception confirms the inclusion of people with disabilities as an additional cost to the employer to ensure among other adjustments, accessibility in the workplace (DPSA, 2001). This appears similar to economists viewing impairment as a form of negative human capital which reduces the value of people with disabilities to employers (Berthoud 2008). This thinking can be linked to the medical model which focuses on the disabled individual’s impairment; maintaining that the limitations they have reduces their “productivity potential and limits job opportunity” (Berthoud, 2008:132).

In Table 1 Davis (2007) outlined her view and interpretation of the medical, social and economic models of disability. The economic model portion has been slightly adapted in this study context to represent more of an employment perspective. Highlighted areas are the ones which have been adjusted.

**Table 1:** A comparative view of the medical-social-economic models of disability

Medical	Social	Economic
PERSONAL Problem	SOCIAL issue	DEMAND Issue
Medical care	Social integration	Economic Integration
Individual Treatment	Social action	<b>Value &amp; Potential development</b>
Professional help	Individual and collective social responsibility	Innovation in design and function <b>within employment sector</b>
Personal adjustment	Environmental manipulation	Universal <b>employee</b> design
Behaviour	Attitude <b>change</b>	Culture <b>of employability</b>
Ethics of Care	Human rights approach	Competitive advantage
Health care policy	Politics	<b>Economic contribution</b>
Individual Adaptation	Social change	<b>Social</b> Inclusion

(Adapted from Davis, 2007)

Davis (2007), an advocate of disability issues, speaks from a business perspective. She wrote that disability needs redefining in terms of an economic approach; to view disability as (a person with) a different level of ability. The economic model of disability should be an expansion of the social model concept, driven by the needs of the potential employee with a disability rather than satisfying the need for social justice alone. In the final summation of an evolving model of disability, Davis (2007) contends that society should not concentrate so much on the disability aspect.

As a researcher working in the context of disability and employment, I tend to agree the focus should rather be directed towards the needs, abilities and skills of a potentially employable person with a disability in an employee focused environment while continuing to work towards environmental change and social inclusion. The journey of many people with disabilities however is loaded with various layers of vulnerability.

### **2.2.2 Vulnerabilities of Disability**

Barnes and Oliver (1995) highlighted the associations of prejudice, ignorance and stigma with disability. According to Taub and Fanflik (2000), people with disabilities are still often devalued, stigmatised and discriminated against; equal access to opportunities are denied and they continue to be socially excluded (Diamant and Waterhouse, 2010). There are various contributing aspects influencing vulnerabilities of disability.

#### *2.2.2.1 The socio-emotional-familial aspect*

Being socially excluded means people with disabilities experience a myriad of interrelated difficulties and vulnerabilities such as discrimination, ill health, poor skills development, poverty as well as unemployment (Sayce, 2000). Furthermore “economic disadvantage” is noted as a crucial component of the social position of disabled persons (Berthoud, 2008:129). The effects of disability are felt by the individual with a disability as well as their family, as disability is not an isolated incident. Brett (2002:830) observed parents of disabled children often experience “disablement by proxy” implying the child’s burden of impairment is transplanted onto

them. Consequently, the experiences of disablement are characterised by the physical and socio-emotional strain of raising a disabled child. Parents continuously face societal assumptions such as a disabled child has poor potential; they are incapable of achieving anything, even the expectation of having a job may seem out of reach. Initially families may conceal the disability status of a child; parents feel disempowered when challenging negative attitudes, constantly judged and pressurised they feel powerless and vulnerable (Brett, 2002). People with disabilities who lead lengthy “disability oriented lifestyles” also appear to find it difficult to adapting to work and, are unable to realise their potential as workers due to a phenomenon called the “disability syndrome” (Hanson-Mayer, 1984 in Engelbregt, 2006:77).

In addition to familial vulnerability, (Sipuka, 2011) points to the the education system lacking capacity to prepare people with disabilities for economic participation. His view is that the special schools in South Africa catering for people with disabilities are ‘protectionist’ systems (p52) that isolate, restrict, and have insufficient resources to prepare people with disabilities for participation in the mainstream economy. Persons with disabilities (and families) in South Africa may be even more vulnerable to poverty because of complex, intertwined socio-economic and political barriers linked to the social destruction caused by apartheid (Watson and Lagerdien, 2004; Alant, Emmett and Samuels, 2007). This is reflected by Shuaib Chalklen (and colleagues), himself a person with a disability as a result of political violence on the Cape Flats.

*Under apartheid, the experiences of disabled people were also the experiences of a deeply divided people living in a profoundly unequal society...for the majority of black disabled people, their lives were about struggling on a daily basis to cope with poverty, deprivation and violence of the apartheid system, a struggle compounded by their disability...also of importance is that both black and white disabled people had limited access to fundamental socio-economic rights such as employment, education, appropriate health and welfare services (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006:42)*

Stone (2001) captured the perpetual relationship between poverty and disability cautioning that people with disabilities were at risk to falling into a trap of deprivation.

Poverty and unemployment present huge challenges. Occupational Therapists Lorenzo, Van Niekerk, and Mdlokolo (2007) reflected on the economic empowerment of black people with disabilities in Cape Town pointing out the dynamism between poverty and disability. Poverty is seen as “a direct social cause of disability” (p429), while disability is viewed as aggravating poverty. In their study on developing the entrepreneurial skills of people with disabilities, Van Niekerk, Lorenzo, and Mdlokolo, (2006) suggested that support services for skills development and employment opportunities were scarce. They have been concerned about the upliftment and economic empowerment of people with disabilities and collaborated with Disabled People South Africa to highlight partnerships with disabled entrepreneurs. Many people (including disabled persons) were not afforded the “dignity of economic independence” (Van Niekerk *et al.*, p324).

*Our parents struggle for us to go to varsity so that we can rescue them out of poverty, and yet...we don't get proper jobs...we are asked for more than five years experience. Where must we get that? I speak from my own pain...I am unemployed (Madlavu, 2012)*

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Employment opportunity; being able to participate and contribute in the open labour market so as to achieve some measure of economic empowerment could assist in countering the effect of poverty and deprivation (Engelbrecht, 2006).

#### 2.2.2.2 *The economic aspect*

Current statistics show that South Africa has a population of approximately 51.77 million people. The Eastern Cape Province has the third highest population of 6 829 958 million people; 13.50% (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Statistics also show that ethnic Black and Coloured South Africans account for 30 and 23 percent (respectively) of the unemployed as compared to 5 percent unemployed White South Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

The National Census of 2001 estimated that in South Africa there were 2.25 million people with disabilities. This figure then represented 5.3 percent of the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2003). Looking at this percentage within the recently tabulated estimates for the South African population, would mean that 6.7 million people in South Africa have a disability. Emmet (2006) refers to a CASE

survey report by Schneider, et al., (1999) which showed that the Eastern Cape Province was one of three provinces in South Africa with the highest concentration of families living in poverty. Considering the Eastern Cape has the third highest population, it is most likely this province would still have one of the highest unemployment levels. Emmet (2006) reported that the Eastern Cape also had the highest prevalence for disability in the country. An Eastern Cape newspaper highlighted the plight of local unemployed graduates reflecting the Eastern Cape Province having the third highest unemployment rate in the country of 28% (Go & Express, June 2012).

Employment rates for disabled people are lower, compared to the rest of the population, indicating that many people with disabilities are unemployed. Recent information from Statistics South Africa does not reflect an official unemployment rate for people with disabilities in South Africa. The 11<sup>th</sup> Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report however shows that people with disabilities only account approximately for approximately 0.83 percent of the total number of employees in the country. This report mentions that 60 percent of these employed citizens with disabilities are employed in a semi-skilled, unskilled or temporary work as reported by employers (Department of Labour, 2011).

#### *2.2.2.3 The democratic - governance aspect*

In a paper by Emmet (2006), it was reported that people with disabilities have lower educational and literacy levels. In developing countries, such as South Africa, high disability rates have been linked to unemployment and lower occupational mobility (Yeo, 2001). Access to services such as infrastructure and employment has led to an increase in people migrating across the Eastern Cape borders into the Western Cape in search of better prospects (Bank and Kamman, 2010). They found that the households in the Eastern Cape have become poorer due to unemployed people migrating and relocating permanently in the Cape Province. According to Loeb *et al.*, (2008:318) disability grants provided by the South African government have significantly “equalised the living conditions” for families where there is a person with a disability present. Maistry and Vasi (2010) reported that people with disabilities in the Eastern Cape Province were receiving the most disability grant payments, with

Port Elizabeth and East London (34 000 and 20 000 recipients respectively) receiving the most payments. Loeb *et al.*, (2008:319) however contend despite having this financial resource of a disability grant, people with disabilities still have limited access to education and employment opportunities which “exacerbates the problem and perpetuates the need and dependency on grants”. They propose that people with disabilities be afforded better access to services and socio-economic opportunities as a means of equalising their living conditions and promoting social inclusion.

People with disabilities may become overwhelmed by the stresses of job searching which may cause them to develop ambivalent feelings’ towards job-seeking (Stopford, 1987:8). Furthermore, the oppression of disability may lead to the experience of low self esteem and poor self-confidence which according to Wordsworth (2004) may result in people with disabilities not being able to negotiate for potential work opportunities, or be persistent or assertive enough in their efforts to find work. Loeb *et al.*, (2008) showed concern for people with disabilities who seem to fare worse than people without disabilities in terms of completing their education and finding employment despite evidence showing their monthly income appears to be higher than that of unemployed people without disabilities. These concerns remain a reality for many unemployed people (especially persons with disabilities) living in South Africa. The concern stems from failure in democratic governance and what Dr Mamphela Ramphele (*Mail & Guardian*, June 2012) calls “system failure in four core functions – education, health, safety and security, and employment creation” (p33). Dr Ramphele’s comments address the “wounded” in our South African society.

*“South Africans, black and white...deeply wounded by the legacy of racism, sexism and engineered inequality over the past three centuries’. The majority of black people suffer from a deep seated inferiority...the humiliation of being told that one is inferior is deeply wounding. Failure to transform our education, health and social development systems is generating poverty and inequality...a threat to any society. Our low levels of economic growth and the unsustainably high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth (60%), are a direct result of these failures. The devastating impact of these failures on our human capital, undermines our ability to compete in today’s economic environment” (p33).*

People with disabilities have also been affected by a historic legacy of disabilism, a legacy that has also made them feel inferior in society and most likely 'deeply wounded'. People with disabilities in South Africa continue to compete in a labour market plagued by high unemployment rates with a few people with disabilities securing employment only. People with disabilities are reported to have lower economic value in the employment sector (Berthoud, 2008) since they are viewed as "objects of pity and charity" resulting in them being on the economic periphery of society (Sipuka, 2011:40). When the poverty of disablement denies the realisation of human potential and personal fulfilment, collective efforts are required to assist people in realising their capabilities (Watson, 2004).

Boshoff and Wolmarans (1998), in their study on the employment of adults with disabilities, highlighted barriers associated with unemployment, underemployment and poverty. These include poor basic education, limited work skills and work experience and, a lack of adequate job training available to people with disabilities, therefore diminishing their employability. These South African researchers, having an interest in disability and why employment numbers for people with disabilities are low, stated that societal ignorance of someone's potential with a disability to be productive and make a meaningful contribution to the economy, plays a role in people with disabilities not being afforded employment opportunities. Another barrier they identified refers to employers who have negative attitudes and who remain critical about employing people with disabilities. This is important when advocating the employment sector becomes more compliant with employment equity legislation and adopt a "proactive and planned approach" when employing people with disabilities (Wordsworth, 2003:144).

In this study the issue of intersectionality relates to understanding expectations people with disabilities may have regarding employment in the open labour market, as well as the challenges they faced during the EAP. Addressing employment equity in South Africa within the context of disability one needs to view available policy frameworks.

### **2.3 A new policy framework to address inclusion**

In 1994, as the United Nations adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (UN, 1994), the South African government began a new legislative process to redress the inequalities of the apartheid regime. Of particular importance was the redress of disadvantages in employment opportunities for designated groups including people with disabilities. South Africa as a developing country has one of the largest percentages of people with disabilities; the Eastern Cape Province alone has nearly 3 million people with disabilities receiving government disability grants (Maistry and Vasi, 2010).

The new South African constitutional policy framework, paved the way towards incorporating the needs of people with disabilities by introducing and developing legislation and policy in South Africa. The South African Constitution (1996) called for the integration of people with disabilities into society, acknowledging their right to employment (Howell, Chalklen and Alberts, 2006). An important objective of the South African Constitution calls for the creation of conditions to broaden the range of employment options and to provide people with disabilities with real opportunities of occupational choice relating to employment (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005). The introduction of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) (Department of Labour, 1998) along with the Skills Development Act (Department of Labour, 2001) call for employers to create the capacity for skills development and workplace learning by providing training and support to designated groups including people with disabilities (Jain, 2002). The role of the employer in transforming the workplace should be to promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination (Department of Labour, 2003b). Reflecting on the poor representation of people with disabilities in the workforce, Wordsworth (2004:80) feels that employment legislation influences the decision making of employers to recruit people with disabilities. It remains a challenge for many employers to comply with the Employment Equity legislation. Redressing employment equity is driven by rights and legislation which prescribes to the employment sector laws impacting on work environments (Davis, 2007).

Employment legislation stipulates that people with disabilities should be included in the employment market. Section 3.2 of the EEA (Department of Labour, 1998)

proposes that it is the decision of the employer to negotiate the employment of people with disabilities by adhering to legislative policy in order to create inclusive workspaces and embrace diversity in the workplace. Affording equal rights for people with disabilities says Jashnani (2011:48) is “a challenge that spans the value stream from education to employment through society”. As a disability services co-ordinator in Bangalore, India, she contended that proper sensitization at a “social level, at educational institutions and the corporate, coupled with policies, infrastructural support and best practices can help create an inclusive society” (p48). Carelse (2012), a manager in the recruitment industry, encouraged companies looking to recruit people with disabilities, to be flexible and supportive. According to her views on job opportunities for people with disabilities in South Africa, sensitization programmes need to be part of corporate and Human Resource strategies; to accommodate the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.

The Employment Equity legislation in South Africa promotes equal opportunity for people with disabilities and the right to fair access to work opportunity. This includes ensuring that environmental barriers such as physical and especially attitudinal barriers do not keep people with disabilities from working (Swartz and Schneider, 2006). According to Thomas & Hlahla (2002), employment legislation introduced in South Africa which promotes equal opportunity for people with disabilities making a contribution in line with their experience, capability and skills, has not yielded the anticipated equity changes of effective transformation.

Alant *et al.*, (2007:35) state South Africa has a strong commitment to “multisectoral development” and intervention that supports inclusive social development. Contributing to this is the advanced employment policy and strong disability lobby. Looking at the current rate of employment for people with disabilities however, one wonders why people with disabilities are still being discriminated against in the employment sector, raising concerns about the development and interventions that are effective in favouring social inclusion. According to Orton (2011) employability without employment does not make sense; work opportunities need to be available.

The outcome of the research by Alant *et al.*, (2007) revealed while there are employment policies in place as well as a developmental mandate, there remains a gap between policy and implementation. Their research recommends disability organisations be more proactive in working towards inclusive strategies for people with disabilities to be included in mainstream economy.

In this study the policy framework addressing inclusion relates to the objective of understanding the different facets the participants encountered whilst on the EAP, including the facilitating factors, perceived benefits and challenges of the EAP. For many people with disabilities the rite of passage into the employment sector remains inaccessible.

## **2.4 The process of transitioning and transforming towards inclusive employment**

Wordsworth (2004:80) wrote “legislation is an important mechanism available to government” to redress the inequality and imbalance concerning opportunities available to people with disabilities in the employment sector. The Employment Equity Act of 1998 and supporting documentation such as the Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities (Department of Labour, 2003b) was introduced specifically to address the transition of people with disabilities from unemployment to the transformation of inclusive employment.

In his study which focuses on “hiring people for their skills and not their disabilities” Wordsworth (2004:138) found that employees with disabilities represented less than one percent in the open labour market, confirmed also by the Commission for Employment Equity (2011) which shows people with disabilities continue to remain underrepresented in the workforce. Wordsworth (2004) contends employment equity legislation is a barrier to employment when noting it as “a factor that impacts on the decision of organisations to employ people with disabilities” (p80).

Thomas and Hlahla (2002) researched factors influencing employment of people with disabilities in South Africa. They propose employers fail to comply with employment equity legislation due to inadequacies in the law. They maintain Employment Equity legislation is not disability specific; the primary focus is to eliminate unfair discrimination against designated groups to include women, youth

and persons with disabilities. Despite the introduction of the Code of Good Practice to support the EEA (Department of Labour, 1998), Wordsworth (2004) found that some of the well established business organisations in South Africa were not familiar with this supportive documentation intended to assist specifically in the employment of people with disabilities. Thomas and Hlahla (2002) also raised the issue of the EEA (Department of Labour, 1998) focusing on affirmative action and satisfying targets while overlooking available talent and skills of those with disabilities. Another point they raised was that of limited technical or financial support in meeting the requirements of employment equity, stating that the South African labour department offered limited financial assisted subsidies for limited periods to companies training people with disabilities (Thomas and Hlahla, 2002). Furthermore, employers who fail to comply with the employment equity legislation may opt to pay monetary fines levied by the government instead, especially if this costs less than accommodating a person with a disability (Thomas and Hlahla, 2002). Supporting this view Davis (2007:2) mentions the associated expenses of infrastructure, training, and learning materials are seldom regarded as assets which lead to an “economic return or competitive advantage”.

The Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005) reported legislation for employment equity aimed to create an appropriate context for developing skills, and encouraging people with disabilities to move away from a dependency on social welfare to more economically viable occupations. Further suggestions by the Development Bank (2005), referred to youth with disabilities often found finding it difficult and challenging transitioning from school to work. Societal barriers which include discrimination and prejudice, limited environmental access, poor financial resources, and fewer employment opportunities affects transitioning (Lloyd and Waghorn, 2007; Maja *et al.*, 2011). Despite public and private sector programmes which are designed to promote inclusive social environments, proper and effective employment equity remains lacking (Wordsworth, 2004). For this reason, there appears to be a growing need to encourage and facilitate transition initiatives in order to assist people with disabilities gain entry to the employment market (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 2005).

Employment equity from economic and business perspectives suggests hiring people for their abilities, rather than their disabilities (Wordsworth, 2004). He makes reference to Turton (2001), saying part of the transformation process lies in recognising the role welfare benefit systems play and, understanding this is an important element in keeping people with disabilities from transitioning to the open labour market. People with disabilities can choose between wanting to work or relying on the social welfare grant provided by the State. The disability grant is awarded by the state via the South African social security system (Department of Social Development, 2004). The disability grant, while it provides a means of financial support, is viewed as a household impediment to job searching (Swartz and Schneider, 2006; Engelbrecht, 2006; Loeb et al., 2008).

Engelbrecht (2006) used her Occupational Therapy and Human Resources knowledge to conduct a qualitative study in Cape Town and highlight the experience of people with disabilities employed in the open labour market. The study focused on a company in the Temporary Employment Services sector, where seventy percent of the employed were people with disabilities, showing the company's commitment to the transitioning of people with disabilities into the workplace. Her study revealed this company had been sensitised towards disability issues by promoting disability awareness within the community through their diversity of employees. Employing people with different impairments over a number of years had allowed the company to gain "extensive knowledge and experience in disability employment" (p71). The company's field of specialisation as a "conduit" (p40) allowed people with disabilities entrance and transition to the open labour market.

English researchers and Occupational Therapists Bisiker & Millinchip (2007) showed the value of "identifying a pathway" (p260), a graded transition for people with disabilities to enter the workplace. Their study aimed at assisting people with disabilities seeking employment revealed the success of people with neurological impairments transitioning from a rehabilitation environment via supported employment or voluntary employment into paid employment. A key factor for people with disabilities transitioning into the workplace was that they received an income enabling economic transformation (Engelbrecht and Lorenzo (2010).

Farrell and Bryant (2009a) presented an example of transitional entry into the employment sector in their study concerning voluntary work opportunities for adults with mental health problems in England. The authors suggested engaging people with disabilities in an employment strategy (such as a volunteering placement programme), could be an effective way of overcoming negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. They maintain the positive experience of recruitment and opportunity for participation assists in combating negative attitudes and enables “meaningful contribution to society” for those with disabilities (Farrell and Bryant, 2009b:195). Opportunity to work adds value to a person’s sense of self, develops self efficacy, and influences attitudes and personal goal setting (Strong, 1998).

Having the ambition to work as a life priority is a powerful factor that mobilises a person to make plans and take action to gain work. The decision to employ people with disabilities demands decisiveness from various role players and partnerships to ensure that social transformation includes people with disabilities.

This section of this study related to the objectives that highlight potential facilitating factors assisting participants in finding employment. Working with people with disabilities in a framework of disability and employment necessitates partnerships between various service providers to secure support for a more inclusive enabling place in society (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2006).

## **2.5 Social support enabling participation of people with disabilities**

In defining social inclusion, Le Boutillier and Croucher (2010) referred to Sayce (2001:122) who views it as accessibility to the social and economic world, new opportunities, re-establishing meaning and reduced impact of disability, which affords a sense of belonging and support. In order to create job opportunities for people with disabilities, interaction between the general public and people with disabilities need to be promoted to encourage a positive attitudinal shift towards social inclusion.

A study done by Boshoff and Wolmarans (1998) targeted the limited work experience and job skills faced by people with disabilities in a suburb in Pretoria, South Africa.

The aim of the study was to determine the attitudes of prospective employers (residents in a community) towards employing people with disabilities as gardeners. Eighty percent showed overwhelming support for people with disabilities taking up employment, agreeing they should be afforded employment opportunity in the community.

The community supported productivity, indicating people with disabilities should rather be employed than dependent or “be cared for” (p13); working as gardeners would allow them to participate as socially productive citizens. Positive feedback also showed the community felt that the productivity of people with disabilities would be equivalent to able-bodied workers providing a garden service; that they were capable of gardening tasks such as trimming, cutting, tilling raking, planting, pruning and sweeping.

Participants in a study in the Western Cape by Engelbrecht (2006) reported that being able to earn an income, enabled them to contribute actively to their households and influenced their motivation and productivity in the open labour market. These findings were supported by similar findings of Inman, McGurk and Chadwick (2007) which showed how active participation fostered “self belief” and encouraged people with disabilities to make a positive progression towards employment (p64). Entry to the open labour market provided people with disabilities a means of economic empowerment and recognition as productive citizens contributing to the economy, which also identified their “need for permanency” in the employment sector (Engelbrecht & Lorenzo, 2010:10).

A study undertaken by Occupational Therapists Diamant and Waterhouse (2010) in London showed how participating in a public garden employment project provided people with disabilities with a way of connecting to society. This study revealed how a supportive environment assisted people with disabilities in negotiating entry into the world of work. It confirmed literature presented by Shaw et al., (2007), proposing optimising environments and a supportive social context in accessing meaningful participation and productivity in the work sector.

The study by Inman *et al.*, (2007) investigated a programme for people with disabilities in Lancashire (UK) transitioning into employment. Working in vocational rehabilitation, one of the challenges for Occupational Therapists was securing real work opportunities or alternate forms of occupational activity for people with mental disabilities. Findings revealed the importance of people with disabilities establishing a work routine; that being at work made a difference to their sense of belonging. They contended that vocational progression allowed people with disabilities to experience a positive progression in their attitudes and self belief. As a result people with disabilities were able to have goals and make plans to find employment. This supported the notion by Bandura (1989 in Inman et al, 2007:61) that belief in oneself mobilised 'motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action' towards meeting ones needs.

Engelbrecht (2006:78) made reference to Lynch and Thomas (1994) when discussing the concept of people with disabilities as being the "victim". Instrumental in enforcing this concept, were the emotionally-laden disability campaigns geared at sourcing donations for disability groups. This highlighted the interrelatedness of the victim concept and the environment–person interplay, implying that people with disabilities were seen as helpless beings at the mercy of the environment (Alant *et al.*, 2007).

Empowering and giving power to people with disabilities to be something other than a victim, to become a socially accepted person would help to diminish the victim status and help them belong. Writing from a Xhosa-speaking African perspective, Gcaza (2000) commented that being part of the community and its sense of togetherness is important; similarly the role one plays in the community is important. She added that people with disabilities feel excluded because of attitudes towards disability and, they need to feel they belong and that they could make a meaningful contribution to their respective communities. In a community entrepreneur project in Cape Town, Van Niekerk *et al* (2006) showed how their project encouraged people with disabilities to participate, to develop expectations for learning specific skills in order to develop themselves and, to show others in their community what they were capable of.

Williams, Fossey and Harvey (2010), interested in broadening the interest in social inclusion and employment for people with disabilities, conducted a study in Australia on the views of disabled people working at a “social firm”, a company affiliated to Social Firms Australia providing inclusive employment for disabled persons alongside other employees in a supportive environment (p532). The participants described how working enhanced their lives by fulfilling their desire to participate and find meaning in society. Being in a work environment promoted feelings of competence, allowing them to progress into society: they were also “motivated to sustain” employment (536).

Addressing the employment needs of people with disabilities asks for a socially integrated approach. Working towards an inclusive society by including people with disabilities in the broader socio-economic development framework within South Africa, could address the prevailing inequality in the workplace. Opportunity to develop partnerships so as to access employment and economic empowerment would enable people with disabilities to break the cycle of poverty and a disabling society (Engelbrecht, 2006).

## **2.6 Building partnerships towards an inclusive society**

In facilitating employment for people with disabilities, manifold actions are needed and a wider perspective needs to be considered, rather than solely focusing on the individual (Galheigo, 2005). By using an approach of social inclusion, Galheigo (2005) maintained community ties can be strengthened, inclusive environments can be built, and a ‘sense of belonging and connectedness’ can be developed for those who have been socially excluded (pg96). Building partnerships with key role players is essential to initiating innovative employment projects in the community (Harrison and Sellers, 2008). Reviewing suitable strategies for promoting the participation of people with disabilities in work, Rumrill, Koch, and Harris (1998), emphasised the active involvement of people with disabilities by focusing on their inherent abilities and skills to promote positive employment outcomes.

In South Africa, Alant et al (2007) were concerned about social transformation and mainstream development of people with disabilities in the broader socio-economic framework. They felt that key to developing social transformation, was an

understanding of how people with disabilities facilitated the concept of all inclusive policy and implementation. In engaging with disability stakeholders, these researchers highlighted concerns of alleged fragmentation of the disability sector and the perception that the disability sector was not being proactive enough in mainstream development. Their recommendations encouraged the disability sector to work towards strategies that would show committed action and, to negotiate opportunities for people with disabilities so as to ensure that policy implementation manifests in partnerships that include people with disabilities (Alant *et al.*, 2007).

Further concern reflected raising awareness of disability issues within government and public sectors. In prioritising discrimination and attitudinal barriers Alant *et al.*, (2007) suggested that disability issues needed to be addressed within social and employment contexts, calling for support and opportunity to be developed. Their research highlighted the perception of government being a key role player in the development sector. They acknowledge the government's role in the process of social inclusion, but feel that participation and partnership with the disability sector and other economic agencies is vital in mainstream development (Alant *et al.*, 2007). Developing social networks and intersectoral partnerships is considered important when the focusing on a social outcome of gaining employment opportunities since people with disabilities have limited social networks and they need to develop available support systems which could assist in securing employment (Lloyd and Waghorn, 2007).

The study by Boshoff and Wolmarans (1998) brought into partnership a community, service providers (researchers), and people with disabilities hoping to find employment opportunities. In the process of mainstreaming disability and accessing employment, the community was consulted regarding the idea of employing disabled persons as gardeners to understand prevailing attitudes of such a venture. The study indicated a positive interest by the community to become potential employers and partners of a project supporting a group of people with disabilities working as gardeners. The community rejected an Ethic of Care approach in favour of a Work Ethic approach.

This is where the success of community socio-economic development comes from; community environments which are enabling and building social capital to promote the social integration of people with disabilities wanting to become working citizens (Lorenzo *et al.*, 2007). Employers have a pivotal role to play by creating opportunities for people with disabilities to enter the labour market. Recruiting and supporting people with disabilities into working life, would be one step closer in making the employment sector socially inclusive (Jakobsen, 2009). Work provides opportunity for social integration by promoting a sense of identity and giving people with disabilities a “socially valued” role in society (Lloyd and Waghorn, 2007:55).

Diamant and Waterhouse (2010) provide insight into a partnership which encourages social and therapeutic horticulture (STH) as a means of enabling people with disabilities to participate in society. Their study based in London, England showed the partnership between Thrive Battersea, a charity organisation, a group of persons with disabilities and public patrons. STH, a growing therapeutic movement, uses occupational activities relating to horticulture in order to encourage people with disabilities to develop skills and competencies. This in turn increases their chances of finding employment in the community and becoming socially integrated. Thrive, Battersea’s garden project facilitated access to opportunities by allowing people with disabilities to transition into and “connect with the spaces and people they worked with” (p84). Being able to “participate in civic life” in the context of gardens and as gardeners, they could negotiate entry into the employment sector (Diamant & Waterhouse, 2005:85). The STH environment provided a variety of areas for skills development and vocational training such as learning weeding, potting, inspecting plants, harvesting vegetables, making soup, watering, selling to public, and writing about gardening. These activities contained different layers of focus and served multiple purposes. Participating in these activities helped to connect the gardeners with the greater context of gardening and gardeners which affirmed their sense of identity, sense of belonging and rooted them in the environment (Diamant & Waterhouse, 2005).

Success in securing available resources to network and develop partnerships towards employment enables an ethos of dynamism. Inman *et al.*, (2007) is of the impression that people with disabilities felt that “being there”, engaging in an

employment programme was a “transition in itself” (p64). They stressed that participating in a short-term work placement programme (as a stepping stone) was beneficial for those wanting to progress in something more permanent in the open labour market. The concept of building partnerships towards social inclusion in the context of this study relates to the objective noting changes that the participants may have experienced or the actions they may have taken as a result of being in the EAP.

## **2.7 Summary of Chapter Two**

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents the view that many people with disabilities have been disadvantaged because of deeply rooted negative perceptions surrounding disability issues. The burden of disability and the legacy of an apartheid system, have presented huge challenges for people with disabilities especially having to compete for employment opportunities. Despite employment equity policies and supporting documentation being introduced, people with disabilities remain poorly represented in the open labour market. Developing and implementing strategies to assist people with disabilities transition into employment is an ongoing process requiring support and partnerships from business role players, the public as well as the disability sector to ensure people with disabilities find a way to participate and contribute to the economy.

The next chapter describes the methodology used, examining the experiences of people with disabilities who have engaged in an EAP.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *METHODOLOGY*

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter set out and reviewed the literature that provided insight into contextual concepts pertaining to this study. This chapter systematically articulates the methodology applied in this research study.

Research methodology offers an explanation of the “plan of how the researcher intends conducting the research” (Mouton and Marais, 1990:193) and practically outlines the method used by the researcher to go about studying the phenomena at hand (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The participants in this study have intimate knowledge of their lived experience; these experiences are not directly available to the public. Studying the experiences of unemployed people with disabilities engaged in an EAP required “intensive exploration” with each participant, so as to uncover and produce a “core description of the experience” (Polkinghorne, 2005:138) of engaging in an EAP.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

Paradigms are “all encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking” defining for the researcher “the nature of their enquiry”. The researcher commits to using “particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation” (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006:6/40) which reflects a qualitative world view. A paradigm, as further explained by Maree (2007), assists the researcher to reveal the story of the research by presenting a world that is subjective, yet meaningful.

##### **3.2.1 Descriptive Qualitative research**

A qualitative research approach is a broad term for various methods employed to obtain rich, descriptive data pertaining to particular phenomena with the intention of exploring and understanding a situation from participants’ perspectives (Maree, 2007). Qualitative techniques are essentially for “exploring new topics and obtaining insightfully rich data” (Bowling, 2002:131); designed also to be “open and fluid” (Boeije, 2010:45) allowing for flexibility in capturing and processing data, so the

meaning behind each story is explored and unfolded. This approach describes the view and the experiences of each participant as they engaged in the EAP.

Descriptive studies allow the researcher to offer a detailed account of the research problem; to describe phenomena more accurately through narrative descriptions. In research, where there may be a lack of understanding for the subject studied, descriptive studies such as this may be helpful in providing basic, relevant information which contributes to the body of knowledge and the subject at hand (Merriam, 1998; Myers, 2000). Information on the experiences of a group of young disabled adults engaged in an EAP added to the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the phenomena of engaging in an EAP as a means of accessing employment in the open labour market.

The descriptive paradigm informs the researcher of the most suitable methodology to use in this study.

### **3.2.2 Research Design**

Qualitative, descriptive research requires the use of a particular method to indicate how the information was obtained from the participants. The research design is the structure presented by the researcher that “guides the research activity” (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:563), focusing on the logic of the research process. In the study I chose the research design of a case study.

#### *3.2.2.1 The Case Study Strategy*

Case studies can be seen as intensive investigations of a single unit of particular individuals (Mouton, 2001). All individual contributions, when taken as a collective, holistic case study, serve to emphasize contextually rich information from personal experiences (Creswell, 1998). Case studies maximize the collection of highly descriptive, insightful data of the phenomenon studied (Merriam, 1998). This research study focused on a single unit, a group of unemployed people with a disability immersed in the situation of engaging an EAP. It provided opportunity to explore the richness and depth of the participants’ experiences and meaningfully describe these experiences in order to contribute to the body of knowledge of people with disabilities accessing jobs in the open labour market.

I used the descriptive case study to “formulate rich descriptions” (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:p45) of the experiences of each of a group of disabled adults engaging an EAP. The intent of this study was not to be interpretive or evaluative (Merriam, 1998) but rather descriptive; providing a detailed account of each EAP encounter; producing basic information where research has been lacking with regard to the phenomena of engaging an EAP as a means of accessing the open labour market.

### **3.3 Data Gathering**

The research method outlines data gathering and information relating to the “practical tool used in the research study to create new knowledge” (Terre Blanch *et al.*, 2006). I favoured the notion put forth by Henning (2004:63) that distinguishes between “data making and data collection”. Data collection suggests a collection or gathering of data which is ready and waiting. Data making, however, is a process of creating and constructing; a process which positions the researcher within the process of creating; the constructing, obtaining knowledge about each participant’s lived experience so as to understand the reality of engaging an EAP. For the purpose of this study, my preference was data making over data collecting so as to describe, clarify, create and construct knowledge of the subject under study.

