

**UBUNTU IN ACTION: TOWARDS THE EMPOWERMENT OF  
STATE-APPOINTED SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE LIMPOPO  
PROVINCE**

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## ABSTRACT

Poverty, violence, unemployment, the high rate of HIV/Aids and a lack of resources are some of the issues the South African government is currently trying to address. Victims of crime and violence have special needs that require early intervention. Studies show that if left unattended, victims may show maladjustment in their social, marital and work environments; receiving assistance and support following victimisation therefore holds many benefits for the victim. The Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) announced by government as part of the National Crime Prevention Strategy is meant to address these needs. The VEP is a comprehensive, multifaceted, intersectoral model that brings together integrated service delivery for victims of crime and violence. One of the mandates of the Department of Social Development as the lead department of the VEP is to provide services that empower and meet the needs of communities and individuals who are considered victims.

This study seeks to justify why it is beneficial to use a participatory learning approach when designing and conducting ‘in-service’ continuing professional development training courses for state-appointed social workers working within the field of victim empowerment (VE) in South Africa. It also advocates for the theoretical approaches of experiential problem-based learning and psychosocial empowerment, and discusses the use of a crossover of theories from the different disciplines of mainstream psychology, community psychology and social work.

The vision of a new South Africa based on post-1994 ANC government policies is outlined and the history of the field of socio-economic development and community development is discussed. Mainstream psychology’s contribution to community development, and the tenets of community psychology, participation and empowerment, are applied in the design of an ‘in-service’ short course.

The primary focus of the study is on the range of skills and abilities needed to initiate and maintain successful VE services. These include the following: skills in group process facilitation; skills in intersectoral collaboration (referral and networking) with other governmental departments and other healthcare professionals; knowing how to establish and maintain forums; an understanding of the principles and tools of participatory learning and action; skills required for designing, organising and

presenting workshops; project management, and the monitoring and evaluation of VE projects.

This study elucidates how critical the ‘in-service’ training of VE social workers is within the new social development paradigm in South Africa, and offers key considerations and recommendations regarding future ‘in-service’ training programmes/short courses for state-employed social workers involved in VE services.

**Keywords:** Victim Empowerment Programme; community psychology; ‘in-service’ training; developmental social welfare; empowerment; participatory learning and action; adult experiential learning; capacity development; social programme implementation; ubuntu.

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## DECLARATION

I declare that 'Ubuntu in action: Towards the empowerment of state-appointed social workers in the Limpopo Province' is my own work and that all resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## **Glossary**

In this section, definitions of an array of participatory learning and action, victim empowerment, psychological, and South African-related concepts and terms relevant to this thesis are discussed.

### **Advocacy**

This term relates to lobbying and requires that a problem be addressed and action taken. Nel (2007) writes that advocacy requires building support for the solution to a problem. Advocacy includes educating and informing the public about an important issue (Themba Lesizwe, 2005). It requires that one speaks up and champions for the cause (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001).

### **Batho Pele**

Batho Pele is a Sotho translation for 'People First' and is an initiative to get public servants to be service-orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2010). Eight principles for transforming public service delivery were identified by the South African government and named the Batho Pele principles: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress, and value for money. The principles were expressed in broad terms in order to enable national and provincial departments to apply them in accordance with their own needs and circumstances.

### **Capacity development**

In this thesis, capacity development means a broad, holistic view of individual growth and community building that requires being able to manage, change, resolve conflict, manage institutional pluralism, enhance co-ordination and foster communication.

### **Community**

In this thesis, 'community' primarily indicates a group of people who have a form of homogenous identity. Communities may be homogenous in geographic location, residence, belief system, class system or even economic activity (Kelly & Van der

Riet, 2001). Communities may change and grow as membership increases or decreases.

### **Community development**

Community development refers to the process and method aimed at enhancing the capacity of communities to respond to their own needs through community mobilisation, strength-based approaches and empowerment programmes (Midgley, 1995).

### **Crime**

An illegal action or omission of which a person is found guilty by a court of law and which is punishable by the state (Themba Lesizwe, 2005). Crime is not only about the victim and perpetrator/offender, but is also against the state and therefore goes against the concept of human rights (Nel, 2007).

### **Criminal justice system**

This is the system of law enforcement in which various government departments in South Africa, such as the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Department of Correctional Services and the South African Police Service, apprehend, prosecute, defend, sentence and rehabilitate perpetrators/offenders. It is also the system through which victims are offered information, restitution and compensation for crimes committed against them. The criminal justice system is the system that carries the responsibility for the delivery of justice (Nel, 2007).

### **Empowerment**

The concept 'empowerment' is the facilitation of self-efficacy and control over one's environment, in both individuals and communities, to encourage maximum potential. Empowerment is the process whereby those persons or groups who are defined by themselves or others to be without power are enabled through a collaborative process utilising personal narratives to increase skills necessary for controlling the resources required for effective and satisfying social functioning, including personal, interpersonal and political aspects (Tully, 2000, cited in Nel, 2007). The definition of empowerment can include psychological empowerment, organisational empowerment and community empowerment.

## **Imbizo**

An imbizo is a traditional gathering called by an inkosi (a traditional leader) to discuss issues within communities. The inkosi gets suggestions from the community on how to respond to issues that are causing dissention or stress within the community. In this way, people get to participate in decisions relating to the community.

## **Intersectoral collaboration**

Intersectoral collaboration requires that various government departments, different sectors, as well as civil society have the opportunity to contribute towards a programme or intervention. Collaboration and working towards common action is part of intersectoral collaboration, all of which is achieved through communication, co-operation and planning together.

## **Paradigm**

A paradigm provides a framework for understanding social reality (Seedat *et al.*, 2001) and contains common beliefs or assumptions about knowledge, human nature and science.

## **Participation**

In this research, four different modes of participation, as described by Cornwall and Jewkes (1995:1669), are used:

- *Contractual* – where people are contracted into the projects of researchers and act as informants.
- *Consultative* – where people are asked for their opinions and consulted by researchers before interventions are made.
- *Collaborative* – where researchers and local people work together on projects designed, initiated and managed by researchers,
- *Collegiate* – where researchers and local people work together as colleagues, combining their different skills in a process of mutual learning.

Participatory research should ideally be at the collegiate level of participation. However, due to the nature of this research, varying degrees of participation were engaged at different phases in the research.

### **Participatory action research**

Participatory action research (PAR) is research that brings about action in the form of change, while simultaneously developing an understanding that, in turn, again informs the change. The process continues in a cyclical fashion from there and the qualitative researcher is led mainly by the information gathered from participants (Dick, 1993). Through the use of PAR, an understanding of the world is sought. Reflection both on the past and the present history, culture and context creates a need for action. PAR differs from other positivist paradigms in that it is emancipatory, participative and not confined to a laboratory setting. ‘It is an experiential methodology for the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes – the grassroots – and for their authentic organisations and movements’ (Department for International Development, 2002:65). The research paradigm of this thesis was PAR.

### **Participatory learning and action**

Participatory learning and action (PLA) is an umbrella term for a wide range of approaches and methodologies. Participatory action research falls within this term. Action research intends to introduce some change; action learning uses some intended change as a vehicle for learning through reflection (Dick, 1993). The tools of PLA were used as the research methodology to bring about the learning and change. The tools used as the vehicles for learning were reflection, project management, problem and situational analysis, stakeholder analysis, objectives tree analysis, designing stakeholder workshops and mission and vision statements.