Interviewing was used as a research tool for exploration in this study. The interview is regarded as a meaning-making process wherein the researcher learns about the stories of others, exploring greater depth of meaning behind each story (Greef, 2005; Burns and Grove, 2001). As each participant shared their story I not only listened to understand their experiences, but also reflected on the meaning ascribed to these experiences (Greef, 2005). Interviewing each participant provided a more personal and flexible approach which I chose above a focus group.

I wanted to obtain subjective information that would yield honest responses from a small group of people rather than from a large number of participants. Peoples’ experiences carry “vertical depth” (Polkinghorne, 2005:138); I was of the mind interviewing the participants and listening to their conversations, would provide better personal engagement since I was collecting subjective data.

I intended capturing the “richness and fullness” of the participants’ experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005:138). I did not consider using a questionnaire as a data gathering tool because of its restrictiveness.

I wanted to “explore...ask questions...to build conversations that would elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (Patton, 2002:343) of engaging an EAP. Data gathering is a means of “providing evidence for the experience it is investigating” (Polkinghorne, 2005: 138). This evidence consisted of related accounts participants gave of their EAP experience. After careful consideration I realised that the semi-structured interview as a tool for exploring the experiences of participants engaging an EAP, would be sufficient for the purpose of this research.

### **3.3.1. *Semi-structured Interviews***

Interviewing is described by De Vos (1998:207) as “a conversation with a purpose”; appropriate to this study for exploring and understanding the process of engaging an EAP from the participant’s point of view.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:267) describe the interview as not simply being a collection of data but an underlying conversation; “part of life itself...of human embeddedness”. The semi-structured or partially structured interview has a list of key questions; flexible enough to allow for additional questions which complement a pre-set framework of themes to be explored (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002).

In this study I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. An interview guide based on pre-set objectives to cover the topic was used to set the tone for conversation.

#### **3.3.1.1 *Conducting the interviews***

Interviewing someone is akin to having a conversation; listening is an active and important part, as participants relate their experiences. Open-ended questions were used to allow participants to voice their experiences and ideas “in their own words” (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:486) relating to their EAP encounter. Interviews were conducted with a clear plan in mind although characterized by minimal control over the way participants responded (Bernard, 2005). Responses therefore were free, uninhibited, and not bound to a set manner.

Each participant was contacted individually by telephone, to arrange a convenient appointment time to schedule their interviews. Interviews were held at a location convenient to participants. Verbal permission was always requested to record each interview. (See 3.11.1: Ethical considerations and Appendix A&B). Each interview was recorded for the purpose of transcribing and data analysis; I was able to re-listen to data and extract quotations used in the findings (Chapter Four). Interviews lasted for one and a half to two hours for each participant. Two interviews were conducted in English with each participant. (The interview schedule is attached as Appendix C)

Note taking was kept to a minimum so as not to distract. I focused on key words, which facilitated the opportunity to revisit parts of the conversation and reflect certain responses for clarification. When I had captured and compiled all the interviews, the information was carefully managed for use in Chapter Four and Five.

### **3.4 Data Management**

Qualitative data captures the thoughts and experiences of individuals. Data management is the systematic organization, guidance and supervision of captured data for the purpose of processing and analysis (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest and Namey, 2005).

In managing the data, the first step I took was to organize all the collected data. I handled all raw data myself. All the interviews had to be converted from the digitally recorded system to data files on the computer. These data files were stored on both the computer as well as a flash disk which acted as back-up. For security purposes and to protect the identity of participants, files were stored under pseudonyms. The computer used was my personal system protected by a password which only I had access to.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2005:333). Analysing qualitative data is an active process of deliberately reading and rereading data searching for meaning and deeper understanding (Polit and Beck, 2008).

Responses from one-on-one audio-taped interviews were the main source of data for this study. An initial attempt to use audio-visual equipment did not work well; participants were too self-conscious about the camera and audio-visual sound quality was poor for the location selected. I transferred all the raw data from the audio tape to the computer for easier access. Thereafter I listened repeatedly to the audio-taped data before commencing with verbatim transcriptions. Transcribing all the interviews myself allowed me to become immersed in the data. Once the raw data was organized in a folder and safely stored on the computer, the next step was to start the process of analysing. A type of analysis referred to as content analysis was used. The 'content' of texts is analysed to communicate messages and meaning through words and themes (Mouton, 2001). I followed the process of content analysis as outlined by Henning (2004) using the following steps.

### ***3.5.1 Orientation to data***

I read all the transcribed interviews to become orientated with the data and form an overview of the data. I then read the data a further three to four times to process the content and gain a more holistic understanding of the data.

### ***3.5.2 Working with the data***

Henning (2004) describes this process as coding. I selected and highlighted in different colours segments of data for coding. These segments were directly related to the objectives set out for this study. I then took the related codes for each of the objectives and further categorised these into groups. Further reading and searching through data took place to find relationships between categories in order to create thematic patterns.

### ***3.5.3 Concluding the arrangement of analyzed data***

This last part of the process records the final themes for presentation. To enhance illustration of themes, I drew on data, identifying relevant illustrative quotes. Revisiting and reflectively scrutinising data during the entire process of analysis took time. This process aimed at reflecting participants' lived experiences in a fair and accurate manner.

### **3.6 Ensuring trustworthiness**

The aim of trustworthiness in qualitative studies is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290). In this study I use the term trustworthiness to reflect the manner in which the research presented reliably follows the four criteria as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in De Vos 2005:346): credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

Credibility ensures the study investigates what it had intended to (Merriam, 1998). Using interviews and, a well established research method, participants were given the opportunity to describe their experiences relating to their participation in the EAP.

In this study, data was freely and voluntarily gathered; participants were encouraged to be open and honest because it focused on experiential data. Using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, participants were reminded they had the freedom to share ideas and experiences without fear of losing credibility within the host retail company where they engaged the EAP. Since the participants were already known to REHAB and I had previously engaged with them in volunteer group sessions, I felt that being an insider allowed participants to trust me enough to be able to share their experiences openly and honestly. Being part of the REHAB team, I had full support of the organisation to pursue the research study (which would indirectly promote awareness about REHAB). Therefore there was no conflict of interest.

Using Van Manen's (1983) approach, I scrutinised themes within participant data as a means of internal triangulation, corroborating and verifying particular details shared by each participant.

Using member-checking, I validated participant data which transpired during the interview process. The second interview also helped to verify information received in the first interview. The credibility and trustworthiness of this study was also enhanced through peer checking (Polit and Beck, 2004) by discussing the collected data with the research supervisor.

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the applicability of this research to other contexts and the extent to which findings are relevant in other similar type situations (Merriam, 1998). It was established through the presentation of rich, descriptive contextual and circumstantial data this study and its participants disclosed. Shenton (2004) makes reference to authors Elandson *et al.*, (1993), in his argument that transferability is impossible since each study's observations are defined by specific contexts. He also considered counter arguments of Stake (1994) and Denscombe (1998) saying although each research study is unique the findings reflect and contribute to a broader pool of knowledge (referenced in Shenton, 2004). The prospect of transferability therefore should not be totally rejected. Judgment as to the degree of fit remains the domain of the reader which allows this study to be compared with other similar studies and applied elsewhere.

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the reliability of the study; the consistency of the findings. Shenton (2004) mentions if a study is repeated using the same context, method and same participants, similar results should be obtained. This study outlines the steps followed in detail, data gathering, analysis and interpretation, and it encourages research discussion and conclusions.

### **3.6.4 Conformability**

Conformability relates to the researcher's physical experience (hearing and observed) with respect to the phenomena being studied ensuring study findings reflect experiential data provided by each participant (Shenton, 2004). It also relates to the neutrality of the researcher. I repeatedly listened to audio-taped data contributed by the participants. Also included were verbatim quotes to reference participants' voices and improve authenticity (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson, 2002). See Chapter Four.

### **3.7 Ethics**

Ethical issues stem from the way we interact with other individuals. Research ethics, notably a form of human conduct, concerns itself with 'what is wrong and what is right' in conducting research (Mouton, 2001:238). The research study adheres to the philosophical principles outlined by Terre Blanche *et al.*, (2006) guiding the process of ethical research practice. Aspects of four basic principles namely autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice, were considered.

#### **3.7.1 Autonomy and Respect for the individuals**

During the entire research process, participants were treated with respect and dignity within the context of their social, political, economic and, cultural environments. An information letter was prepared for participants explaining the purpose and objectives of the proposed study. (See Appendix A) Freedom of choice was safeguarded as participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. I obtained informed written consent to protect the autonomy and privacy of the participants (Strydom, 2005a). See Appendix B. In addition to the informed consent form (voluntarily signed), verbal permission was requested at each interview to audiotape data. (See 3.6.1) Participants were reminded and reassured of their freedom to withdraw from the research programme at any stage without recrimination.

It was the researcher's responsibility to withhold private data, real names, and identity of participants. All information obtained during the research process was treated confidentially (Strydom, 2005a). I maintained objectivity and integrity (Mouton, 2001) by taking responsibility for gathering and processing data. All data was managed and safely stored by myself, having conducted the study in a confidential manner (Creswell, 1994).

#### **3.7.2 Non-maleficence**

In this study I was aware of the participants being harmed or wronged and as a result followed research protocol (Macklin, 2002 in Wassenaar, 2006). Deceiving or exploiting the participants as they were engaged in the EAP would have been wrong. As principal researcher, the onus was on me to be aware of vulnerability and be

sensitive to any anticipated or potentially harmful situations that may have transpired while participants were engaged in the EAP. (See 3.9.1)

### **3.7.3 Beneficence**

As a result of this research study, people with disabilities may be recognised for their contribution to uncovering and sharing insight in assisted employment. I was obliged to share the findings with the participants and provide feedback, as recognition and acknowledgement of their role, time and effort (Strydom, 2005a; Wassenaar, 2006). I hope the participants reached a better understanding of an EAP as a means of finding employment in the open labour market.

### **3.7.4 Justice**

Procedural justice supports the interactive process of relationships and how these are lived. During the study, I followed key elements of an interactive relationship which included: sharing without imposing, respect for conversational dialogue, and a certain level of intimacy (Hagey, 1997; Strydom, 2005a). Participants' contributions were treated impartially and fairly (Mouton, 2001). I was responsible for support had any of the participants become distressed or felt compromised during the study.

Permission to conduct this qualitative research study was obtained from the University of Cape Town, Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. The ethical considerations of this study, was guided by the Declaration of Helsinki (Seoul version 2008).

## **3.8 Limitations of the study**

The research study was small; findings from the five participants, restricts the degree to which conclusions may be generalised. This research avoided generalisations about the way people with disabilities access employment. Rather it explored a selected group's experiences of engaging in an EAP as a means of accessing the employment sector.

The methodology used for this study partially reflects the magnitude of the phenomenon investigated but the use of collective case study succinctly captures the intensity, depth and richness intended for this study. Further research in this

field, both qualitative and quantitative, with a broader sample size needs to be conducted to draw inferences from a wider population. Another limitation was this study was situated and conducted within the town of East London, in the Eastern Province of South Africa.

I conducted the research as best I could; guided by the work and writings of fellow researchers. Future readers will make their own interpretation of the research presented.

### **3.9 The participants**

The participants in this study were all unemployed people with disabilities.

#### **Babalo**

This young man has had a disability for most of his life as he suffered poliomyelitis when he was a toddler. He attended a school for children with disabilities as it was difficult to access a mainstream school in the rural Eastern Cape. Financial constraints made it difficult for him to complete his Grade 12. Babalo prefers living near the city in an attempt to find work, so he rents a room from an aunt in the largest township on the outskirts of East London. Since leaving school he has been looking for a job. He is an active wheelchair basketball player and a junior coach; this allows him to travel to other provinces for competitions and coaching clinics. He supports a four year old daughter who is being cared for by his grandmother. During the EAP he was trained as a front line assistant liaising with customers when they selected and weighed produce and later as a CCTV observer.

#### **Zuko**

As a child, Zuko's personal reflection of life was that he did not consider himself as a person with a disability. He attended a mainstream school without any major challenges as his disability remained 'hidden'. After completing his Grade 12, he studied towards his post-matric qualification. As he grew older, his bilateral club feet and lower limb mobility impairment became more prominent and socially noticeable. He is single and lives with his parents in a large township in the East London, Eastern Cape. During the EAP, he was trained in the HR department as an HR assistant.

## **Nathi**

Nathi was born with cerebral palsy which has left him with a paralysed right side and impaired motor function in his right arm and leg. Nathi is well known at REHAB since he attended the voluntary sessions with other unemployed people with disabilities. He also did volunteer work at the REHAB thrift shop. He shares accommodation with his sister and her children in the largest township in the Eastern Cape. Although he failed his Grade 12, he did a theology course at a local college. Since then he has been struggling to secure employment. He is part of his church outreach group where he speaks on disability issues. In the EAP, Nathi was trained as an assistant replenisher working in the aisles, accessing the stockroom and liaising with customers.

## **Corey**

Corey visited REHAB regularly to check on the availability of employment opportunities and to network with other volunteers with disabilities. Corey has a cognitive disability and attended a special secondary school for learners with cognitive impairment. He lives with his mother, a single parent who is eager for him to find a regular job so that he can earn an income. Corey enjoyed voluntary work such as *Meals on Wheels* or helping friends in their transport business. Corey frequently visited local businesses in his community in search of part-time work. During the EAP he was trained as an assistant replenisher also working in the aisles, accessing the stockroom and liaising with customers.

## **Zeka**

Zeka was the only female participant in the study. She resides with her family in the largest township as mentioned above. Despite completing her Grade 12, she has never worked; her husband has been the main breadwinner. At the time of the study however her husband was unemployed and it appeared that they were dependent on her disability grant as the family income. She considers her disability (having an amputation and wearing a prosthetic leg) as a continuous struggle. She has tried various ways of earning a living such as running a spaza shop and selling meat in the community.

Zeka joined the REHAB volunteer programme to network with other disabled adults keen on finding employment. During the EAP, she trained as a front line assistant as a till packer and later went on to do formal training as a cashier.

### **3.10 Summary of Chapter Three**

This chapter provided an explanation of the intended research plan by describing the methodology employed for this study. The research design is clarified, along with data gathering, management and analysis. In addition, I reflected on the trustworthiness of the research data drawing attention to the ethical considerations relating to this research study. Lastly I discuss the limitations of the study and introduce the five study participants by giving a brief description of each one.

Chapter Four further develops the methodology by explaining the next process of presenting the research findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *FINDINGS*

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings which emerged from the analysis of collective data of five participant interviews. The findings relate to the four study objectives namely:

1. To identify the expectations identified by people with disabilities at the start of engagement of the EAP
2. To explore the view people with disabilities have of:
  - a. the facilitating factors for engaging the EAP
  - b. the perceived benefits
  - c. the challenges of participating in an EAP
3. To explore their personal actions taken as people with disabilities in promoting their progress relating to aforementioned challenges
4. To describe the changes experienced by the people with disabilities, relating to their experiences in the EAP

In the next section, I set out four themes related to each of the objectives and accompanying questions. Then I present the categories and subcategories with supporting quotes from the data.

#### 4.2 Theme One: Collective Expectations

Theme One reflected the collective expectations of the five unemployed participants with disabilities, for whom the question was asked: “What do you expect to gain/find/get out of this EAP?” Theme One indicated the participants’ collective expectations of engaging the EAP, as a ***Vehicle of progression***.

TABLE 2: THEME ONE – VEHICLE OF PROGRESSION			
THEME	CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	CODES
Vehicle of progression	#	Personal journey	To learn more things in the working area To learn more about working for a company The chance to gain more experience
		Learning opportunity	I can learn more about merchandising I started as a packer then I asked to be the cashier that's when I start to be the cashier In doing the programme I am registered to do the HR certificate I'm now considering changing to HR work
	Towards permanent employment	Hope and aspirations	gave me hope was hoping to find permanent employment still hoping it could be me staying on here
		Staying on	I want a job where I can stay and work I could get the job renew my contract I could get another contract I don't want to go back to the community doing nothing I want continuity in my life
	Being a worker	Active employee	more about merchandising to be a worker what it's really like in the workplace I expected a lot of professionalism and dedication to have a regular job a packer then the cashier
		Social dignity	staff thought I'm not going to cope I just showed them by working that I can do the job to have responsibilities like everyone else an employee doing the job I would earn a salary like others when you're a man you are supposed to be earning your own salary earning something instead of sitting at home
	Accessing employment	Moving out of unemployment	help me get a job quicker you sit there and don't take chance you'll be stuck an opportunity in the real workplace a regular place to go to opportunity to get out and do something
		Make life better	a job to satisfy the needs of my family this work makes me try harder wanted my life to progress wanted the chance to gain more (self worth)

### **4.2.1 Learning opportunity**

There are two sub categories that were related to learning opportunity which will be presented.

#### **A personal experience**

The participants share the hardship of being disabled and being unemployed which made it difficult for them to access jobs. They expected the EAP to be a personal voyage of learning and to have a similar experience of learning about a job as an able bodied person.

Babalo had not been able to complete his last year of schooling and struggled to find a job. He volunteered at REHAB and coached wheelchair basketball, but his expectation was to learn something in the workplace.

*I feel like I'm different...I feel bad sometimes [about being unemployed]...I didn't know what to expect ...my expectation was to learn more things in the working area (19 April 2011, interview1)*

Corey had been doing temporary jobs; he knew what it was like to have some form of work but he was enthusiastic about getting another opportunity to learn more.

*Unemployment is hard...being at home is difficult...I have been looking for a job...to do something...I wanted the chance to gain more experience (21 April 2011, interview1)*

#### **Capacity building**

Nathi had never worked before so he was excited about the prospect of improving his personal capacity for learning something specific.

*I wanted to learn so I can know more about merchandising (19 April 2011, interview1)*

Zeka knew about the struggle to find work. She tried supporting herself from home but she had the expectation of doing something better.

*I tried many things like having a spaza shop...I started as a packer [in the EAP] but then one day I ask if I can be the cashier that's when I start to be the cashier (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.2.2 Towards permanent employment**

There are two sub categories related to the participants' expectation of moving towards permanent employment.

### **Hope and aspirations**

The participants perceived the EAP offered them a chance to receive training in a real work environment. They were aware the EAP was a temporary contract and it would end after a specified time yet they were hopeful about the experience.

Zeka is a married Xhosa woman with three children. As a married woman her duties include being a wife and a child-bearer first, and a worker second. She has not been formally employed for nearly twenty years and receives a disability grant.

*I felt like I was fighting all these years for a job...I had a hope...I was thinking that this programme will lead to a permanent work (20 April 2011, interview 1)*

Corey's expectation was finding something more secure; more permanent.

*I really enjoyed having a job...thinking about the prospect of leaving...I'm nervous for when the contract ends...I was hoping to find permanent employment (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Staying on**

The EAP created an expectation of staying on in the job. Nathi and Corey were not ready to go home; their comments express their wish to remain in the workplace.

*Even though it [EAP] was a learning contract I wish I could get the job to renew my contract (Nathi 11 August 2011 interview2)*

*When the contract ends maybe I could get another contract (Corey 10 August 2011 interview 2)*

Zuko agreed to come into the EAP knowing that engaging work was better than staying at home and being in a job would earn him respect in his community. He did not look forward to the EAP ending and having to give up his status and respect in the community.

*If you sit there [at home] and don't take chances you'll be stuck in one place I don't want to go back to the community and just sit there doing nothing I want continuity in my life.....people in my community they do respect me now (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Babalo also felt that he was not ready to go home; he wished to remain in the workplace.

*I want a job where I can stay and work if given the chance (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.2.3 A worker role**

There are two subcategories presented reflecting the participants' expectation of having a worker role.

#### **Active employee**

Having expectations of holding down a job and fulfilling a worker role emerged as strong concepts throughout the transcripts.

Zeka's expectations changed during the EAP when she identified with, and requested training for a different role.

*I started as a packer at the till ... I think this is fine but then one day I ask if I can learn to be the cashier ... that's when I start to be the cashier...I am so happy just having this job (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

Being an active employee in the programme was an opportunity for Babalo to experience the workplace while Zuko felt being an active employee was about performance and advancement.

*To be a worker...participating in this programme ...how I was going to cope with other people ... I want to know what it is really like in the workplace (Babalo 19 April 2011, interview 1)*

*In the HR department ...I knew the responsibility I was going to face ...I expected a lot of professionalism and dedication...it's more about what you know...what you want in life (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Corey had been trying to find something stable. His expectation was to be a regular worker with a regular routine.

*Unemployment is hard...I miss not having a routine...I want a regular job (21 April 2011, interview 1)*

Nathi has never worked before; he identified strongly with a specific worker role.

*Working for a company...so I can know more about merchandising (19 April 2011, interview1)*

#### **Social dignity**

In society, disability still carries a social stigma. The participants had hopes of working and realising their expectations of becoming socially dignified citizens. Being seen as a 'worker' in the community is important to Nathi, his expectation is to have a 'normal social routine' doing a 'normal job' just like other people.

*To have responsibilities like everyone else...an employee doing the job (Nathi 19 April 2011, interview 1)*

Zuko, Corey and Zeka had expectations that earning would elevate their social dignity.

*Looking for a job...when you are a man you are supposed to be earning your own salary (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

*To have a regular job...earning something instead of sitting at home (Corey 21 April 2011, interview 1)*

*That I would earn a salary like others [social citizens] (Zeka 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

#### **4.2.4 Accessing employment**

There are two sub categories relating to accessing employment which will be represented.

##### ***Moving out of unemployment***

The participants wanted to enjoy their rights to employment; to have the opportunity to access work. They expected the EAP to be a way out of unemployment.

Zuko did not want to be stuck in one place and Babalo wanted a job in the real world.

Nathi had a clear expectation of the EAP hastening action out of unemployment.

*If you sit there [at home] and don't take chances that come along your way you'll be stuck in one place ...it has been a very good decision to come into the programme (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

*Participating in this programme is the chance to be a worker...to get into the real workplace (Babalo 19 April 2011, interview 1)*

*It's so hard to get jobs ... I was interested to come to the programme because I knew it [EAP] could help me to get a job quicker (Corey 21 April 2011, interview 1)*

##### ***Making life better***

Zeka was struggling to keep her family going. Her expectations were not only for herself but to make things better for her family.

*I was fighting all these years for a job ... it was my prayer for a job to satisfy the needs of my family (20 April 2011, interview 1)*

Zuko and Corey did not want to sit at home, cooped up and stuck in one place; it was up to them to take a chance and decide where they wanted to go.

*You'll be stuck in one place...if you sit there and you don't take chances that come...I wanted my life to progress (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

*Being at home is difficult...cooped up...not having a regular place to go to...I wanted the chance to gain more (Corey 21April 2011, interview 1)*

Babalo felt the EAP would prepare him for further opportunity which made him try harder.

*This programme is about the permanent job...being prepared for that next job...I could work my whole life there in this place [the retail company]...this work makes me try harder (10 August 2011. Interview 2)*

#### **4.2.5 Summary of the expectations of the participants starting the EAP**

All the participants showed excitement at entering the EAP with an expectation of gaining an opportunity for learning. Being unemployed, they were eagerly seeking the chance to find some form of permanent employment. More importantly they are keen to identify with a worker role and gain access to the workplace and society. The participants' expectations emerged as *Theme 1* a view which reflected that engaging the EAP was a *Vehicle of progression*.

#### **4.3. Theme Two: Collective experiences encountered during the EAP**

Theme Two indicates the collective experiences of the five unemployed participants with disabilities they encountered during the EAP. The question asked of participants was: "What are you experiencing during the EAP?" These experiences portrayed three facets of the EAP encounter. They were:

- a. facilitating factors for engaging the EAP
- b. the perceived benefits, and
- c. the challenges they faced (as they engaged the EAP)

Theme Two, as the collective experiences encountered during the EAP reflected the participants' views of ***Belonging in the world of work***.

TABLE 3: THEME TWO – BELONGING IN THE WORLD OF WORK

THEME	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	CODES	
BELONGING IN THE WORLD OF WORK	<i>FACILITATING FACTORS</i>	Embracing the work place	Positive attitude did not stand around doing nothing no one was pushing me into this thing it all depends on you I just show them I can do the job motivated to go to work	
			Change is welcome to know what it's really like in the workplace working in HR part of HR team a packer then the cashier so happy to have this change	
			Family blessing family happy I could go out to work family so excited they look forward to this family happy for me my family so excited	
		I have faith in that job	I believed firstly I believed in myself gave me some belief into myself I knew I was doing my job properly Now I have this I can believe	
			Support counts customers helped me and support from other people staff were friendly the environment was positive and friendly	
			Step up to that job when people accept you it's easier to step up to that job with the new job came the trust given to me people accepted me	
		<i>PERCEIVED BENEFITS</i>	Employment connects people	Mentoring they help me find a solution one of the cashier's was my mentor staff helped show me around to teach me they were eager to teach me show me what to do
				New responsibilities given the new responsibilities to have responsibilities I was responsible for fetching stock working in HR has given me a lot of responsibility pack groceries clean baskets explain to customers
				Acquiring new skills registered to do HR certificate I start to be the cashier sent for proper training on the job training
				Having a job a positive experience a learning experience made a difference in my life experience helped me a lot I can keep that experience experience has been so great positive from the beginning I really enjoyed having a job Having this job I can make a difference
	Stepping forward		I can belong I was an employee doing the job not a burden being in the job among others working as a merchandising assistant I'm in HR in the employment equity committee In the CCTV work makes me feel part of the management	
			Learning to work working to learn gain experience I liked learning I liked working a good learning curve I've learnt a lot grown a lot my knowledge is getting more now I am moving forward this whole experience helped me to learn about the job	
	Swapping a disability role for a worker role		Advancing social networking social benefit is important to be part of people at work it's been like social enlightenment connecting with people I could meet people at different levels I liked getting to know different staff dealing with customers	
			Paid employee financial benefit has been good the finance helped I am earning something to earn the salary	
			A valued role people in my community respect me I was an employee doing the job it made me feel like a man Having this job moving forward I know who I am	
	<i>PERCEIVED CHALLENGES</i>		New	Adapting front line assistant CCTV something different to learn the environment storeroom aisles different people customers staff
		never worked customers shout at me managers nasty going for training when I'm only here for short time I stood up for her I showed him I'll stand my ground In the CCTV they feel threatened that I'm watching them		

	environment	Rookie employee	keep looking at possibilities I have a challenge to look for that job
	Fighting social stigmas	Not giving up	when the contract ends I have to keep motivating myself to look for possible employment
		Social attitudes	people think I'm not going to cope because I'm walking with crutches managers want me to do whatever they want staff made me angry being rude customers made me angry
		Disability awareness	minimum representation of people with disabilities staff didn't know how I will do thought I'm not going to cope

## A. Facilitating Factors

In understanding the facilitating factors for the participants' in meeting their goals, the question was asked: What makes it easier for you to be in the EAP and helps you cope in this work environment?

In their active engagement in the EAP, the participants identified the following facilitating factors that helped them to cope in the programme.

### 4.3.1 Embracing the work place

The participants had all been looking for employment and when the EAP opportunity arose, they were ready to embrace the working world. Three sub- categories are presented next.

#### *Having positive attitude*

During the EAP, Nathi kept busy at work while Zuko's view was that a positive work experience begins by having a positive attitude towards the work environment.

*I wake up early...I go to work...I did not stand around doing nothing (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*No one was pushing me into this thing... it really all depends on you...what you want in life (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

Both Babalo and Corey expressed a positive attitude toward the whole experience.

*I know what's expected of me...I just show them by working I can do the job (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I was motivated to go to work (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Change is welcome**

The participants, as unemployed persons with disabilities, embraced the EAP as a new venture, a welcomed change from their unemployed status. Babalo welcomed the change of environment and exposure to the real workplace.

*I want to know what it is really like in the workplace...I really enjoyed it...changing from a front line assistant...it was a tough one now because I had to face up with the management...I was nervous but I was happy at the time because it was a different job now...to be in the office for the first time (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

For Zuko the EAP exposure was his life in progress; the change he had been looking for to get ahead in life.

*It all depends on you...what you want in life...working in HR...I consider myself like everybody else...no one was pushing me into this thing...I am part of the HR team...a lot of responsibility which I welcome...it's been a good learning curve (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Family Blessing**

Participants describe their family's reaction, an important factor which helped them cope during the EAP.

*Being at home is difficult...I don't like being cooped up at home everyday...my family was happy that I could go to work every day instead of sitting at home (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I've been unemployed for six years...my family was happy for me...seeing me busy in a job (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*It's so hard to get jobs...my family was so excited for me getting a job...they look forward to this employment (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Just having this job...it was my prayer for a job to satisfy the needs of my family...my family was so excited for me (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.3.2 I have faith in that job**

Four out of the five participants received a disability grant from the state. It has been the norm for many people with a disability to stay at home and live off their grant money. These young unemployed people were no longer prepared to remain at home. Three further sub categories are presented below.

#### ***I believed***

The participants reflected a sense of self belief in their potential to become meaningfully employed. Babalo voiced this belief.

*This worker role has helped me a lot...firstly I believed in myself...I can do the job if I'm given the chance to do it...some people look at my disability...I just show them by working that I can do the job...at least I have faith in that job (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Zuko believed he had what it takes to make a difference and want more in life.

*I wanted my life to progress...the responsibility that I have here [in this job] which gave me some sort of belief into myself...it all depends on you...you can make a difference (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Zeka had been waiting for a long time to find formal employment; the opportunity to participate in the EAP restored her faith in finally believing in her efforts.

*I tried many things like having a spaza shop...now I have this[EAP]...I can believe that I have the right to be here in this work (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Support counts**

Zeka and Nathi acknowledged the social support they received from people in the work environment.

*I can say the environment was good...it was positive...the staff were friendly towards me...the customers got to know me...they wait in the queue to come to my till (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*The environment was positive and friendly...I saw people from work and they knew me...people at work know me as a person, as a worker...I wake up so early and go to work, that was something...a motivation (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

Babalo acknowledged the social support he received both in the retail sector and from others.

*Customers they always made me laugh...they helped me to get used to being around people...I will never be shy again...and support from other people like Rehab, my family, my friends, admin staff encouraging me and motivating me (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Step up to the job**

Being accepted as a potential employee seemed to make it easier to step up and do the job as Zeka explained.

*The other staff saw that I am a person with a disability they accept it...when you see how people accept you it is easier to step up to that job (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

Zuko felt being accepted made it easier for him to accept his work responsibility and get on with the job.

*This is a big company with a good reputation... people accepted me...I knew the responsibility I was going to face...which I welcomed with both hands...you have to stand up for yourself...do what you have to do (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

## **B. Perceived Benefits**

In understanding the positive spinoffs or rewards of the EAP, the question was asked: "What are you hoping to gain/find/get out of this EAP?"

### **4.3.3 Employment connects people**

The participants had been struggling to find employment. These findings indicated how they began to feel connected to the employment world. Four sub - categories elaborate further.

#### **Mentoring**

Babalo felt the EAP was about testing his coping skills, and mentoring had helped him manage his work.

*This worker role has helped me a lot...I don't have a problem working alone...the thing was working with other people...always the manager comes around to check on me...if there's a problem then they help me find a solution...he tells me to manage my job better...how to do things better (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Having a mentor meant a great deal to Zeka.

*One of the cashier's was my mentor...I started as a packer at the till...she encouraged me...I start training as the cashier...my mentor was happy for me to go forward (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

Having a mentor made Corey and Nathi feel more like other employees in the store; it gave them a sense of belonging in the workplace.

*Having a job...working as a merchandising assistant...having something to get up for in the morning...the staff helped to show me around the shop...they were willing to teach me how things worked...I looked forward to being at work every day (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I wanted to learn more...so I can know more about merchandising...they [staff] were eager to teach me and show me what to do...I was an employee doing the job (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### **New responsibilities**

The participants reflected on the new responsibilities they enjoyed while doing the EAP.

*I'm part of the management office...in the office for the first time...they [office staff] just leave the money there and say to me 'you must watch here...you are the eye of the shop'...they trust me in that office...they wanted to believe I can do this job... given the new responsibilities (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Working in HR has given me a lot of responsibility which I welcome with both hands...I liaise with outside people...do reference checks...follow up employees' queries...assist other people with disabilities in the company...I'm in the employment equity committee...some responsibilities are delegated to me by myself...my responsibility (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Every day I packed the merchandise on the shelves...I worked in different aisles...see that the shelves were always stocked...I was responsible for fetching stock from the storeroom...I really enjoyed having a job (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Acquiring skills**

The participants pointed out the EAP enabled them to be trained, acquire good work habits and become better skilled.

*What I learnt ...in terms of communication and setting out goals...working in a time frame situation...as part of this [EAP] programme I am registered with the college to do the HR certificate (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I start to be the cashier...immediately I start training...even if I'm there only for a short time...I am sent for proper training...selected by the management...for the cashiers certificate (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Having a job is a positive experience**

Participants valued the EAP exposure as a positive working experience.

*That experience of working was a nice experience...it was a learning experience...I was like everyone else there...an employee doing the job...accepted just like them...it[working] has made a difference in my life... it [EAP]could help me get a job (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*This whole experience helped me a lot...I can keep that experience...given the chance I can do the job...they [staff] also wanted to believe that I can do this job...at the end of this programme...being prepared for that next job...skills will never be lost...I've got the exposure...the experience (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I was looking for a job everyday...it has been a good decision to come into the EAP...working...connecting with people...the experience [of having a job] has been so great...positive from the beginning...I've learnt a lot...I'm now considering changing to HR work (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### **4.3.4 Stepping forward**

This finding reflects the benefit of having an opportunity to closer to employment. Two sub - categories are presented.

### ***I can belong***

The findings show how participants enjoyed the benefit of being in a work environment where they had a meaningful role to play in society.

*I knew it [EAP] could help me...I was an employee doing the job...now I was a person who could contribute...and not be a burden (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I'm in HR...in the employment equity committee..I stand for people with disabilities (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*In the CCTV work... watching the activity in the shop makes me feel that I'm part of the management...no longer part of the floor workers (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### ***Learning to work and working to learn***

Corey and Zuko expressed how learning to work while at the same time working to learn, helped them grow and encouraged them to have a positive outlook.

*To get out and do something...gain experience...I liked learning how...I liked working... the working world has given me a positive outlook (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*It's been a good learning curve for me...I've learnt a lot...I work within a team...I liaise with management...I've grown a lot...this company has given me that (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Zeka and Babalo added their views.