### **Patriarchy**

Implicit in the definition of patriarchy is that there is male dominance and that men have power and privilege over women and children. Nel (2007) refers to patriarchy as a system committed to the maintenance and reinforcement of male superiority in all aspects of life.

### **People-centred development**

This refers to an approach in which the community is consulted by the researcher and becomes involved in the planning and implementation of interventions. It is a developmental model that focuses on what people in the community consider the best

action plan for their own goals. It does not focus only on economic conditions, but may include educational, social, economic and health goals.

### **Programme**

A programme is a group of projects with an overarching theme or goal, such as poverty reduction or domestic violence. A development programme is considered to be more comprehensive and larger than a project (Patel, 2007).

### **Project**

‘Projects are considered to be the ‘building blocks’ of social development programmes’ (Patel, 2007:277). Each project should be related to the overall objective of the social development programme.

### **Reconstruction and Development Programme**

A policy of the post-1994 South African government in which growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution are linked into one programme. The infrastructure should provide access to modern and effective services like electricity, water, telecommunications, transport, health, education and training for all citizens, which in turn is thought to lead to capacity building and an increase in overall output.

### **Rights of victims**

The basic rights of victims, as agreed upon by the United Nations and found in the Services Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa, are the following:

- The right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- The right to offer information.
- The right to receive information.
- The right to legal advice.
- The right to protection.
- The right to compensation (Department of Social Development, 2004a:2).

### **Service provider**

Any person rendering services to service recipients (victims).

### **Social development**

Social development is a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development (Midgley, 1995). To develop communities and ensure that their needs are met and that social problems are managed is the mandate of the Department of Social Development. Social development differs from social welfare in that the principles of people-centred development are applied. Patel (2007) states that social development is concerned with the achievement of human well-being and the development of people through comprehensive and universalistic interventions and requires the democratic participation of people.

### **Social services**

This is a collective term for services within the health, welfare and education sectors (Department of Social Welfare, 1997).

### **Social welfare**

Social welfare has been defined from numerous viewpoints. Midgley (1995:25) defines it as meeting the social, economic, educational and health needs of people in order for them to obtain a sense of human well-being. Patel (2007) states that social welfare has political and ideological connotations and that moral values within society determine how social welfare is viewed. For the purpose of this thesis, 'social welfare' will incorporate all social policies, social services, benefits, programmes and social security that promotes social development, social justice and social functioning in a caring and enabling environment (Department of Social Welfare, 1997).

### **Supervision**

Dunbar-Krige & Fritz (2006) refer to supervision as a means of transmitting the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a profession to the next generation. According to these authors, it is evaluative, extends over time, and provides mentorship and debriefing to junior members of the profession. Supervision is one of the most important mechanisms available to the Victim Empowerment Programme to ensure high and standardised quality of service and to prevent compassion fatigue and burn-out (Higson-Smith, Bedell & Mudau, 2005).

## **Ubuntu**

'Ubuntu' is the term used in Africa to describe a person's connection with the community: It is believed that the community identifies the person and not the person the community. The identity of the person is his or her place in the community. Du Toit (2004:33) calls it 'African humanism'. Msengana (2006) refers to ubuntu as an African expression of what is viewed by the African culture as a universal identity – i.e. membership of humankind, inclusive of all people. It has the power to enhance the value system of society and offers a sense of belonging to all, because it resonates with human values such as respect, spirituality and the sacredness of human life (Msengana, 2006).

## **Victims**

The term 'victims' refers to victims of crime and violence as defined in the United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power – i.e. persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical and mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss and substantial impairment of their rights through acts or omissions that are violations of national criminal law or of internationally recognised norms relating to human rights (Department of Social Development, 2005b). Viano (2000) describes a victim as an individual, organisation or group of people who have been harmed or damaged by someone else and whose harm has been acknowledged, and who looks for help and receives it from an agency.

A person may be considered a victim regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted and regardless of the familial relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. The term 'victim' also includes, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victim, as well as persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist a victim in distress or to prevent victimisation (Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, 1985).

## **Victim empowerment**

Victim empowerment refers to a certain philosophy of care and assistance, and a specific approach by service providers (regardless of which state department or sector they represent) in delivering available services to victims of crime. Victim

empowerment is a philosophy, method or technique of handling victims that accepts that, rather than being dependent on the expertise and assistance of a professional or someone else, all people have certain skills and competencies that, when facilitated appropriately, can come to the fore to assist individuals to help themselves or to cope better with an incident of victimisation (Nel, Koortzen & Jacobs, 2001).

Higson-Smith *et al.* (2005) emphasise the following as components of victim empowerment: victim empowerment ensures protection for victims (including shelters, legal protections and witness protection); prevents secondary victimisation by ensuring that all employees within the criminal justice system are skilled in working with victims; ensures victims' access to information regarding cases with which they are associated; facilitates informed participation by victims in the criminal justice system; advocates for compensation for victims; facilitates restorative justice initiatives where appropriate; prevents repeat victimisation, and breaks potential cycles of violence that may emerge when victims feel that they have no means other than violence of achieving a just result. A final component of victim empowerment is providing for the immediate needs of victims directly following a violent crime.

### **Victim support**

Victim support seeks to assist victims and survivors of crime or tragedy with emotional support, practical aid, information and advocacy. The objectives of victim support are to reduce the psychological shock and trauma victims may suffer by providing emotional support and practical assistance immediately after the incident or shortly thereafter; to identify symptoms of post-traumatic stress and refer victims for trauma counselling and other professional services where necessary; to prevent or reduce secondary victimisation by the criminal justice system by providing information on matters such as the status of the investigation, the functioning of the court system and the rights of victims within it, and to prevent repeat victimisation by advising and guiding the individual towards a preventative lifestyle and by creating awareness among the public of the risks of crime (Themba Lesizwe, 2005).

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation is the process whereby a person suffers harm through the violation of national laws or internationally recognised norms relating to human rights (Themba Lesizwe, 2005).

**Violence**

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, dysfunctional development or deprivation (Themba Lesizwe, 2005).

## Abbreviations

Aids	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BNA	Basic Needs Approach
CE	Community Empowerment
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRDS-SA	Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa
Jipsa	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
NCPS	National Crime Prevention Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NHC	National Heritage Council
OE	Organisational Empowerment
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PE	Psychological Empowerment
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme

SAPS	South African Police Service
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UN	United Nations
Unisa	University of South Africa
VE	Victim Empowerment
VEP	Victim Empowerment Programme

# Chapter 1

## South Africa: Vision to reality

The South African Constitution speaks of both the past and the future:

*On the one hand, it is a solemn pact in which we, as South Africans, declare to one another that we shall never permit a repetition of our racist brutal and repressive past. But it is more than that. It is also a charter for the transformation of our country into one which is truly shared by all its people – a country which in the fullest sense belongs to all of us, black and white, women and men. – Former President Nelson Mandela in the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1243).*

### **1.1 Purpose of the study**

This thesis is grounded in participatory learning and action (PLA) methodology, as well as the theoretical approaches of experiential problem-based learning and psychosocial empowerment. The thesis seeks to justify why these three approaches are appropriate to the ‘in-service’ training of state-appointed social workers working within the Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) in the Limpopo Province. To motivate the choice of PLA, experiential problem-based learning and psychosocial empowerment, the following issues will be discussed: theoretical principles and laws; policy frameworks; the skills and competencies required to execute victim empowerment (VE) services within the VEP in the Limpopo Province, and the results of an ‘in-service’ short learning course entitled ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’.

The primary focus is on the critical role of the ‘in-service’ training of state-appointed social workers within the Limpopo Province if social programmes such as the VEP are to be established and sustained. The emphasis in this thesis is therefore on the range of skills and abilities needed to initiate and maintain successful VE services. These include the following: skills in group process facilitation; skills in intersectoral collaboration (referral and networking) with other governmental departments and other healthcare professionals; knowing how to establish and

maintain forums; an understanding of the principles and tools of PLA; skills required in the designing of, organising and presenting workshops, project management, and the monitoring and evaluation of VE projects.

## **1.2 Scope and aims of the study**

The eradication of poverty and inequality, and restoring the dignity of all citizens regardless of race, gender or any other status, lies at the heart of the South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) and government programmes (Republic of South Africa, 2005). In an address delivered by former Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, at the South African-German Women in Dialogue conference in Berlin in 2003, she spoke of poverty as one of the major legacies of the racist and patriarchal past that the government of South Africa has had to address since the onset of democracy in 1994 (Dlamini-Zuma, 2003). South Africa's approach to poverty is informed by national imperatives, including constitutional guarantees on socio-economic rights and the country's commitment to being a developmental state (Republic of South Africa, 2005). The antipoverty programme in South Africa is based on measures that seek to address income, human capital and asset poverty (Republic of South Africa, 2003).

South Africa's long history of confrontation and conflict has also created a culture of violence, which is deeply rooted in many communities (Naudé, 2000). Barolsky (2007) states that the promise offered by South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 was that, with the end of apartheid, levels of violence in South African society would drop significantly. However, various forms of social violence at all levels of society, ranging from armed robbery to sexual violence and murder, have remained at extremely high levels. According to Freedom Front Safety and Security spokesman, Pieter Groenewald, South Africa's murder rate was 38,6 per 100 000 of the population in 2008, but the world average for murder is five per 100 000. 'In South Africa, murder is still nearly eight times higher than in the world' (Mail & Guardian Online, 2008). Another article in the Mail & Guardian Online (2009) states that the number of murders declined slightly – by 3,4% from 18 487 in 2008 to 18 148 during the 12 months ending in March 2009, and that violent crime was down by 2,8%, but a 27% jump in house robberies helped push up the overall crime levels by 0,2%.

In communities where political violence is experienced, high levels of other forms of violence can be observed over many years (Sinani, 2007). Poverty and political violence can be linked to high levels of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual violence or economically motivated crime. When violence divides the community, a lack of resources, unemployment and poverty is a result and the effect is a slowing of the development of the community (Sinani: KwaZulu-Natal Programme for Survivors of Crime and Violence, 2007). The rate of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection does not remain unaffected by these socio-economic factors.

*It is evident that social factors such as the high rate of rape, the unfavourable economic position of women, and the inability to insist on condom usage make South African women unable to negotiate the timing of sex and the conditions under which it occurs. They are thus rendered powerless to protect themselves against HIV infection (Ackermann & De Klerk, 2002:163).*

In summary, poverty, violence, unemployment and high rates of HIV are just some of the indicators of the low base from which the post-1994 African National Congress (ANC) democratic government started.

Post-1994, a radical transformation to help rebuild communities was called for, that would address poverty, violence, lack of resources and unemployment. Beytell (2001) believes that health and social issues have a reciprocal relation and that this is particularly evident in the South African context. Poverty, which includes poor living conditions, unemployment and the consequent low income, results in disease and malnutrition. Health and social issues therefore cannot be seen as separate entities. In order for the South African government to establish effective, efficient and appropriate healthcare, social work services will have to encompass people-centred, developmental, preventative, promotative primary healthcare approaches that emphasise participation, partnership and self-determination (Beytell, 2001).

Social services in South Africa are moving away from the treatment of the individual problem as an isolated case towards the general upliftment of the community (Collins, 1998). Writing in 2007, Patel states that the profession of social work has had to adapt to changing social conditions and has been challenged to

become more relevant and appropriate in the local context. To strengthen and support communities requires skills that enable communities and facilitators to get to know one another, decide what changes need to be made, carry out the project/programme, monitor and evaluate the project/programme and to empower communities to sustain the project/programme. Social work graduates will be required to have basic, or generalist skills as community developers, researchers, advocates, service brokers, educators, policy analysts and group facilitators (Fildes & Cooper, 2003).

There are a number of community and governmental programmes currently implemented in South Africa that are meant to address the legacy of poverty, violence and HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (Aids). All of these programmes fall within the mandate of the Department of Social Development (DSD). These include, among others, the VEP, HIV/Aids Programme, the Children's Programme and the Domestic Violence Programme. Although social workers and healthcare professionals and managers are given these social programmes as part of their portfolios, they may lack training in co-ordinating and integrating group processes.

As co-facilitator of the VE short course presented by the University of South Africa (Unisa) Centre for Applied Psychology, I had previously noted that an understanding of groups and group processes appeared intrinsic to achieving successful social programme implementation and intervention. I was also of the opinion that a distinct crossover was needed between the disciplines of mainstream psychology, community psychology and social work. There is a tendency among professionals to use specialised jargon, even when communicating on a cross-professional level, with this tendency often relating to efforts at protecting 'turf'. In a research study conducted by Pillay (2003) entitled 'Community psychology is all theory and no practice', the majority of the participants – all of whom were educational psychology students – indicated that they had received very little training in community psychology during their course work and felt the need to develop skills in community interventions. Pillay (2003:267) concluded that '[i]f we intend to be successful in meeting the needs of the majority in the South African context, we need to focus on mass interventions'.

In my experience of working with social work co-ordinators actively engaged in executing social development programmes, in particular the VEP (detailed later in this chapter), it has become evident that the traditional approach to the 'in-service' training of state-appointed social work practitioners working within the field of VE is

simply not adequate to deal with the social problems within a South African context. Nel (2007:214) states that:

*Few professionals with qualifications in the medico-psychosocial sciences (including psychologists) are adequately equipped in the (psychological) theories, understandings, methods, approaches, skills, techniques and attitudes required to appropriately and effectively respond to needs, problems and concerns, such as the country's HIV/Aids pandemic, endemic crime and violence and unacceptably high levels of trauma, widespread meaninglessness and despair, interpersonal skills deficit, and insufficient process and group skills.*

In the past the training of social workers and psychologists has focused on individual interventions. My understanding is that, if we are to make a difference, we need to move towards preventative measures, which embrace the community and society at large. In essence, this means that some of the skills taught to community psychologists that are based on traditional tenets of community psychology need to be taught in 'in-service' training courses/programmes to healthcare professionals and managers who practice within the discipline of social work. On the other hand, skills that are an integral part of the social work training need to be taught to community psychology students. Nel's (2007) study highlighted the need for psychologists as well as other health professionals to gain access to postgraduate psychological training as this type of training can increase the quality of their professional life.