*Started as a packer... pack groceries...clean baskets...trolleys...one day I ask if I can learn to be the cashier...I was selected by the management to go for training...I start training as the cashier...my knowledge is getting more now...this experience helps me to believe...so I can make a difference...I am moving forward (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Participating in this programme...to learn more things in the working area...to know what it is really like in the workplace...it taught me how to work...how to cope...to work with people...this whole experience helped me...to learn about the job (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### ***4.3.5 Swopping a disability role for a worker role***

The EAP enabled participants to assume a different role which allowed them to advance in society. Three sub-categories relating to the benefit of swopping a disability role for a worker role are presented below.

### **Advancing social networking**

The participants enjoyed the social networking associated with having a worker role, advancing their social skills.

*The social benefit is important to me...to have friends and make friends at work...to be part of the people at work was good...I like the people I worked with (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*There's also been social benefits...for our department team building the whole HR team went to Cape Town...today we are going out ...to have a dinner...it's been like a social enlightenment...connecting with people (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Paid employee**

Corey and Zuko did not receive disability grants from the State like the other participants. Earning some remuneration elevated them to a different status.

*The finance helped...I was earning something...I liked having my own money...I could stand on my own two feet...I could take my girlfriend out...I was independent (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Financially I don't have a disability grant...I do get some remuneration...the company does pay me...I am earning something...in my community they do respect me now...when you're a man you are supposed to earn your own salary (Zuko 10 August 2011)*

Nathi was able to enjoy earning something extra while Zeka could support the needs of her family.

*The financial benefit has also been good especially to have something extra (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*My family was so excited for me to earn the salary...so I can make a difference to them...since it was my prayer for a job to satisfy the needs of my family (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **A valued and socially accepted role**

For Zuko and Nathi, having a socially valued worker role earned them respect from their peers in their community.

*When I got in here [EAP] the experience has been so marvellous for me...positive from the beginning...people accepted me...you are part of them...on another social level...one word...respect...when you are a man you are supposed to be earning your own salary...so if you're not...the less respect you'll get...people in my community they do respect me now...people in the workplace they also kind of respect you (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I was like everyone else there...I was an employee doing the job so I was accepted just like them...they didn't notice my disability...the people there were not pitying me...they were putting my disability aside...people with no disabilities were saying how can I wake up so early and go to work...people at work know me as a person...the programme helped me grow...to have responsibilities...it made me feel like a man...it made a difference...now I was not a burden (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **C. Perceived challenges faced by participants engaging in the EAP**

To gain an understanding of what the participants perceived as challenges during the EAP, the question was asked: What were the demands placed upon the participants, or what was taxing or straining for the participants while completing the EAP programme?

#### **4.3.6 A new environment**

The participants' experiences reflected the challenge of being in a different environment. Three sub-categories below elaborate.

##### **Adapting**

*From a front line assistant...CCTV work...something different...new responsibilities (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*From the storeroom downstairs...different aisles...different people to deal with...customers...staff (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **Rookie employees**

Although the participants felt engaging the EAP was beneficial, they had not worked in the retail sector before and felt like rookie employees in an unknown environment. Zeka had no sooner started in the EAP when she realised that she was capable of something better. There was a challenge for her in dealing with staff reactions in being allowed to pursue this new avenue.

*I'm there only for a short time...I ask the bakery manager if I can learn to be the cashier...immediately I start training as a cashier...I was selected by the management to go for training...some cashiers are shocked that I'm going for the training when I'm here for a short time (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

For Babalo the challenge lay in coping with new responsibilities. Like Zeka, he also had the opportunity of assuming different job functions while engaging the EAP.

*Participating in this programme...was a test to see how I was going to cope...didn't know what to expect...changing from a front line assistant...I was nervous...in the*

*office there was a tension...but I was happy at that time because it was a different job now...I'm watching them [staff] now in the CCTV...they feel threatened that I'm watching them...that was another experience (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Nathi shared this experience.

*When I started one manager thought I could just do whatever he told me...some customers would shout at me...some managers were nasty...they would just tell me to do things...I didn't want to be called to the office...and then maybe be fired...so I just did it (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Not giving up**

Participants were aware of the ongoing strain of finding employment. As the EAP drew to a close, some wanted a sense of continuity and to remain focused while others needed to stay motivated for the challenges ahead.

*Since 2007 I have been looking for a job...unemployment is hard...being at home is difficult...I'm nervous for when the [EAP] contract ends...I looked forward to being at work...I have to keep motivating myself (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I was unemployed for one and a half years...I was looking for a job everyday...to look for possible employment...it's going to be a challenge...I cannot plan much ahead while I'm still on the programme...when my contract ends...I don't want to go back to the community and just sit there and do nothing...I need continuity in my life...I want to be focused (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.3.7 Fighting social stigmas**

The participants indicated that fighting social stigmas was a challenge for them during the EAP. Two sub- categories are represented next.

#### **Social attitudes**

Babalo realised some of the staff were not informed about the participants coming into the work environment for the EAP. Some employees were uncertain as to whether he was capable of doing the job or not.

*The office staff knew about us coming but the floor staff was not told that we were coming...I could see what people think...how they react...the staff didn't know how I will do...that maybe I'm not going to cope because I'm walking with crutches...even the customers were surprised (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

Corey had to deal with different types of people in the store.

*Working as a merchandising assistant...there were always different people to deal with...sometimes staff made me angry...being rude...customers also made me angry sometimes...I didn't show I was angry...I just listened and tried to help them (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Disability awareness in the workplace**

Babalo thought that disability awareness in the workplace was lacking and Zuko alluded to the insufficient diversity in the company

*They were not prepared for us...not told that we [participants] were coming...the staff didn't know how I will do...they thought I'm not going to cope because I'm walking with crutches...people[without disabilities] are always asking for jobs here but now here is the people with the disability(Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*People with disabilities are not given too much chance...there are a lot of people out there who do qualify...even in the factory environment...there is minimum representation of people with disabilities...you can't say that companies don't employ people with disabilities...but here [in store] there is poor representation on our staff (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### **4.3.8 Summary of the three significant experiences participants observed during the EAP.**

These three facets are based on the objective to understand (a) what the facilitating factors were which helped the participants cope in the EAP, (b) what the perceived benefits were of participating in the EAP and (c) what the perceived challenges were of engaging the EAP.

The participants indicated that embracing the workplace helped them cope during the EAP. The participants embraced the EAP by having a positive attitude towards being in the work environment. They also welcomed the change of engaging in the EAP (as opposed to being unemployed people with disabilities) as a means of accessing the employment sector and they spoke of having their family's blessing and supportive while they engaged the EAP. The participants reported having faith in the job through believing, and by having the right social support and being accepted helped them to step up to the job and enjoy the EAP experience.

Three main benefits of engaging the EAP were mentioned by the participants. First, the EAP as a means of employment gave them the opportunity to connect with people in the workplace. Being mentored while on the EAP, having new responsibilities, acquiring skills and, having a job contributed to the EAP being a positive experience for the participants. This in turn helped the participants to step forward so they had a sense of belonging in the workplace where they enjoyed learning in as much as they did working.

Ultimately, the EAP meant that the participants could swap their disability role for a worker role. Being a worker helped the participants advance their social network and enjoy earning an income which elevated their social role and acceptance in society.

The EAP presented the challenge of adapting to a new environment where they felt like rookie employees. When the EAP was nearing completion, participants were hoping for further opportunity in the workplace. The EAP highlighted the realisation of social stigmas present in the workplace. There were negative attitudes to contend with and some participants found disability awareness and diversity in the workplace lacking. The participants' experiences as encountered while engaging the EAP emerged as *Theme 2*. Their view of engaging the EAP was captured as *Belonging in the world of work*.

#### 4.4 Theme Three: Personal actions

Theme Three reflects the participants' personal actions taken to promote their progress relating to the aforementioned expectations and challenges by posing the question: "What actions have you taken / are you taking or will you take?"

Theme Three indicated that the participants' actions relating to their expectations and challenges of the EAP was collectively termed **Active participation begins with me**.

TABLE 4: THEME THREE – ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BEGINS WITH ME			
THEME	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	CODES
Active participation begins with me	Continuously job hunting	Searching to find something	buying newspapers to look for employment sourcing vacant posts sending CV to Rehab hunting more jobs looking for a job ask to be the cashier write letter
		Tapping into support network	attend Rehab with other people having a disability talk to friends who are working look for jobs at shops I ask the bakery manager the cashier write letter to the boss been to recruitment agencies heard about programme from others with disabilities

Active participation begins with me	Being in the job among others	I can do this job	I was an employee check stock fill shelves check barcodes weigh things check prices fetch trolleys work in a team liaise with people pay vendors do reference checks assist people with disabilities in company learn about the job watch the CCTV communicate with customers pack groceries clean baskets trolleys go for training explain to customers pack merchandise work in different aisles
		My job my responsibility	find out why payments not gone through resolve employees' queries get information for staff I knew when stock was finished doing my job properly know what is expected of me work makes me try harder frontline assistant to CCTV work
	Positive choices	Being assertive	not isolating myself expressing myself stand up for yourself how to deal with people ask if I don't know I explain I say to them go tell I stood up for her I stood my ground
		Preparing for the next job	work harder more prepared for the next job it is about the permanent job wanted my life to progress considering changing to HR started as packer I start to be the cashier
		A good decision	EAP good opportunity to get out do something a very good decision to come into the programme opportunity into the real workplace interested to come into the programme to get a job this programme will lead to permanent work something bigger

#### 4.4.1 Continuously job hunting

There are two sub- categories which elaborate how the participants took action in job hunting.

##### Searching to find something

It was evident from the participants' views that they took active steps to search for job opportunities.

*I'm buying newspapers to look for possible employment...sourcing out some vacant posts...sending my CV to Rehab...do whatever I need to do to sustain this employment...take chances that come (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I'm hunting more jobs now...always look in the papers...looking around for what I can do...anything that comes (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Tapping into support network**

Participants used the support of available social networks to look for jobs.

*When I am looking for work I attend Rehab with other people who are having a disability...we are coming together as the volunteers...talk to friends who are working to see if there are no other jobs where they are working...look for the job at the shops in Mdantsane (Babalo, 19 April 2011, interview 1)*

*I ask the bakery manager if I can be the cashier...ask the lady in the office...write the letter to the boss (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.4.2 Being in the job among others**

The participants had expectations of finding work and to be employed. Two sub-categories are presented which refer to working with others in the workplace.

#### ***I can do this job***

The EAP gave participants a chance to realise the role of being active employees in the workforce.

*I was an employee...check on stock...fill shelves...check barcodes... match the price of items...weigh things...fetch trolleys...check if customers came to my aisle...continue to fill shelves again...work with people (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I work within a team...liaise with outside people...pay up vendors...do reference checks for new employees... liaise with management...assist people with disabilities in the company (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### ***My job my responsibility***

Participants had to assume the responsibility of getting the job done properly. Zuko expected professionalism and dedication. He and Babalo knew they had to deliver a sterling performance.

*I do liaise with outside people...If their payments has not gone through I find out from the finance department why...I do follow up for employees' queries...trying to resolve them...get information required by staff...it was my responsibility (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*With the new job came the trust given to me...I know what is expected of me...I just show them by working that I can do the job... this work makes me try more harder...from a front line assistant...now in the CCTV work...I managed (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### **4.4.3 Positive choices**

For the participants to take positive action it meant they had to tap into their inner resources. Three sub- categories are presented to elaborate.

##### **Being assertive**

Participants felt the need to exert confidence and be assertive during the EAP.

*This whole experience helped me a lot...taught me how to deal with people...face up with the management...ask if I don't know something (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I was doing my job...some customers shout they want an item from the shelf...I knew when the stock was finished...I explain...they say they are going to tell the manager...I say to them go tell...I knew I was doing my job properly (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **Preparing for the next job**

The EAP presented opportunity for participants to challenge themselves for the next available job opportunity.

*I wanted my life to progress...I knew the responsibility I was going to face...which I welcome...and now I'm considering changing to HR...my responsibility to make sure (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I started as a packer...I think this is fine...but one day I ask if I can learn to be the cashier...I do that...that's when I start to be the cashier...I am moving forward...I have a hope for something bigger (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **A good decision**

The participants chose to participate in the EAP.

*Unemployment is hard...I want to have a regular job...it [EAP] would be a good opportunity to get out and do something (Corey 21 April 2011, interview 1)*

*Unemployed...looking for a job every day...it's more about what you know...what you want in life...take chances...so it has been a very good decision to come into the programme (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

#### 4.4.4 Summary of the participants’ personal actions taken to promote their progress relating to the expectations and challenges presented in the EAP

The participants engaging in the EAP were unemployed people with disabilities. This opportunity for them to gain exposure in the workplace heightened their expectations of finding employment. Actions taken reflected participants were continuously job hunting, searching to find something while making use of available support networks. The EAP allowed the participants to see themselves in a work environment. They focused on having a positive attitude, executing a particular job and doing it properly and responsibly. Furthermore, the participants’ actions showed them making positive choices by being assertive and preparing themselves for the next job. Ultimately, engaging the EAP was seen a good decision.

#### 4.5 Theme Four

Theme Four identifies the changes experienced by the participants, relating to their experiences in the EAP when they were asked to reflect on the question: ‘How has this experience changed things for you? Or, what sort of changes have you experienced? Theme Four representing the collective changes experienced by the participants as a result of engaging the EAP was seen as **Advancing Quality of life**.

TABLE 5: THEME FOUR – ADVANCING QUALITY OF LIFE			
THEME	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	CODES
Advancing quality of life	Change is in me	Self conviction	I will never be shy again I'm more confident more driven now I can speak out participate contribute I am motivated a better person I know who I am I can believe I have a right to be here in this work
		Full of optimism	happy to get that cashiers certificate in a job among others moving forward changing to HR need continuity be focused keep that experience stay fresh to learn go back to college
	Change is in me	You can make a difference	Satisfy needs of my family make a difference to them made a difference in my life I was a person who could contribute not be a burden Gave me some belief you can make a difference

Advancing quality of life		Uplifted	to have this change of work I felt accepted this experience helps me to believe the working world has given me back a positive outlook towards working this experience changed the quality of life a social enlightenment another four months to my contract so happy extra working time made a difference
	Life is a journey	Towards independence	was more like an introvert now I participate contribute don't want to go back and do nothing experience helped me to work to cope do the job skills will not be lost being in the job moving forward being at work stand on my own two feet support myself was independent
		I have grown	the programme helped me grow I was like everyone else there an employee as a merchandising assistant work every day instead of sitting at home being a better person they accept my disability I know who I am I know I can do this I believed people look at my disability I show them I can do the job this company has given that sense of growth sense of status

#### 4.5.1 Change is in me

Participants became aware of personal change that occurred as a result of engaging the EAP. Four sub- categories below extrapolate.

##### **Self conviction**

The participants experienced a sense of self assurance while on the EAP. Zuko and Zeka voiced their conviction.

*I've grown a lot...now I can speak out...I can participate...I can contribute...I am confident (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Now I have this job...I know who I am...I can believe I have a right to be here in this work (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **Optimism**

The participants were full of optimism. Babalo, Zuko and Zeka were enthusiastic about learning further.

*I'm now considering changing to HR work...I need continuity in my life...I want to be focused (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I've been looking around for what I can do...so I can keep that experience...so I can stay fresh to learn...I think I could go back to college to get that certificate (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I felt happy that I was going to get that cashiers certificate...I am happy being in the job among others...I am moving forward (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **You can make a difference**

The participants felt the EAP made it possible for them to make a difference.

*Having this job...to satisfy the needs of my family...I can make a difference to them (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*People were not pitying me...they were putting my disability aside...it has made a difference in my life...I was like everyone else...an employee...now I was a person who could contribute...and not be a burden financially (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Uplifted**

The participants felt uplifted by the EAP encounter. Corey and Zuko share their thoughts about the EAP effecting change in their lives.

*I liked having my own money...learning...getting to know staff...being a better person...the working world has given me back a positive outlook towards working (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*This experience has been so great...it's changed the quality of life...there's been too much growth within myself...like a social enlightenment (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.5.2 Life is a journey**

The participants reflected on the EAP journey. Their understanding is life is not about their disability but about their journey. Two sub- categories below elaborate.

#### **Progression towards independence**

Participants presented the view they were making progress towards becoming independent.

*When I was not in this programme...I was more like an introvert...I wanted my life to progress...now...I can participate...contribute...my mentality just told me that I don't have a disability even if I do have...I don't want to go back to the community...sit there and do nothing...I'm now considering changing to HR (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*This whole experience helped me...taught me how to work...how to cope...I can do the job ...this worker role has helped me...to be more prepared...skills will not be lost...I can learn...hunt more jobs...go back to college (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I wanted the chance to gain more...have a regular job...I looked forward to being at work...I could stand on my own two feet...support myself...I was independent (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### ***I have grown***

Engaging the EAP allowed participants to reflect on the changes within themselves. These were their thoughts.