Mvubelo (2000:1) explains that in line with the post-apartheid government's overall policy as, for example, explicated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, the DSD mission statement is:

*To serve and build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders through an integrated social welfare system which maximises its potential, and which is equitable, sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental.*

The skills that underlie this statement are those of collaborative partnership. However, forging collaborative partnerships is not an easy task. If this is to succeed, proficiency

in stakeholder analysis, networking and referral, and the exchanging of information and research as well as the establishing of forums are needed. In the South African context we need a combination of expertise, such as high-level skills (e.g. research, mathematics) in combination with a set of generic capabilities that combine soft skills (networking, intersectoral collaboration, facilitation, conflict resolution) and hard skills (project management).

In addition to sound theoretical knowledge, social workers must have a broad range of skills. Earle (2007b) observed that the ability to listen actively and communicate clearly and effectively was essential. She went further in saying that not only should social workers be able to communicate verbally in at least a couple of the national/regional languages, but also non-verbally through gesture and posture. Due to the requirements of the national judicial system regulating statutory social work interventions, the ability to write English reports is a necessity (Earle, 2007b). Earle's report also elucidates on characteristics such as creativity, initiative, compassion, enthusiasm, benevolence, honesty and the consistent personal exposition of 'professional' values and ethics (Clark, 2005; Sevenhuijsen, 2003, cited in Earle, 2007b).

I view the 'in-service' training courses/programmes to be inadequate in addressing the needs and the proficiencies required by our mental health workers, both psychologists and social workers, in post-1994 communities within South Africa. It was with this in mind that my research and experience in the field of VE lead me, together with state-appointed VE social workers, to develop an 'in-service' capacity development short course for health workers offering VE services, with special emphasis on social workers. The capacity development short course combines a set of generic hard and soft skills that I believe should be incorporated into 'in-service' training courses/programmes for state-appointed social workers working within the field of VE services.

The role of higher education in improving the skill level of human resources in the country is indisputable. Education has long been recognised as critical to economic and social development (Council on Higher Education, 2002).

*Large skills gaps and critical shortages of resources, both human and material, and a civil service that is not focused on service delivery but*

*rather rooted in bureaucracy, pose significant risks for the transformation process towards becoming the 'Good Society' (Nel, 2007:22).*

*The Ministry of Education has highlighted that many of the hopes and aspirations of South Africa's new democracy depend upon the production of professionals who not only have globally competitive knowledge and skills, but are also 'socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation' (Department of Education, 2001:5).*

Anne Bernstein, Executive Director of the Centre for Development and Enterprise, says the serious skills shortage may hamper the government's development initiatives.

*This is a major constraint on our prospects of achieving the kind of sustained economic growth that will reduce poverty and open the way for much wider participation in the economy. The government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) recognises skills shortages as one of the six 'binding constraints' on growth, one that is serious enough to warrant its own programme, the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) (TradeInvest South Africa, 2007).*

It is acknowledged by the government that there are skill challenges, particularly in the public service. This was addressed in the 2007 report by the Public Service Commission, which states that addressing the capacity challenge in the public service requires dedicated leadership from the executive and senior management levels (TradeInvest South Africa, 2007). In his 2010 budget speech, the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, highlighted the need for South Africa to develop skills in order to facilitate job creation.

The rest of this chapter will focus on the principal macro-policy frameworks underpinning the rationale and the shift of paradigm since the onset of democracy towards the establishment, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of social development programmes that focus on improving lives in South Africa. It is through this exploration that I hope to highlight the generic skills that are necessary to implement in social development programmes and thereby detail the implementation

methods and topics that inform the ‘in-service’ capacity development short course. Skills included in the training programme were stakeholder analysis, problem and situational analysis, visioning and logical framework-forming. Risk management, participatory methodologies and participatory management, conducting workshops, working in teams, building partnerships, conflict resolution and monitoring and evaluation were also included in the capacity development short course.

### **1.3 The macro-policy frameworks that inform social programme development in South Africa**

#### **1.3.1 The South African Constitution (1996)**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) was approved by the Constitutional Court on 4 December, 1996 and took effect on 4 February, 1997. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the Constitution (South African Government Information, 2009).

The cornerstone of the Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which guarantees non-discrimination regardless of, among others, race, gender, sex, religion, belief, culture, ethnic or social origin, or sexual orientation (Nel, 2007). Human rights are embedded very clearly in the Constitution. They feature in the preamble of the South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996:1243) with its stated intention of establishing ‘a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights’. Human rights appear in the first of the Founding Provisions of the Republic of South Africa: ‘Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms’ (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1243).

According to South African Government Information (2009), human rights occupy 35 sections of Chapter 2 of the Constitution. Nel (2007) believes that South Africa has one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. He bases this belief on the fact that the Constitution guarantees both first-generation human rights, such as freedom of speech, association and movement, as well as second-generation rights, which promise access to social resources, such as housing, water, education and economic opportunities.

Chapters 3 to 7 of the Constitution outline the country’s democratic system of government. A characteristic of this democratic system is the stress on interaction between the national, provincial and local levels through the mechanism of co-

operative governance. Schedule 4 of the Constitution outlines concurrent responsibilities between national and provincial governments for social service delivery, such as health, education and social welfare (Patel, 2007). It is because of these provisions that service delivery becomes a complex system (Patel, 2007). The courts and the administration of justice, state institutions supporting constitutional democracy, public administration, security services (defence, police and intelligence), the role of traditional leaders, and finance are also dealt with in the Constitution.

The final chapter covers general provisions, including international agreements and international law. '[C]ustomary international law is law in the Republic unless it is inconsistent with the Constitution or an Act of Parliament' (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1331). Among other things, the final chapter requires that all constitutional obligations 'be performed diligently and without delay' (Republic of South Africa, 1996:1331).

### **1.3.1.1 A critique**

The Constitution of 1996 establishes the three co-operative spheres of government. It confirms the pivotal role of local government in social and economic development, enhancing democracy, the sustainable provision of services and the promotion of participation. Perret (2002) is of the opinion that a lack of practical guidelines, legislation gaps and strong urban bias hindered the implementation of such principles. In order for local government to execute the services, skills and experienced staff are needed, and there is a shortage of people trained to deliver these type of services (Perret, 2002).

The relevance of the previous statement to this thesis is that state-appointed VE social workers delivering services to direct beneficiaries lack the essential skills required to bring about participation and people-centred development. Prior to 1994, the apartheid era system's 'top-down' administration typically proceeded without the consultation or participation of those who implemented the decisions (Gallie, Sayed & Williams, 1997). The post-1994 ANC government has tried to adopt an *imbizo*<sup>1</sup> approach that is aimed at interacting more with the people of South Africa. The purpose of the *imbizo* approach is to explain governmental policy and programmes

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<sup>1</sup> *Imbizo* is a traditional gathering called by an inkosi (a traditional leader) to discuss issues within communities. The inkosi gets suggestions from the community on how to respond to issues that are causing dissention or stress within the community. In this way people get to participate in decisions relating to the community.

and to gain an understanding of socio-economic conditions that South Africans are experiencing (Netshitomboni, 2007).

It is essential that 'in-service' or continuing professional development (CPD) training courses/programmes for mental health workers, psychologists, social workers and healthcare workers emphasise participation and mass community interventions in line with the imbizo approach.

### **1.3.2 The Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994)**

Our Constitution provides for the Bill of Rights to ensure the provision of services to meet essential needs. These rights are judicially enforceable and the Constitutional Court has in a number of cases, such as 'Grootboom' and the 'Treatment Action Campaign', affirmed the interconnectedness and indivisibility of social and economic rights, and civil and political rights (Patel, 2007). There is recognition within government that the past structures and models of social welfare provision cannot adequately meet the needs of today's society and that it is necessary to promote the goals of sustainable development to address past imbalances.

*Recognising that the socio-economic transformation of South Africa is necessary for consolidation of its democracy, the ANC-led government has committed itself to focus on social issues such as unemployment, housing shortages and crime (Nel, 2007:207).*

The government developed a framework for socio-economic development in its RDP, in which it has set out broad principles and strategies for development in all key areas and sectors in order to effectively address the various problems facing the majority of the people of South Africa (Department of Health, 1997). In line with its constitutional aspirations, the fundamental principles of the country's economic policy are democracy, participation and development. Nel (2007) writes of the core values informing the RDP, which include accountability, transparency, consultation, inclusivity, representivity and respect for diversity.

According to the RDP policy framework, the RDP contains five key programmes that aim to rebuild and develop the country. The first of these programmes is the meeting of basic needs such as jobs, the development and improvement of housing, and services like water and sanitation, land and environment

and healthcare. The second programme is concerned with developing human resources and addresses education and training, literacy, sport and recreation as well as youth development. The third programme addresses democratising the state and security and includes industry, trade and commerce, mining and minerals, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, tourism, upgrading infrastructure, reform of the financial sector, labour and worker rights, and the Southern African regional policy. The fourth programme looks at building the economy to counteract poverty and sets out the role of the new Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the constituent assembly, national and provincial governments, security forces, administration of justice, the public sector, local governments, civil society, and democratic information (Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 1994). The fifth programme is the actual implementation of the RDP.

The RDP was widely supported by the social welfare sector because of its emphasis on the idea of developmental social welfare (Patel, 2007). It also paved the way for further development of social welfare policy in South Africa (Triegaardt, 1996).

### **1.3.2.1 A critique**

The 1994 White Paper on Reconstruction and Development identifies local government as a vehicle for taking forward the RDP (Perret, 2002). It also underlines consultation as an important process that should take place with accredited local RDP forums consisting of representatives of all local stakeholders, community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Perret (2002) criticises the principles of the RDP because he feels that they lack institutionalisation. They promised much, yet with some vagueness, especially regarding rural development, and lack of implementation. ‘The RDP was also characterized by a welfarist, supply-driven approach to development’ (Perret, 2002:3).

This demonstrates a ‘top-down’ approach that is lacking in community participation and community sustainability. Perret (2002) argues that participation has repeatedly been put forward by policy documents as a compulsory element of local governance as well as rural development, yet with various different implementation ideas. He views the participation that has sometimes taken place in forums as information, and sometimes consultation, but not as co-design, co-decision and actual partnership.

Writing in 2007, Patel regarded the targets for many of the programmes as extremely ambitious given the inadequate institutional delivery systems, lack of capacity in government, limited funding, and an overloaded transformation agenda coupled with simultaneous restructuring of the public sector. Lombard (2006) highlights that there was much criticism around the downgrading of the role of government to the mere management of transformation and subsequent policy proposals regarding the privatisation of state assets and trade and financial liberalisation in the RDP White Paper, whereas previously, in the original RDP, the integration of social and economic development was seen as a key task of the new ANC government. Competition between the RDP office and the various ministries and departments ensued, coupled with the complex political dynamics of operating a coalition government (Patel, 2007). This finally led to the closure of the RDP office and the RDP was in future to be channelled through the various government departments.

### **1.3.3 The strategy for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (1999)**

The closure of the RDP office coincided with the subsequent adoption of the government's macro-economic policy – the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy as government tried to create balance in which sustainable growth, development and reconstruction could advance. According to Nel (2007), this was aimed at the RDP and assisting the country in meeting its development objectives in alignment with the national development priorities and within the context of the Millennium Development Goals. GEAR was an integrated economic strategy that planned to successfully confront the challenges of meeting basic needs, developing human resources, increasing participation in the democratic institutions of civil society and implementing the RDP in all its facets (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2010).

The GEAR document was very ambitious. It set the specific targets of 6% growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2000 and annual job creation of 400 000 (Department of Finance, 1999). For the programme period 1996-2000, 'these goals implied an average GDP growth of 4.2 percent and average annual increase of non-agricultural employment of 2.9 percent' (Weeks, 1999:3). During the period 1994-1996, GDP growth had been 2.3%, which was almost half of the expected growth of the GEAR policy document. The government argued that this was

necessary given the long-term structural economic crisis that faced the South African economy, international isolation of the economy, the need to restructure the economy and to promote investor confidence (Patel, 2007).

### **1.3.3.1 A critique**

Fiscal policy was shown to be unsuccessful in achieving the GEAR targets in terms of privatisation. The emphasis on private investment-led growth and increased labour market flexibility that was envisaged to reduce poverty through job creation has been considered by many as faulty policy (Weeks, 1999; Streak, 2004).

*The Gear strategy rests on the assumption that budget deficit reduction will kick-start growth via private sector investment responding to lower budget deficits and interest rates. However, the (weak) link between deficit reduction, lower interest rates and increased private investment is dubious (Streak, 2004:280).*

One of the most outspoken critics of GEAR was the Congress of South African Trade Unions, a federation of 19 unions with a combined membership of over 1.8 million. Because of its size, ability to organise its members and its alliance with the ANC, its views cannot be ignored by the government (Knight, 2001). Critics on the left argue that GEAR ‘represented a shift away from the government’s commitment to its social goals and that the government embraced a neo-liberal paradigm in response to pressures from big business and economic globalization’ (Sewpaul, 2001, cited in Patel, 2007:94).

Streak (2004) considers that the GEAR policy failed to see that development theory and economic history illustrate clearly that a heavy reliance on sound macro-economic policy, liberalisation and efficiency reforms and private sector investment was unlikely to produce rapid growth and development in South Africa and is of the opinion that to stimulate growth and reduce poverty, government needs to rethink industrial policy and investment in the social sectors.

Perhaps the most poignant challenge facing South Africa is how it will balance its fiscal policy and its goal of attracting foreign investment with the pressing needs of its people for jobs, housing, land, education and healthcare – defined as rights in its constitution (Knight, 2001).

### **1.3.4 The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (2005)**

In late 2003, the government announced its growth and job creation strategy, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA). This was officially launched by the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, in July 2005 and was to be headed by the former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. This policy aims to guide and improve on the country's remarkable economic recovery since the removal of the crippling policies of apartheid (South Africa.info, 2005). Its primary aim is to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014 – ten years after the policy was first set out in 2004, and 20 years after South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 (South Africa.info, 2005). Nel (2007) highlights that the focus of this policy will be on, among other things, human resource training, fast-tracking the unskilled and the unemployed out of the second economy and improving their access to basic services.