*Personally the programme helped me grow... it made me feel like a man...a person who could contribute...I was like everyone else there...I was an employee...not a burden (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*This company has given me that sense of growth...doing HR...you are part of them...gives me a sense of status...when you are a man you are supposed to be earning your own salary...I am earning something...people in the workplace respect me...they recognise the work...people in my community they do respect me now (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Having a job...working as a merchandising assistant...I could go out to work every day instead of sitting at home...I think of myself being a better person (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I'm more confident...no more shy...I know I can do this...I believed in myself...some people look at my disability...I just show them...I can do the job...I managed (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I tried many things...I had a hope...now I have this job...being in the job among others...my knowledge getting more...to earn the salary...I know who I am...I am moving forward (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **4.5.3 Summary of the changes that the participants experienced as a result of engaging in the EAP**

Engaging the EAP as a means of accessing the open labour market was considered a real life journey for the participants. There was a sense of conviction and optimism. The EAP encounter allowed the participants to experience a feeling of upliftment and being able to make a difference. Participating in the EAP and in the workplace created a sense of progression; a sense of moving forward and, of being independent. Final reflections show an awareness of the growth experienced while engaging the EAP.

#### 4.6 Summary for this chapter

This chapter provided a presentation of the findings. Four emerging themes were linked to the objectives set out for this study.

These themes were identified as: a *Vehicle of progression* (collective expectations), *Belonging in the world of work* (collective experiences encountered during the EAP), *Active participation begins with me* (personal actions taken to promote progress), and *Life is a journey* (changes experienced by participants as a result of engaging the EAP). These reflect an understanding of the cumulative experiences of the participants as they engaged in an EAP as a means of accessing employment in the open labour market.

Chapter 5 will discuss these themes in relation to the literature. Final conclusions and recommendations for future research follow in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *DISCUSSION*

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the information gathered from the participants and the review of the literature in Chapter Two. Reflected in this chapter are key themes that emerged from the findings presented in Chapter Four:

- Vehicle of progression
- Belonging in the world of work
- Active participation begins with me
- Advancing quality of life

#### 5.2 Theme One: Vehicle of Progression

Theme one relates to the first objective; to understand the expectations of the participants entering the EAP. These expectations were seen as a ***Vehicle of progression towards employment***.

This study advances the expectancy of achieving a positive outcome regarding employment prospects. Four main categories of expectations which emerged from the findings are presented below.

##### ***5.2.1 An expectation of the EAP being a learning opportunity***

Learning emerged as an expectation identified by the participants. Some expected the EAP to be a personal learning experience; a journey into the working world. Others wanted the EAP to be an opportunity to learn and build capacity in a specific type of work. Learning and being educated and skilled, is important for developing future economic prospects. Having a solid basic education allows people with disabilities to compete for jobs in the open labour market and, strengthen their advancement toward economic participation (Siphuka, 2011). Three participants attended special schools for people with disabilities; two of them discontinued their schooling after Grade 11 and the third completed Grade 10, the highest level at this school for learners with cognitive impairments. The remaining two participants

completed Grade 12 at mainstream schools in the township where they live. Special schools in South Africa are protectionist, trapped in an isolating apartheid system and ineffective in providing sufficient resources for people with disabilities to socialize and make the transition into the economic sector (Sipuka, 2011). The participants were proactively involved in the REHAB programme (see Chapter One). Despite their different levels of schooling, they all took active steps in continuing their journey towards finding employment. The participants' decision to engage the EAP provided the opportunity to experience a further dimension of learning and progress towards being employed. This decision presents a counter argument against the perception of people with disabilities (especially women) who may be considered as roleless (Sipuka, 2011).

The participants had aspirations of improving their future; of finding employment and persevering in spite of the challenges. By attending volunteer sessions at REHAB prior to engaging the EAP, participants embarked on a personal journey; believing in their capability, motivation and cognitive resources, planning their actions needed to meet their goal of finding an employment opportunity. This theme resonates with the Inman *et al.*, (2007) study showing the impact of a positive attitude and self belief on personal actions taken.

The participants expected the EAP would provide training for specific job tasks; to capacitate them in securing employment and allowing them to perform an accepted role in society. This reflects the study by Van Niekerk *et al.*,(2006) who noted the expectations' of people with disabilities participating in a community entrepreneurship project was to learn specific skills and to develop their personal capacity, self-worth and to reach an envisaged destination of being valued in the community. Once engaged in the EAP, two participants realised they had the capacity to do even more. This shows while on the EAP their original expectations were fuelled and developed further. Their expectation for self expansion grew as their self concept and self efficacy began to develop thus supporting literature by Strong (1998) that the opportunity to work is powerful in influencing a person's sense of self.

### **5.2.2 Expectations towards permanent employment**

For people with disabilities, finding their way into the employment sector may be fraught with many challenges, such as, the continuous stress of job searching and being less able to negotiate for potential work opportunities (Stopford, 1987) reducing their chances to gain work skills and work experience (Wordsworth, 2004). Impairment equals negative human capital; people with disabilities are seen to have less economic value in the employment sector (Berthoud, 2008) resulting in people with disabilities finding themselves on the economic periphery (Sipuka 2011).

It could be argued the participants were tired of being unemployed, of being on the periphery and, ready to stand up to the challenges they faced due their having a disability. The prospect of participating in the EAP had a positive effect on the participants. They began to believe the EAP would allow them entry into employment, fuelling their hopes and aspirations as well as their attitudes about being employed. Actively engaging the EAP furthered the expectation of hope that they could stay longer in the employment sector. The EAP was a temporary learning contract and there was anxiety regarding the uncertainty of not knowing what they would do when the contract ended. The expectation that the contract would be renewed and provide some form of continuity, showed their motivation to sustain employment, reinforcing their desire for a permanent job. These findings concur with studies by Engelbrecht and Lorenzo (2010) and Williams *et al.*, (2010) indicating people with disabilities have hopes of employment permanency.

### **5.2.3 The expectations of being a worker**

Engelbrecht (2006) referred to Hanson-Mayer's (1984) claim that people with disabilities who have led lengthy disability – oriented lifestyles, found it difficult adapting to work as they were unable to realize their potential as workers. It could be said the participants led lengthy disability oriented lifestyles due to their disability and associated lengthy unemployment status. Through the REHAB programme and the decision to accept the invitation to the EAP, they began to challenge their disability oriented lifestyles, developing expectations of becoming active employees. These expectations were shaped by their previous experiences of being unemployed and the challenges associated with job seeking. There was an expectation of being part

of the workforce and assuming a more socially valued, dignified role. It is notable the participants wanted this work opportunity to provide social dignity as opposed to sitting at home unemployed. They wanted to challenge the negative attitudes that portrayed them as helpless, incompetent, and roleless by proving their worth, showing others they could contribute. They wanted the opportunity to belong and be recognized as socially valued citizens. This finding is similar to what Gcaza (2000), Van Niekerk *et al.*, (2006) and Lloyd and Waghorn (2007) noted in terms of social inclusion providing social value that promotes a sense of social identity.

#### **5.2.4 An expectation of being able to access employment**

Opportunity for people with disabilities to access employment responds to an appeal by Davis (2007) to redefine disability as (a person with) a different level of ability and to improve the perceived human capital and economic value of people with disabilities (Berthoud, 2008). The EAP opportunity was the catalyst encouraging them to voice realistic expectations of moving out of unemployment. These expectations showed they were ready to reclaim their power to make choices, of wanting to work and the EAP being their opportunity to working life. This resonates with the findings raised in the literature (Engelbrecht, 2006; Jakobsen, 2009). The accessibility of work, meant people with disabilities had enabling and uplifting expectations that were purpose driven. This corroborated with the findings of previous studies which revealed the prospect of having work allowed people with disabilities to want to occupy their time meaningfully, to be productive and progress in making family life better instead of sitting and doing nothing (Van Niekerk *et al.*, 2006; Barkey *et al.*, 2009).

#### **5.2.5 Summary of Theme One**

This study shows that given an opportunity, people with disabilities are able to voice their expectations regarding their need to be employed. Their motivation to learn and become skilled sends a strong message that they have hopes of assuming a socially valued role in society. Evidence of participants' expectations shows a nurturing self belief and an empowerment that enables them to transition into the work environment.

### 5.3 Theme Two: Belonging in the world of work

Theme two relates to the second objective: to understand the experiences of the participants during the EAP. The theme is threefold reflecting the *facilitating factors*, *perceived benefits* and *challenges* were while engaging the EAP. Their experiences were noted as ***Belonging in the world of work***. The discussion of experiences encountered is presented below.

#### 5.3.1 *Facilitating factors for engaging in the EAP*

The facilitating factors provide an understanding of how the participants' cope in the EAP. The discussion reflects how participants' embraced the workplace and had faith in the EAP as a job opportunity which helped ease their transition into the employment sector. The South African Employment Equity legislation (Department of Labour, 2003b) implies that employers should facilitate employment opportunities for people with disabilities, by creating the capacity for skills development and workplace learning. The EAP in this study was negotiated between the participating retail company and REHAB promoting skills training in the retail sector for the participants, momentarily easing the stress of job searching. This opportunity in the real working world challenges documented perceptions of ignorance, negative attitudes and discrimination towards people with disabilities in the workplace similar to the findings of Maja *et al.*, (2011) and Sipuka, (2011).

Engelbrecht (2006) questioned the extent to which people with disabilities are equipped to challenge stigmatisation and transform the course of disability employment in the open labour market. In contrast, this study revealed the positive expectations of participants which reflected their spirit and drive towards accessing work, rather than self-pity. Participants reflected on their inner attributes such as positive attitude and self belief as facilitating factors in entry to the EAP and coping with the work environment. These factors allowed the participants to respond to change that took place during the EAP; to welcome and value changes in their job function which continued to shape their expectations and goals. Inman *et al.*, 2007, doing research in England, also found opportunity for vocational progression, allowed people with disabilities to experience a positive progression in their attitudes and self belief. As a result, people with disabilities were able to have goals and make

plans to find employment. The participants valued the support of family and people in the work environment. These aspects helped them feel accepted during the EAP and allowed them to ease into their new work role. These factors correlate with findings from Van Niekerk *et al.*, (2006) and Lloyd and Waghorn, (2007) that support provided during a workplace programme gives acknowledgement of self worth and social acceptance.

### **5.3.2 Perceived benefits of engaging in an EAP**

The findings of this study indicate a range of benefits as a result of participants engaging the EAP. The benefits reflected the expectations, noting a sense of satisfaction during the EAP which outweighed the challenges mentioned later. The first of these benefits, one of connectedness to the workplace offered by the EAP is linked to the way in which participants embraced the workplace and had faith in the work opportunity.

Being mentored, enjoying new responsibilities and acquiring skills were regarded by the participants as positive experiences; connecting to the working world and accessing the work environment. For the participants it enhanced their ability, taking their focus away their disability which Boshoff and Wolmarans (1998) and Davis (2007) advocated for, in the process of economic mainstreaming. This benefit also concurs with the findings by Maja *et al.*, (2011) enhancing people with disabilities' positive attitude and productivity through training including their managers' outlook. The experience of workplace learning encouraged continuous working and new learning. The reward included the participants' contribution, encouraged feelings of competence, belonging and stepping forward into the employment world and into society. This resonates with findings of other studies (Sayce, 2001; Inman *et al.*, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 2010 and Maja *et al.*, 2011).

People with disabilities are underrepresented in the workplace (Wordsworth, 2004). The participants viewed transitioning into the workplace and a worker role as benefits (linking their expectations and facilitating role). The EAP was a positive experience, connecting participants with the world of work and allowing them to step forward and assume a working role in which they learned and acquired new skills.

Finding support and acceptance during the transition into the workplace helped participants advance their social capital and integration as working citizens, thus strengthening their role identity in civic life similar to Diamant and Waterhouse (2005); Lorenzo *et al.*, (2007) and Lloyd and Waghorn (2007) who found enabling social environments promote positive role identity and pulls people with disabilities from the periphery into a welcoming society.

Thus, the EAP could be considered as a beneficial programme aimed at assisting people with disabilities into the workplace. Three of the participants already received a disability grant, so earning an additional allowance during the EAP was a bonus. This monetary gain was therefore another benefit which elevated participants to a paid employee status, re-affirming their sense of identity and productivity while favoring a Work Ethic approach that promotes competence and advances economic progression. This is supported by Engelbrecht and Lorenzo (2010) and Williams *et al.*, (2010) who reported being able to earn an income enabled people with disabilities to contribute actively to their households and influenced their motivation and productivity in the open labour market.

### **5.3.3 Perceived challenges of engaging in an EAP**

The EAP was an opportunity for the participants to access the open labour market. Some had never been in formal employment and it was their first exposure to the retail environment which has its own business culture. The host retail company has an ongoing corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme that provides practical entrepreneurial and social skills training for school children doing the life orientation curriculum. The EAP was offered the participants as part of the company's corporate social responsibility programme which at the same time contributed to the advancement of employment equity by developing social networks and support systems for people with disabilities (Lloyd and Waghorn, 2007).

Wordsworth (2004) feels people with disabilities are unable to negotiate for potential work opportunities due to what Stopford (1987) termed overwhelming stresses of job searching. In this study participants acknowledged the challenges of navigating the work environment.

Their previous unemployment experience, which compares to findings of Boshoff and Wolmarans (1998) of limited job training and work experience, challenging them to learn and adapt to the work environment, to learn the job as well as getting used to working with different people within a short time period. Most of them felt like rookies on the job when it came to engaging certain people in the workplace. Participants faced the challenge of fighting social stigmas in the workplace, especially dealing with negative attitudes, and the realization there is a need for disability awareness in the business sector. Interestingly, the participants' views regarding negative attitudes were mainly directed towards managers, outsourced staff (merchandisers) and customers. It may be that certain staff members regarded people with disabilities as helpless victims at the mercy of corporate social responsibility and in need of charity. Wordsworth (2004); Jakobsen (2009) and Maja et al., (2011) also reported the social barriers evident in the behaviours of able-bodied staff as well as the resistance met from inadequately informed line managers in accommodating people with disabilities.

Companies which intend employing people with disabilities should be flexible and supportive. According to Jashnani (2011) and Carelse (2012), lobbying for equal rights for people with disabilities, strongly suggests sensitization programmes in the employment sector should become integral to corporate strategies, disability policy, and best HR practice when working towards recruiting and retaining people with disabilities for an inclusive society.

Farrell and Bryant (2009a) view employment placement programmes as employment strategies that provide effective means of overcoming environmental and social barriers. The positive exposure to recruitment and job opportunities for people with disability in the employment sector allows them to contribute meaningfully in society.

The EAP gave impetus to participants' personal journey of finding employment. The findings of this study showed participants wanted a sense of continuity and were persistent in finding a permanent job. This study captures the focus of participants striving to become working citizens and assuming a socially dignified role enabling an ethos of dynamism. Their biggest challenge while engaging the EAP was persevering since the idea of going back home to nothing was unappealing. This

finding differs from Sipuka (2011) whose study findings reinforced the notion that people with disabilities are not economically mainstreamed due to continuing social barriers which stunt the economic development of people with disabilities.

The EAP not only met the expectation of learning and capacity building, but it was a supporting, uplifting and empowering experience which challenged and developed participants self belief . Lorenzo et al., (2007) and Inman et al., (2007) noted that accessing opportunity evolved so positively meant that people with disabilities could not see themselves giving up and going back; hopeful the experience could continue beyond the initial pre-arrangement.

#### **5.3.4 Summary of Theme Two**

This study highlights people with disabilities have a need to belong in the working world and to feel they are working citizens. Their sense of agency is portrayed in the way they see themselves as being drivers in embracing the workplace and having faith in a given job opportunity. They reveal the benefits that accompany a work opportunity namely, connecting with society, and stepping forward to embrace a more socially accepted role as a worker. Lastly, they remind the reader of the remaining challenges when entering a new environment of having to fight social stigmas; yet they are not ready to give up their hopes and aspirations of being employed.

#### **5.4. Theme Three: Active participation begins with me**

Theme three focuses on the third objective: the personal actions taken by participants to promote their progress relating to the expectations and challenges of the EAP. Collectively the participants' actions are termed as Active participation begins with me. The EAP was an opportunity for unemployed people with disabilities to actively engage the open labour market as a means of accessing employment through an understanding of the nature of the participants' transactions and their work surroundings. Actions taken by participants are reflected below.

#### **5.4.1 *Continuously job hunting***

For the participants, continuously hunting for work was about learning and building capacity which would free them from unemployment. As noted in Chapter One, the participants are familiar clients of REHAB, networking with this organisation and other people with disabilities to access jobs. There is a sense participants' actions to accessing employment (see Theme One) was a process they started before engaging the EAP and something that will continue when the EAP contract ends. The EAP experience allowed participants to integrate their past experience of unemployment with their present workplace role, encouraging them to further pursue job hunting by continuously searching for employment and tapping into support networks (see 4.4.3). Participants are actively choosing to work rather than relying indefinitely on welfare grants from the South African government and refocusing away from their limitations and succumbing to societal stigma regarding them as subjects of pity and charity (see 4.3.7 & 4.5.1). Feedback reported elsewhere (Boshoff and Wolmarans, 1998) showed that South African citizens were willing to support people with disabilities taking up pivotal roles in society as productive citizens, which enable them to participate in the economy rather than being dependent on state welfare. The EAP provided positive experiences such as taking responsibility for a job, the regularity of being in a job among other employees and the satisfaction of being capable and mastering skills which added value to their life's experiences and therefore challenged them to persist in finding a job.

#### **5.4.2 *The job and the responsibility***

For participants, the EAP was a journey in becoming a worker. Being part of the EAP, made them realise the EAP experience was about embracing the workplace and having faith in the job, facilitating factors intrinsic to the participants' themselves. During the EAP the participants had access to workplace learning, actively doing the job assigned to them and assuming full responsibility as an active employee among other employees in the retail sector. These actions ensured the participants enjoyed the benefits reported earlier in Theme Two of Chapter Four.