#### **1.3.4.1 A critique**

AsgiSA has identified the shortage of skilled labour as one of the six constraints to its goal of boosting economic growth to 6% per annum. The other five are exchange rate volatility, infrastructure backlogs, limits on investment opportunities, the regulatory environment, and deficiencies in state organisation, capacity and leadership (South Africa.info, 2005). The government has acknowledged that the single greatest impediment to its public infrastructure programmes – as well as private investment programmes – is the country's shortage of skills (South Africa.info, 2005). According to Fin24.co.za (2007), there are six binding constraints against achieving the 6% growth per year. These are relative currency volatility, capacity of national logistics system, skills shortages, limited new investments, deficiencies in state organisation, capacity and leadership, and a cumbersome regulatory environment for small businesses. Skills shortages are again cited as a negative constraint.

Writing in 2006, Lombard expresses scepticism about AsgiSA's propensity for achieving the country's development goals. She clarifies this by quoting from the State of the Nation Address 2006, in which the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, explains AsgiSA as being not so much a comprehensive development plan, but rather a 'limited set of interventions' that serve as a catalyst for growth and development (Lombard, 2006:4).

### **1.3.5 The Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (2006)**

In March 2006 the government launched a high-level task team, known as the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (Jipsa), which was tasked with identifying urgent skills needs in the country and advising government how these needs could be met. Jipsa identified that there was overwhelming evidence that addressing skills shortages was one of the most critical interventions that would make a major difference in achieving the remaining AsgiSA objectives. Jipsa detailed that through improved skills, the economy would absorb more youth into the employment force, which in turn would mean freedom from both poverty and other social ills. The massive infrastructure programme of over R400 billion and sectors earmarked for growth would prosper if appropriate and adequate skills were attainable.

Jipsa defined priority skills as an absolute or relative demand (current or in future) for skilled, qualified and experienced people to fill particular roles/professions, occupations or specialisations in the labour market. Five high-profile priority skills areas were identified for immediate attention:

- high-level, world-class engineering and planning skills for the ‘network industries’ – transport, communications, water and energy;
- city, urban and regional planning and engineering skills;
- artisanal and technical skills, with priority attention to infrastructure development, housing and energy, and in other areas identified as being in strong demand in the labour market;
- management and planning skills in education and health, and
- mathematics, science and language competence in public schooling (Republic of South Africa, 2008:10).

Of primary concern and identified as crucial in this thesis, is the fourth priority skill listed by Jipsa – that of management and planning skills in education and health. It is hoped that this thesis can contribute towards an understanding of the principal competencies and skills that are required by mental health workers, both psychologists and social workers, and that the short learning course developed and applied in this research provides a set of guidelines for future interventions in CPD for social workers within the field of VE. These two objectives in improving service

delivery will, in turn, help to uphold the basic tenets of the Constitution in addressing the needs of South African society.

#### **1.3.5.1 A critique**

Jipsa has never been regarded as a long-term response to the skills shortage (Republic of South Africa, 2008). Jipsa was established to focus on generic skills and resolve the immediate skills crisis that the country was facing. The failure of students (23% passed) at Further Education and Training (FET) colleges and the dismal failure of FET colleges to attract future trainee artisans (4% of the target number) were highlighted by the Democratic Alliance in 2008 (The Citizen, 2008).

#### **1.3.6 Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa (2009)**

The establishment of the Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa (HRDS-SA) is meant to address sustainable long-term human resource development challenges. The HRDS-SA, which falls under the aegis of the Department of Education (DoE), commenced in April 2009 and fully incorporates Jipsa's work as the government phased out Jipsa in March 2010. HRDS-SA will deal with all spectres of training, from enhancing mathematics and science education in schools to the training of teachers.

#### **1.4. Social services post-1994**

Hlagala (2005) considers that historically South Africa adopted a welfarist approach to social development, based on the top-down specialist and Medical Model of services. The person/client (individual, group, community) was perceived as a passive recipient of services and the experts were the ones who knew what was best for the community. The community was not consulted about decisions affecting them and a Medical Model of services was in place. The Medical Model views the disadvantaged person as the problem and believes that the problem can only be fixed by an expert. The Medical Model fosters dependence rather than encourages independence within communities. Communities were not encouraged to participate in decisions that related to them and were often forced to implement policies regardless of whether they perceived them to be workable. The Medical Model has proven unaffordable,

unsustainable and unable to address the developmental needs of the poor and marginalised sectors of society in this country (Hlagala, 2005).

As discussed previously, a central priority of government, as required by the Constitution's Bill of Rights, is to ensure provision of a range of services to meet the essential needs of the people within the constraints of available resources (Hlagala, 2005). Against this background, post-1994, and in recognition of the need to promote the goals of sustainable development to redress past imbalances, a radical transformation was called for in the social services model (DSD, 2006:9). This meant a review of existing policy and legislative frameworks and reconceptualisation of services that would address the challenges of HIV/Aids, poverty, crime and unemployment. The former Minister of Social Development of South Africa, Dr Zola Skweyiya, writes in the foreword to the Service Delivery Model (DSD, 2006:1):

*In reaching out to the millions of people who live in conditions of abject poverty, some deprived of access to even basic resources, there had to be a shift in approach, from a welfarist, social security focus to a social development perspective. This paradigm shift was premised on the notion that people are the masters of their own destiny and, instead of helping the poor in the traditional way with handouts, it moved on to the development and empowerment of individuals, groups and communities, teaching them to be self-reliant.*

### ***The development paradigm***

The development paradigm targets those who are vulnerable, those who live in poverty, but may not be ultra-poor, and those beyond poverty, but who face constraints in terms of their life chances. It also addresses the aspirations of all for a sustainable, prosperous, just and stable society. Development approaches must transform attitudes and structures, impact on policy at micro-, meso- and macro-levels, restructure interpersonal and social relationships, and must be guided by principles of equity and social justice (Hlagala, 2005). These approaches must also alter people's positions in relation to their circumstances, enabling them to have greater choice, feel empowered, have some influence on policies affecting them and be part of participatory planning processes.

At the core of the social development approach is collective empowerment – facilitating processes that help the poor, vulnerable and marginalised to regain power and control over their lives (Parkade, 2005). It is because the social development approach recognises the interrelated, intersectoral and integrated nature of service delivery that there are certain attitudes, behaviour and a set of values that promote this approach (Parkade, 2005). It is this developmental approach to social services that has informed the use of PLA methodology in this thesis.

#### **1.4.1 The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997)**

The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) provided a framework in which to debate the future of social work in the developmental welfare system it advocates. It is a system that requires a sincere commitment to working towards minimising poverty in South Africa.

There were five themes informing the policy framework of the White Paper for Social Welfare. The first theme is that of a rights-based approach as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996). Its goals include achieving social justice, a minimum standard of living, equitable access and equal opportunity to services and benefits, and a commitment to meeting the needs of all South Africans with a special emphasis on the needs of the most disadvantaged in society (Patel, 2007).