Supporting evidence found in Inman et al., (2007) and Diamant and Waterhouse (2010) suggests active participation in work activities in the open labour market provides the foundation for job satisfaction and connect people with disabilities to the broader context of work while rooting them in the employment environment among people without disabilities. It is these elements that provide further incentive for people with disabilities to make better choices when accessing employment (Farrell & Bryant, 2009b).

### **5.4.3 Making positive choices**

The EAP allowed participants' entry into the open labour market, a combined effort with the retail company hosting them and developing their knowledge and skills, rather than focusing on their disability. This is the notion Watson (2004) referred to saying that collective efforts were necessary for people with disabilities to realise their capabilities while Yuval – Davis (2006) wrote; opportunity was key to people with disabilities enjoying a socially accepted and valued identity, despite having to navigate various forms of oppression when accessing employment.

For the duration of the EAP, the participants had the opportunity of being represented in the workforce, momentarily creating awareness of disability and building diversity in the workplace. For them, transitioning into the workplace was about readying them for the next job, embracing the challenge of a new environment and adapting to their rookie employee status by being assertive. Contrastingly Engelbrecht (2006) shows the difficulty people with disabilities have in transitioning into the open labour market. Low self esteem and feelings of disempowerment, lead to a lack of agency among employees, despite being employed by a company with over fifty percent of people with disabilities. The participants' perseverance lies in pursuing economic opportunity and social progress and their efforts in making positive choices to connect with, and belong in society.

The findings in this theme revealed that collective expectations of accessing employment together with the benefits of being exposed to the employment sector were powerful motivators for wanting to stay in a job, to persevere and, for deciding to prepare for the next employment opportunity.

These findings support the work of (Boshoff and Wolmarans, (1998) and Inman et al., (2007), which favours people with disabilities adopting a Work Ethic approach in order for them to be productive, rather than being dependent and, actively working towards becoming socially integrated citizens.

#### **5.4.4 Summary of Theme Three**

This theme reflects personal actions taken by people with disabilities in promoting their progress in conjunction with their expectations (Theme One) and challenges (Theme Three) of the EAP. Voicing their expectations was an important first-step action, allowing them to put their hopes in gaining from the EAP as an employment opportunity into perspective. Further, active progressions are noted in the way participants saw themselves embracing the workplace, stepping forward and adapting to belonging in the workplace. Essentially the success of these actions show active participation begins with the individuals as they continue their journey in finding employment so they may join the economic mainstream. The essence of their active participation lies in the positive choices and decisions they continue to make towards accessing employment. The participants' choice to take action speaks of an ethos of moving ahead; good decisions in advancing their quality of life.

### **5.5 Theme Four: Advancing the Quality of Life**

Theme Four reflects the findings of objective four: to understand the changes the participants encountered as a result of actively participating in the EAP. Collectively, the changes noted by the participants are termed as Advancing Quality of Life which also signifies the culmination of the participants' experiences in the EAP.

The perception of disability has influenced the structure of society's thinking, not only in how we relate to people with disabilities but also in how they have come to see themselves. This perception reinforces people with disabilities being viewed as negative human capital, reducing their productivity potential and limiting job prospects (Berthoud, 2008). Earlier references such as Shaw et al., (2007) and Farrell and Bryant, (2009,b), also report an optimizing environment, supportive social context and the positive experience of recruitment opportunity, allows people with disabilities to participate and contribute meaningfully in society. The EAP provided

opportunity to challenge societal ignorance and prejudice and to acknowledge the potential within people with disabilities. This opportunity allowed participants to develop their skill capacity through workplace learning, through training and support in the open labour market.

The EAP allowed participants to challenge the social exclusion of people with disabilities by creating opportunity for them to be included in the employment sector and thereby positively impacting their participation in socio-economic activity. Contrastingly Sipuka (2011) reports opportunities (for people with disabilities) for economic inclusion were nearly impossible to realise because of a less optimizing environment creating a negative impact on their spirit and drive in the employment arena.

### **5.5.1 Change is in me**

In this study, the findings show consensus among participants that the first change observed lay within them. There was a sense of self conviction, optimism, of being uplifted and a feeling they could make a difference. This finding is consistent with Van Niekerk *et al.*, (2006) and Inman *et al.*, (2007) showing when given a chance to actively participate and contribute socio-economically, people with disabilities experienced a sense of personal upliftment and direction they considered valuable.

Alant *et al.*, (2007) voiced concerns of how people with disabilities engaged the concept of social inclusivity in the process of developing social transformation. The participants saw the EAP as a means of advancing the quality of their lives, a journey of personal growth towards independence, and a means of embracing growth and connectedness in society. The EAP provided access to social and economic networks which encouraged a positive attitudinal shift to social inclusion for people with disabilities. The EAP facilitated access to the employment sector and strengthened community ties between REHAB, people with disabilities and, the host company as a potential employer which sought to enable social capital and promote social integration of people with disabilities wanting to become working citizens.

### ***5.5.2 Life is a journey***

The findings show the participants' journey towards employment was one of social awareness, introspection, personal growth and development, and an understanding of their transactions with themselves and their environment. These findings contrast with those of Engelbrecht (2006) and Sipuka (2011) in which people with disabilities discover their personal journey into employment restricts rather than advances quality of life; since they experience inferiority, isolation, lack of agency, ignorance and disempowerment rather than personal growth.

It could be said that the EAP was a tool; an employment strategy which allowed the participants access to an employment experience and its value and richness enabled a positive outcome for them. These findings concur with supporting literature of Van Niekerk et al., (2006); Inman et al., (2007) and Williams et al., (2010) in which people with disabilities engage an employment strategy which yields personal growth that shows a deep appreciation of being exposed to an employment opportunity and advancing quality of life.

### ***5.5.3 Summary of Theme Four***

This study identifies the journey of progression undertaken by the participants when they actively engaged the EAP, culminating in changes that add value to, and advances the quality of their lives. Their personal journey during the EAP, actively pursuing employment expectations, and challenging the social constructs of disability perceptions. Participants experience a powerful realisation that change has taken place within them. Positive affirmations of self-conviction, optimism, personal upliftment and, being able to make a difference confirm the EAP's influence in personal advancement. On their journey to accessing employment, and increasing their productivity potential, confronting the process of social transformation, participants experienced the positive impact of having actively participated in the open labour market. The sense of progression and ethos of dynamism brought about through active participation in the employment sector, allowed participants to advance their social awareness and journey out of unemployment towards socio-economic independence.

## 5.6 Discussion of methodology

To appreciate and understand these findings within a comprehensive framework, consideration of the possible limitations of the chosen methodology will now be presented. The study site was chosen for practical, purposeful reasons and therefore the sample is not representative of the entire unemployed population of people with disabilities.

The analysis however invites the reader to engage, appreciate and understand the experiences of five people with disabilities in an EAP as a means of accessing the open labour market.

The study population included people with disabilities known to and registered with the REHAB unemployment database and actively involved in the volunteer programme at the time of this study. Thus, data gathered did not include the experiences of people with disabilities from the broader spectrum of the unemployed. For example, those registered with other organizations such as Disabled People SA (DPSA). Consequently, the possibility exists for other participants (including persons with other types of disability such as hearing or visually impaired persons) to have been excluded from the study.

Chapter Six is the final chapter. An overview of each of the study objectives is presented with consideration of their fulfilment. A summary of each chapter is given followed by the final conclusion and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### ***CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

This research study was aimed at understanding the experiences of a group of unemployed people with disabilities as they actively engaged in an EAP as a means of accessing job opportunities in the open labour market.

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The context for this research study was introduced in Chapter One. The chapter outlined the disability perspective and research problem which posed the question concerning benefits and drawbacks an EAP held for people with disabilities engaging an access to employment strategy. The aim and four objectives of this study were noted. Chapter Two presented the review of literature underpinning disability related issues within the social context of employment in the open labour market.

Chapter Three described the methodology used to examine the participants' experiences as they engaged an EAP. Chapter Four further developed the methodology by uncovering and capturing the research findings. Chapter Five presented the discussion of the findings. Study objectives linked to the themes which emerged in chapter four were examined in relation to the literature.

Chapter Six considers the fulfilment of the study's objectives together, with a summary of findings of the research methodology. Recommendations for further research are presented, followed by the conclusion for this research study.

#### **6.2 Evidence regarding expectations of participants when entering the EAP**

The first objective showed participant expectations upon entering the EAP. The results showed people with disabilities have been able to articulate their expectations. The study also revealed that some of these expectations were met while participants' engaged the EAP. Participants' expectations of learning job skills, being workers and accessing employment were met. Securing permanent employment remains an expectation which has yet to be fulfilled. Therefore the study

objective was successfully met in terms of broadening an understanding of the expectations for people with disabilities entering an EAP.

### **6.3 Evidence of participants' experiences during the EAP**

This objective was threefold, reflecting the facilitating factors, perceived benefits and challenges while participants engaged the EAP. The results showed there were indeed strong and positive facilitating factors which guided participants during their EAP journey. Embracing the workplace and having faith in the new venture, participants showed a positive attitude in believing and welcoming change and benefitting from a positive support network they could appreciate, and enjoy the job opportunity the EAP provided. It is my opinion this was a key element in the EAP process.

The EAP as a beneficial experience allowed participants to connect with the working world, and exchange their disability roles for worker roles. Similarly, the study provided evidence that there were indeed challenges for people with disabilities engaging an EAP. Navigating a new environment challenged participants to adapt to the retail sector culture, and work with different people; relying on positive facilitating influences already mentioned. These influences also helped participants face social stigmas which emerged. Participants realised they would have to persevere in looking for employment opportunities. Therefore this study objective was successfully met since the study highlighted the experiences for people with disabilities engaging an EAP.

### **6.4 Evidence of actions taken by the participants to promote their own progress**

The third objective related to the personal actions taken by the participants in promoting their progress in relation to their expectations, and challenges of the EAP. The EAP could be viewed as a process of action. For each participant it was a journey in which they acknowledged active participation begins with them as they continuously searched for opportunities to access employment. Participants' on-the-job actions centered on satisfying learning expectations and being industrious; spurred on by personal facilitating traits which guided transition into the workplace. It

is my opinion the actions taken by the participants' added value and richness to their experience in the EAP, since it reflected the choices and decisions taken by them.

It can be concluded this study objective was successfully attained as the findings present evidence of actions taken by participants in promotion of progress towards accessing employment.

### **6.5 Evidence of the changes participants encountered through actively participating in the EAP**

The final objective brings to a close the experiences of participants engaging the EAP, highlighting the changes participants' encountered on their journey into employment. For the participants, the EAP was an opportunity to access employment, an experience that would provide a sense of personal upliftment and enlightenment. The findings indicate the positive attributes of self conviction, optimism, and upliftment and being able to make a difference; challenging social perceptions of exclusion and advancing human capital worthiness of people with disabilities. The EAP had a positive impact on the participants, allowing them to experience and appreciate the job opportunity and the changes which advanced the quality of their lives. My opinion is the EAP is more than an employment strategy. The EAP improved productivity potential and future job prospects. It provided a supportive social context in which participants could challenge societal prejudice, yet it created space for social inclusion by providing access to socio-economic networks. It can be said this study objective was successfully met as the EAP was a journey towards changing social awareness, embracing personal growth and a provided sense of connectedness with society.

### **6.6 Summation of research findings and relationship to Occupational Therapy Practice**

This research study provided opportunity for people with disabilities to be active participants in the process of research, allowing them to make a vital contribution to the existing body of knowledge regarding disability and employment access in South Africa. The summation of themes have provided strong evidence of human occupation, active participation in an everyday occupation, self belief and identity,

sense of choice and decision making, sense of agency, well being and promotion of quality of life. These are key attributes of Occupational Therapy practice.

The EAP as a pivotal element of the research process enabled people with disabilities to do something worthwhile and to be someone worthy for a short while. This study provided a means to further understand the human experience with occupation giving acknowledgement to the power of engagement in occupation and in this context, the occupation of work. Finally the research study has allowed the collaborative partnership between myself as researcher, the person with a disability (and the family) and the employer in the open labour market (the environment) to be strengthened. It is hoped that the findings of this study will lead to better understanding of and greater satisfaction of Occupational Therapy services in South Africa in the context of disability and employment in order to improve access outcomes for people with disabilities.

## **6.7 Summation of Research Methodology**

This study was confined to the East London region of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. This was a small case study of five people with disabilities pooled from one resource database to participate in a collective case study. The choice of methodology used did not fully reveal the enormity of the phenomenon investigated but rather explored the participants' experiences in depth.

## **6.8 Recommendations**

I have identified the following recommendations with the view of improving opportunities for people with disabilities enabling greater access to employment in the open labour market.

### **6.8.1 Learnership Protocol**

The learnership programmes fall under the DOHET and SETAs and are funded by the Skills Levy Fund under the auspices of (the Skills Development Act, Act of 97 of 1998, RSA, 1998). Based on the findings reflecting the challenges participants' experienced in the EAP, the research suggested the government enforce stricter monitoring and compliance of this Act pertaining to learnership protocol. As

participants alluded to challenging social barriers, it is recommended companies who intend hosting learnerships should submit a thorough site audit report indicating accessibility of the physical and social environments.

A further recommendation refers to host companies presenting a multi-pronged disability employment programme plan intended to provide employee assistance and, facilitate a special relationship between the employer and the employee.

This programme should include disability employment training, employee sensitization workshops, education workshops providing information on workplace equity related to the South African Employment Equity legislation (Department of Labour, 2003b). Implementing the programme would provide an opportunity for companies to consult and build relationships with disability resources in the community. It is further recommended that government enforce as obligatory practice for host companies presenting their disability employment programme plan before learnership programmes are allowed to proceed. This will ensure employees, and especially managers and supervisors have been informed of the recruitment and training for people with disabilities.

It is also recommended that government enforce stricter monitoring and compliance of learnership protocol, by requesting host companies to provide audit reports of their disability training implementation programmes.

### **6.8.2 Dissemination of findings**

First, it is envisaged the findings of this research be presented to the management board and staff of REHAB as a token of thanks for their support during this research study. This presentation should help to emphasize the valuable role REHAB performs as a disability resource organization in the community; facilitating employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The research findings will also aid REHAB in developing future programmes. These programmes will assist in counteracting the challenges faced by participants, such as adapting to the workplace, being rookie employees and preparing people with disabilities for the workplace.

Second, a presentation will be given to the participants, other REHAB clients with disabilities (including those engaging in learnerships) as well as local DPO's in appreciation for their contributions to the research study. This platform could be used to highlight the role people with disabilities have to play in strengthening disability awareness and contributing to the South African body of knowledge pertaining to disability issues and employment. The sharing of research findings could help to strengthen ties among various organizations within the disability sector and encourage joint programmes such as awareness, education and sensitization campaigns to challenge social stigmas and attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Third, a summary of the research findings will be disseminated to the East London business sector at a Border Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB) network evening, a quarterly event for local businesses to network and socialise. In continuing to build partnerships towards an inclusive society, it is equally important to include East London businesses as key role players to strengthen employment equity for people with disabilities in the Eastern Cape. This platform could be used to improve disability-inclusive employment practice and a REHAB marketing campaign for future recruitment and placement of people with disabilities.

The research findings will be disseminated to relevant departments in higher education institutions, particularly occupational therapists, social workers and commerce students.

This information will be presented during Continuing Professional Development (CPD) network sessions for occupational therapists, social workers as well as professionals in the commercial field. A lecture presentation (at the local universities) for students and educators in similar fields of study, would raise awareness of people with disabilities, promote social diversity and educate the public as to the potential of people with disabilities to be active role players in the community. The research findings will also be published in a professional journal as a contribution to the South African and international body of knowledge pertaining to disability issues and employment and be accessible for future researchers.

Lastly, to publish the findings of the research study in scholarly journals in order to share with fellow researchers and stimulate further expansion of research on the topic of disability and employment access

## **6.9 Further research**

This study has identified five areas for possible research in the future. They are the following:

### ***6.9.1 Expectations of prospective employers***

To prepare participants for entry into the EAP they were asked to voice their expectations. This study did not consider whether the prospective employer had any expectations in accepting young adults with disabilities into the work sector. Future studies could establish host companies' expectations for engaging people with disabilities entering EAP's such as learnership programmes.

### ***6.9.2 Retaining people with disabilities in the employment sector***

The EAP in this study was a six month contract only as compared to formal learnership programmes in South Africa which are usually one year contracts. Further research could be undertaken to determine the percentage of learnership candidates offered extended contracts or permanent employment with host companies when initial contracts have expired.

### ***6.9.3 Company benefits of training people with disabilities in an EAP or learnership programme***

The research study clearly showed participants benefitted from engaging the EAP. Follow up research to determine what benefits learnership programmes hold for prospective employers would provide valuable information. This information may be useful for guiding and upgrading present employment legislation for people with disabilities.

#### **6.9.4 Nature of challenges for companies offering learnership programmes for people with disabilities**

This study succinctly pointed out the challenges faced by people with disabilities participating in an EAP. It is recommended that further research be conducted to establish what challenges companies face when presenting learnership programmes for people with disabilities, shedding light on possible reasons for companies failing to retain candidates after they have completed training.

#### **6.9.5 Method of research**

Further research in this field may consider adapting the method of research.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies could be conducted in future to broaden this particular body of knowledge pertaining to employment opportunities for people with disabilities accessing EAP's such as learnership programmes in South Africa.

Larger samples for quantitative studies including other areas in the Eastern Cape Province as well as cross provincial sites could be undertaken in the future to provide valuable statistical information of people with disabilities accessing employment. Furthermore a wider cross section of people with disabilities should be considered including the various impairments such as hearing, visually or mental disabilities.

#### **6.9.6 Occupational Therapy Practice**

Further research in this field may explore the occupational identity of people with disabilities in order to explore how people with disabilities create meaningful lives by fulfilling a purpose.

Explore the occupational meanings and aspects of learnership concept (in South Africa) in more depth with regards to accessibility to people with disabilities and look at meaningful outcomes related to occupational enablement.

Explore what occupational choices do after school youth with cognitive disabilities enjoy and does this enable active participation in the open labour market.

## 6.10 Conclusion of the research study

The chapter has summarised each of the preceding chapters, the findings of the research methodology and presented recommendations. It illustrates the aim of this study and the objectives for this research have been met.

This research has created the space for people with disabilities to share their experiences with a broader readership.

The research experience has been valuable for me, the participants, and people with disabilities striving towards inclusive employment. Much work still needs to be done to develop and implement strategies that would ensure the successful and meaningful employment of people with disabilities.

Conducting this research study has been a challenging but very rewarding journey as an Occupational Therapist as well as in a personal capacity. I have learnt to persevere in face of obstacles and to appreciate the journey. Working with this group of people with disabilities has been extremely rewarding and I value their motivation and passion to bring the research to fruition. I have been inspired along the way by fellow students, lecturers, mentors and other like-minded (but far more seasoned) researchers. I hope to consider future research studies regarding disability issues to strengthen Occupational Therapy contributions in this critically relevant domain of practice.

### **Footnote**

Babalo went on to do a 12month accredited learnership programme with a well known battery manufacturing company. Zeke and Zuko also went into a learnership programme with a world – renown, car manufacturing company in East London. Zeka completed a two year programme while Zuko found employment in the HR department in the South African police service. Corey is now employed at a very well known retail company as an assistant replenisher. Nathi continues to search for employment opportunities.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Information Letter

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Appendix C: Interview Guiding Questions

Appendix D: Additional Quotes (Chapter Four)

University of Cape Town

## Appendix A

### Information Letter

#### Study Title

**An understanding of the collective experiences of unemployed people with disabilities engaged in an employment assisted programme in the Eastern Cape.**

This research study aims to increase understanding and to document the value of the experiences of people with disabilities actively engaged in an employment assisted programme. The study will be conducted and documented by Judith Dirks doing a Post Graduate Degree in Occupational Therapy at UCT. Ethics approval has been obtained from the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC REF: 125/2011). As a participant in the study, you will be invited to attend two interview sessions. In the event of becoming vulnerable to distress during the EAP, you will be referred to appropriate agencies for assistance if you wish.

In the interview sessions you will be asked some questions that would help to gain further understanding of your experiences in the programme. The types of questions which will be asked, are about being unemployed, expectations of participating in an employment assisted programme, job function while on the programme, and highlights of benefits and challenges of participating in such a programme. Interviews will take place at a venue convenient to you. All this information will help to assist other clients with disabilities seeking employment opportunities. In agreeing to participate in the study, you and the other participants would contribute approximately fifteen hours over an eight week period.

Names and personal information will be kept confidential and, if you decide at any time to withdraw from the study, you may do so without negative consequences. All information obtained shall be kept confidential and the host company where participants will be placed for employment training will not be made aware of who said what during the study. With your permission, information obtained during the

interviews will be recorded (for the purpose of transcribing and analysing data). All information documented will be administered by the researcher. No other parties would have access to the research material. Storage of all research material will be kept safe and, upon completion of the Masters programme shall be handed to the supervisor.

Should you agree to participate in the study, you will be contacted by the researcher. The host company will be ready as soon as agreements are in place. The host company will be offering you a weekly travelling allowance (the amount of which shall be stipulated when programme commences). You may feel free to ask further questions after you have read this, or at any stage of the study if you are unsure about anything.

Should you wish to contact the researcher at any stage during the study, you may do so at telephone number 043- 7221811. You may also contact the relevant departments if you have any queries regarding the research study.

#### Research Supervisor

Theresa Lorenzo  
Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy  
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Cape Town  
Tel: 021 4066326

#### Human Research Ethics (UCT)

Professor Marc Blockman  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
Research Ethics Committee  
Room E52-24 Groote Schuur Hospital Old Building, Observatory 7925  
Tel: 021- 4066 338

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent Form

Division of Occupational Therapy  
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
Faculty of health Sciences  
University of Cape Town

An understanding of the collective experiences of unemployed people with disabilities engaged in an employment assisted programme in the Eastern Cape.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to participate in this research study of my own free will. I am aware that all information that I share will be kept confidential, because my name will not be mentioned in the transcripts, analysis and publication of the study.

I have been informed about the research process and I understand what will be expected of me. I am aware that the interviews will be recorded by audio-tape after which the information will be transcribed and analysed.

I understand that I do not have to take part in the study and that I may withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences to myself.

Consent confirmed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judith Dirks

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C

### Interview Guiding Questions

*Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. Be reassured that the interviews and anything you share will remain confidential. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. The questions I will be asking will need you to describe your experience in the employment assisted programme in detail. I have some questions that will help to facilitate the process.*

#### Main Questions

1. Tell me about your experience of being unemployed
  - How long were you unemployed for
  - What sort of activities did you do during the day
  - What sort of strategies were you using to access work
  - Within your immediate community, how did you feel as an unemployed person (with a disability)
2. You agreed to participate in the employment assisted programme – what sort of expectations did you have?
3. What was your job function during the employment assisted programme
4. Describe the experience of participating in the employment assisted programme
5. Were there any changes in your job function and how did you adapt to these?
6. In your opinion, were there any benefits of participating in an employment assisted programme?
7. Could you identify any facilitators assisting you while participating in the employment assisted programme
8. Are there specific challenges you wish to highlight about participating in the employment assisted programme
9. How has this employment assisted programme changed your outlook on employment opportunity - what do you plan to incorporate into your future plans regarding employment access
10. Is there anything you would have done differently?

## Appendix D1

### ***Additional Quotes [Theme One]***

This appendix is included to show additional quotes for Theme One in Chapter Four.

Theme One: Vehicle of progression

#### **Learning Opportunity**

Two sub-categories relate to learning opportunity.

##### ***A personal experience***

Nathi had not completed his Grade 12, trying to find work was something that he worked hard at. A place in the EAP meant an ideal learning opportunity.

*I was interested to come to the programme...I wanted to learn more about working for a company (19 April 2011, interview 1)*

##### ***Capacity Building***

The EAP gave Zuko the chance to reassess his expectations when he realized that he had the capacity for something more than he hoped for.

*Doing the [EAP] programme I am registered to do the HR certificate...I'm now considering changing to do HR work now (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview2)*

#### **Towards Permanent employment**

This sub category related to the participants' expectation of moving towards permanent employment.

##### ***Hope and Aspirations***

Nathi was fortunate to have his contract time extended by an extra four months. This gave him further hope towards something more permanent.

*This job has been like home for me...when they added another four months to my contract I was so very happy...I was given extra working time...It [EAP] gave me a hope that I could stay and they would renew my contract again (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

Babalo acknowledged the difficulty in finding a job. He also pointed to the reality of not having money to apply for a job that came up. Even though the EAP was a

temporary opportunity and Babalo knew it would end, he was hoping that he could stay longer.

*There is difficulty finding a job...sometimes there is a job coming...but then I don't have the money to go there and apply...money is a problem to access transport and jobs...I know I was prepared for the change ... that the programme will end but I was still hoping that it could be me staying on there (10 August 2011, interview 2).*

## **Being a worker**

### ***Social dignity***

In society, disability still carries a social stigma. Babalo wanted the dignity of a job; to show that he was capable.

*They [staff] thought I'm not going to cope...because I'm walking with crutches...I just show them by working that I can do the job (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview2)*

### **Accessing employment**

This sub category relates to accessing employment.

#### ***Moving out of unemployment***

Corey hoped the EAP would get him out of the house and into a job.

*I don't like being cooped up every day...I have been looking for a job...an opportunity to get out and do something (Corey 21 April 2011, interview1)*

## **Appendix D2**

### ***Additional Quotes [Theme Two]***

This appendix is included to show additional quotes for Theme Two in Chapter Four.

Theme Two: Belonging in the world of work

#### **Facilitating Factors**

The participants identified the following facilitating factors that helped them to cope in the programme.

#### **Embracing the work place**

The participants had all been looking for some form of employment and were more than eager to embrace the working world.

#### ***Change is welcome***

The participants had been looking forward to being employed, and it seemed that this new venture was a welcomed change from their unemployed status.

Zeka had not been formally employed before although she tried different avenues to support herself and her family. She was very excited about EAP as a welcomed change in her life.

*I started as a packer...I think this is fine but then one day...I ask if I can be the cashier...I start to be the cashier...immediately I start training as the cashier and I am so happy to have this change of work (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### **I have faith in that job**

Many people with disabilities stay at home and live off their grant money. These unemployed young people with a disability were no longer prepared to remain at home.

#### ***I believed***

Nathi expressed this belief.

*I was an employee doing the job...I did not stand around doing nothing...I knew that I was doing my job properly (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Step up to the job**

Being accepted as potential employees seemed to make it easier for participants to step up to the job. Babalo was unsure about the EAP as he was not sure what to expect but he realised that the staff believed in him.

*Participating in this programme...was a test to see how I was going to cope... to know what people are really like in the workplace...I didn't know what to expect...they [office staff] trust me...they wanted also to believe that I can do this job...with the new job came the trust given to me (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Perceived Benefits**

Participants reflect on what they hoped to gain from the EAP experience.

### **Employment connects people**

These findings indicated how participants began to feel connected to the employment world. Four sub categories elaborate further.

### **New Responsibilities**

The participants reflected on the new responsibilities they enjoyed whilst doing the EAP.

*I started as a packer at the till...had to pack groceries...clean baskets and trolleys...I start to be the cashier...happy to have this change of work...customers got to know me...my till was having a problem...I had to explain to customers (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*The programme helped me because I have never worked before...to have responsibilities...check if the stock truck is there...check stock...check barcodes...weigh things...match the price of items on the shelf...fill shelves...learn how to weigh things...it was a learning experience...something good (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Acquiring skills**

The EAP provided an opportunity for participants to be trained, to acquire good work habits and become better skilled.

*There was on the job training...he [boss] tells me to manage my job better...how to do things better...gave me the code book to memorize the codes... it [programme] taught me how to work with people...how to communicate...time management (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### ***Having a job is a positive experience***

The EAP exposure was a positive working experience.

*Just having this job...my prayer for a job...I can make a difference (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*The job was nice...I think it was easy for me to do the job...I really enjoyed having a job...I liked learning how to do the job...my girlfriend liked me having a job (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Stepping forward**

The EAP opportunity allowed participants to step forward towards employment.

#### ***I can belong***

The benefit of a learn-on-the-job opportunity allowed participants' to feel that they were part of the work environment where they had a certain role to play.

*Being in the job among others...a packer...cashier (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Working as a merchandising assistant...I packed the merchandise on the shelves...I worked in different aisles...dealing with customers...enjoyed having a job (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Swopping a disability role for a worker role**

#### ***Advancing social networking***

The social networking that came with having a worker role helped participants advance their social skills.

*I've enjoyed this work...this worker role...I could meet people at different levels...floor staff...admin staff...customers (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*There were always different people to deal with...I liked getting to know the different staff in the store...I liked dealing with customers...everyone was friendly (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### ***A valued and socially accepted role***

Zeka also acknowledged the positive sense of self that came as a result of engaging in the EAP.

*The other staff saw that I am a person with a disability they accept it...just having this job...I am moving forward...I can make a difference...I know who I am (11 August 2011, interview 2)*

## **Perceived challenges faced by participants engaging in the EAP**

An understanding of what the participants perceived as challenges during the EAP.

### **A new environment**

The participants' experiences reflected the challenge of the new and different environment.

#### ***Adapting***

*For the first few months...trying to learn the environment...HR...support documentation...confidential information (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### ***Rookie employees***

The EAP made participants feel like rookie employees in an unknown environment. Corey had been exposed to working with other people as he had done various part-time jobs before coming into the EAP. This was how he dealt with a particular challenge.

*A merchandiser was being rude to a female colleague...I stood up for her saying he shouldn't talk to a woman like that...I don't think he liked that but I showed him I'll stand my ground (10 August 2011, interview 2)*

#### ***Not giving up***

As the EAP drew to a close, participants wanted a sense of continuity and to remain focused while others braced themselves for the challenges which lie ahead.

*I have never worked before...it's so hard to get jobs...I wish I could get the job...renew my contract again...even though it was a learning contract...I didn't know what to do...even if I'm going back to where I started before I know the programme will help me to keep looking at possibilities (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I've been unemployed for about six years...there is difficulty finding a job...I want a job where I can stay and work...I know I was prepared for the change...that the [EAP] programme will end...at the end of this it is about the permanent job...being prepared for that next job...I have a challenge to look for the job now (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Fighting social stigmas**

The participants also indicated that fighting social stigmas was a challenge for them during the EAP.

**Social attitudes**

Nathi thought that some of the managers made unreasonable demands.

*Some of the managers...they want me to do whatever they want me to do even if they are not from my department...they come from other departments and just tell me to do things...I didn't want to be called to the office...and maybe to be fired...so I just did it (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

University of Cape Town

## Appendix D3

### ***Additional Quotes [Theme Three]***

This appendix is included to show additional quotes for Theme Three in Chapter Four.

Theme Three: Active participation begins with me

#### **Continuously job hunting**

Participants' took action regarding job hunting.

##### ***Searching to find something***

Participants were actively searching for job opportunities.

*I have worked in temporary jobs...I have been looking for a job...something more permanent...I want to have a regular job (Corey 21 April 2011, interview1)*

*I've tried different things...having a spaza shop...looked in the newspaper...submitted my CV to Rehab...I ask if I can learn to be the cashier...write the letter (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### ***Tapping into support network***

Participants were of the view that they needed the support of available social network to look for jobs.

*I have been to numerous recruitment agencies...looking for a job...heard about this programme from some other people with disabilities (Zuko 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

#### **Being in the job among others**

Two sub-categories are presented which relate to working among others in the workplace.

##### ***I can do this job***

The EAP gave participants a chance to realise the actions of being active employees in the workforce.

*Learning about the job...watching them in the CCTV...communicating with customers...weighing fruit and veg...salads...responsibilities in the office (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*Pack groceries...clean baskets and trolleys...work in the cigarette counter...go for training...explain to customers that there is a problem (Zeka 11August 2011, interview 2)*

*I packed the merchandise...fetching stock...worked in the different aisles... assist them [customers]...getting to know staff (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **My job my responsibility**

Participants spoke about being active employees, alluding to assuming responsibility and getting the job done properly.

*They [customers] would shout at me saying they want an item from the shelf...I knew when the stock was finished even in the storeroom...they would say that they are going to tell the manager...I say to them go tell the manager because I knew I was doing my job properly (Nathi 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

### **Being assertive**

Three sub-categories are presented to elaborate.

Participants shared their views about exerting confidence and being assertive.

*I'm not isolating myself...I'm a people's person...expressing myself...it all depends on you...you have to stand up for yourself (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*One time a merchandiser was being rude to a colleague...I stood up for her...I showed him I'll stand my ground...I just stuck it out (Corey10 August 2011, interview2)*

### **Preparing for the next job**

The EAP allowed participants to challenge themselves for the next available job opportunity.

*This work makes me try more harder...to be more prepared for the next job... ...at the end of this programme it is about the permanent job...I know there will be something out there (Babalo 10August 2011, interview 2)*

### **A good decision**

*I was interested to come into the programme...it could help me to get a job...to learn more about working...this job has been like home for me (Nathi 19 April 2011, interview 1)*

*I was thinking this programme will lead to permanent work...I have a hope for something even bigger (Zeka, 20 April 2011, interview 1)*

## Appendix D4

### **Additional Quotes [Theme Four]**

This appendix is included to show additional quotes for Theme Four in Chapter Four.

Theme Three: Advancing Quality of life

#### **Change is in me**

Three sub-categories represent personal change the participants became aware of as a result of engaging the EAP.

##### **Self conviction**

*I am motivated...a better person (Corey 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

*I will never be shy again...I'm more confident...I'm more driven now (Babalo 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **You can make a difference**

Having had the EAP experience, the participants felt that 'you can make a difference'. This is how Zuko felt.

*People with disabilities are not given too much chance...I knew the company wouldn't take me unless they knew I was capable...I can contribute...my manager complimented me on my work...we [HR] got a good audit...I can say it was part of my being here...the responsibility I have...gave me some belief into myself...you can make a difference...it really depends on you (Zuko 10 August 2011, interview 2)*

##### **Uplifted**

The participants felt uplifted by the EAP encounter.

*I am so happy to have this change of work...all I can say is I felt accepted...my knowledge getting more...for me to earn the salary...I know who I am...this experience helps me to believe (Zeka 11 August 2011, interview 2)*

*When they added another four months to my contract I was so very happy...I can still work...I was given extra working time...it has made a difference...it gave me a hope (11 August 2011, interview 2)*