*The other four themes informing the policy framework of the White Paper for Social Welfare are, firstly, the inter-relations between social and economic development to overcome the distorted and unequal nature and form of development; secondly, democracy and participation in development; thirdly, social welfare pluralism with particular reference to the role of the state and civil society in social development, and the fourth theme relates to reconciling the micro-macro divide in developmental social welfare theory and practice (Patel, 2007:98).*

The White Paper for Social Welfare recognised that the welfare of the population will not just be enhanced by economic growth, but that economic growth must be accompanied by redistribution through social development programmes that can improve on the human development status of the majority of the population.

Community development is one of the methods used to address poverty, inequality and developmental problems (Grobber, 2004).

The White Paper also acknowledged that 14 different departments for the different population groups and homelands administered the welfare system. The result of this was ‘fragmentation, duplication, inefficiency and ineffectiveness in meeting needs’ (Department of Social Welfare, 1997:6). Each of these departments had their own procedures, styles of work, approaches and priorities. There was a lack of intersectoral collaboration, and of a holistic approach. This fragmentation was also reflected in social welfare legislation.

The social service delivery system was organised along specialist lines, and fragmented between a number of fields of service. ‘While some social workers have received training and practice in community development, the approach to service delivery is still largely rehabilitative, it relies on institutional care and is not preventative and developmental’ (Department of Social Welfare, 1997:7).

Welfare services were not accessible and responsive to the needs of all people. The White Paper sought to address these issues, and the national goals of the proposed strategy were:

- to facilitate the provision of appropriate developmental social welfare services to all South Africans, especially those living in poverty, those who are vulnerable and those who have special needs. These services should include rehabilitative, preventative, developmental and protective services and facilities, as well as social security, including social relief programmes, social care programmes and the enhancement of social functioning;
- to promote and strengthen the partnership between the government, the community and organisations in civil society and in the private sector who are involved with the delivery of social services;
- to promote social development intrasectorally both within the welfare departments and in collaboration with other government departments and non-governmental stakeholders;
- to give effect to those international conventions of the United Nations (UN) system that have been ratified by the government, and that are pertinent to developmental social welfare, and

- to realise the relevant objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the RDP (DSD, 1997:10).

In summary, the White Paper endorsed the provision of comprehensive social assistance to those without means of support and committed the government to build a comprehensive, integrated social system in order to ensure the realisation of the right of access to social security. The White Paper envisaged a social security system that ensured universal access to ‘a minimum income sufficient to meet basic subsistence needs and that would work intersectorally to alleviate poverty’ (Department of Social Welfare, 1997:17). The White Paper enshrined a rights-based approach that was non-discriminatory, encouraged participatory democracy, was transparent and accountable, accessible and appropriate to the needs of the people of South Africa.

In 1997, the White Paper was officially adopted, conceiving a shift from social welfare to social development. In 2000, in keeping with this paradigm shift, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) was renamed and became known as the Department of Social Development (DSD).

#### **1.4.1.1 A critique**

Hlagala (2005) questions whether the developmental approach to service delivery was complied with in its entirety. In her paper presented at the VE Strategy Meeting in 2005, she observed that despite having adopted a developmental approach to service delivery after the White Paper of 1997, the focus of the DSD over the previous decade had been predominantly on social security, primarily due to the need for urgent and effective interventions to alleviate poverty. This crowding out effect resulted in curtailment and neglect of other services. This neglect had, among others, the following results:

- poorly developed protection, prevention and early intervention services;
- skills flight due to poor salaries and working conditions, resulting in an inadequate number of social service practitioners to deal with high caseloads and the impact of poverty, and
- limited support to the non-governmental sector, which renders social services jointly with government (Hlagala, 2005).

On the whole there is support for the developmental paradigm, but due to the extreme levels of poverty in the country there is concern over the available resources. The welfare budget has increased, but staffing accounts for a very small proportion of the welfare budget because of the preponderance of grants. A developmental approach requires increased staffing, which might run counter to government's attempts to limit current expenditure. The activities of South African social workers have mostly been confined to individual counselling crisis intervention and not to community intervention as required by the developmental approach. Even outside of government employ, much of the time of social workers is spent fulfilling statutory obligations on behalf of government, for example supervising parolees and placing foster children. Reorientation towards developmental social welfare will require training and practice (Patel, 2007). Critics of the developmental social welfare approach (Gray, 2006; Hölscher, 2008) do not believe that the approach has been successful in alleviating poverty.

Hlagala (2005) believes that DSD is making a conscious effort to support the process of transition towards developmental social welfare and that this transition will require reprioritising budgets, human resources development and reviewing the role of statutory bodies such as the South African Council for Social Service Professions. Lombard (2008) highlights that the White Paper has been effective in reshaping social welfare policy, and ten years on there is an understanding of what is meant by developmental social services<sup>2</sup>.

#### **1.4.2 The Integrated Service Delivery Model (2006)**

A new model that sought to address the issues discussed in the previous section was launched by the former Deputy Minister of Social Development of South Africa, Dr Jean Benjamin, on November 28, 2005. This model became known as the Integrated Service Delivery Model. Presently this is the model that is adopted by the DSD. The approach seeks to integrate the three main focus areas of the department, namely social security, social welfare and community development. 'We believe that this is the best way for the Department and its partners to combat the socio-economic challenges facing the country' (DSD, 2006:1).

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<sup>2</sup> Developmental social services constitute both traditional social work practice and social development, like strength-based and empowerment approaches (Lombard, 2008).

Some of the challenges that the new model would try to alleviate included the following:

- large numbers of children who have to await trial in prison because of inadequate numbers of probation workers and lack of infrastructure, such as places of safety and secure care facilities in communities;
- an almost non-existent management information system, which greatly hampers planning;
- very poorly developed prevention and early intervention services;
- an increase in social pathologies and problems, for example the high number of street children, child sexual exploitation and the impact of HIV and Aids, and
- increasing incidence of substance abuse (Hlagala, 2005).

The rationale for the new Service Delivery Model was also to address the inadequate numbers of social service practitioners and a lack of depth to service delivery. The inadequate numbers of social service practitioners came about because of a skills flight due to poor working conditions. Parkade (2005) regards social workers and community development workers as the main agents of change. Parkade (2005) is of the opinion that failure to expand the range of developmental services will result in community instability, and that the country as a whole will see high levels of substance abuse, domestic and other forms of violence and abuse, and various social ills.

The new model sought to refocus attention on social services and to implement the developmental model, as well as to review the organisational functions and structures already in place so as to ensure service delivery is carried out. The promise made was that backlogs would be addressed and that the nature and quality of relationships with internal and external stakeholders would alter so that services could be monitored and reviewed in accordance with societal needs. According to Hlagala (2005), the transformation would include:

- redirection and review of the existing policy and legislative framework;
- reconceptualisation of services to address current realities and challenges, such as the high levels of poverty, crime, HIV and Aids, and unemployment;

- a recognition that the past structures and models of social welfare provision cannot adequately meet the needs of society;
- a need to promote the goals of sustainable development to address past imbalances, and
- adoption of a macro-policy approach that integrates social and economic development.

Hlagala (2005) succinctly captures the key focus areas of the new Service Delivery Model as: a clear identification of basic needs opportunities and priorities for each community; development of basic infrastructure and systems within each community; development and growth of the economy; encouragement of community participation in all spheres of social, economic and political life, in particular amongst the youth, women and the handicapped, and the development of monitoring and evaluation programmes in order to ensure success of reconstruction and social development programmes.

*The desired outcome of the Service Delivery Model is the implementation of a comprehensive, efficient, effective and quality service delivery system, which will contribute to a self-reliant society, and which is based on the principles of Batho Pele<sup>3</sup>, the White Paper for Social Welfare, and the constitutional, legal and international obligations that inform the mandate of the Department in the provision of services (DSD, 2006:5).*

#### **1.4.2.1 A critique**

The transformation of social welfare to social development requires social service professionals who will be equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills, values and the imagination to work in a changing local and global world (Patel, 2007). The model includes a capacity building programme for social service practitioners, as well as the

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<sup>3</sup> 'Batho Pele' is a Sotho translation for 'People First' and is an initiative to get public servants to be service-orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2010).

social worker retention strategy. Earle (2007b) elucidates that social work schools currently occupy the unenviable nexus between a poor quality secondary education system and demanding national and international professional standards, with low levels of funding and high expectations of the racial transformation of universities and the role of social work professionals in national social development efforts. Earle (2007b) believes that funding should be reconsidered if government is to meet the demands made on social workers.

### **1.5 Policies governing the victim empowerment field**

In light of the fact that the research and implementation of the short course ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’ is located within the field of VE, an explanation of this field and the macro-policies governing the field will be discussed. These policies are the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996), the National Victim Empowerment Programme (1999), the Integrated Victim Empowerment Policy (2005), the Services Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa (2004) and the Minimum Standards for Service Delivery in Victim Empowerment (Victims of Crime and Violence) (2004).

#### **1.5.1 The National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996)**

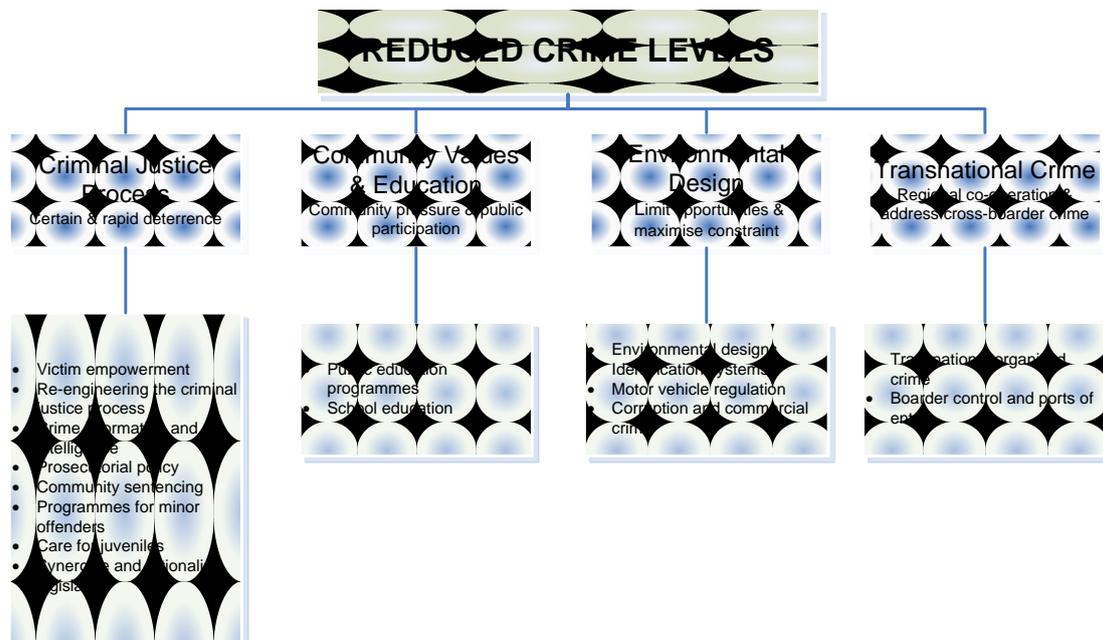
The South African government announced the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) in 1996 as a long-term strategy to address the factors that contribute to high levels of crime in South Africa (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996). The Strategy was enlightened in that it recognised the social and developmental causes of crime that are beyond the scope of the police and the courts (Nel, 2007). The NCPS aimed at creating a paradigm shift in how crime was perceived and addressed ‘from an exclusive emphasis on crime control to crime prevention; from emphasising crime as a security issue towards treating it as a social issue; from a state-centred criminal justice system to a victim-centred restorative justice system, and viewing safety as a basic need and fundamental right of all South African citizens’ (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996:6).

R200 million from the RDP Fund was given to projects that would accelerate criminal justice reforms. This was also one of the first symbolic links between the NCPS and the RDP, emphasising a developmental paradigm for crime prevention in South Africa. These links were again made when the NCPS was included as one of

the six pillars of the government's National Growth and Development Strategy (Simpson & Rauch, 1999).

The NCPS drew together key role-players in government and civil society in an effort to restructure the criminal justice system (CJS) and develop crime prevention strategies that would address the root causes of crime (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996). It was clear from this statement that the NCPS recognised that crime prevention required the involvement of a range of government departments together with civil society. The NCPS set out roles for all three spheres of government, namely national, provincial and local (Pretorius & Louw, 2005). At a national level, the Ministry of Safety and Security was to ensure the success of the NCPS, provincial governments were to develop their own crime prevention strategies and prepare provincial plans, and local departments were to implement crime prevention programmes. The NCPS required an integrated planning process, co-ordination of roles and activities, linking planning with budget, and capacity building for effective planning, implementation and service delivery (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996).

Figure 1.1 shows how the 18 prevention programmes of the NCPS were divided into four pillars: the criminal justice process, community values and education, environmental design and transnational crime.



**Figure 1.1: Framework for the National Crime Prevention Strategy (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996).**

Under each of the four pillars there were strategies that were proposed by the NCPS:

- re-engineering the CJS to provide an efficient and legitimate CJS as the foundation for crime prevention, law enforcement and the protection of human rights;
- reducing crime through environmental design to limit environmental or situational opportunities for crime, and maximising constraints by primarily ensuring the safety and crime prevention considerations are applied in the planning of new developments and in the re-design and upgrading of existing infrastructure;
- focusing on community values and education to harness community participation and involvement in crime prevention to ensure a positive impact on the way society engages with and responds to crime and violence, and
- clamping down on transnational crime in order to address the enormous influence of international and regional crime syndicates, which includes improved border control and addressing cross-border crime and regional co-operation.

#### **1.5.1.1 A critique**

Naudé (2000) regards the NCPS as an important policy document, but do not believe that it was a comprehensive policy as claimed by the developers. In 1998 a review of the NCPS was commissioned. The NCPS Presidential Review Commission (1998) established that drastic improvements were necessary if there was to be a significant impact on crime and violence. More focus was required between the cluster of criminal justice departments and agencies and more integration of the work of different departments (the DSW, South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Health (DoH) and DoE), and agencies (NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs)).

Rauch (2002:5) highlighted a number of challenges in the NCPS' implementation:

- The NCPS was based on an important assumption that the cross-cutting national programmes it proposed would spontaneously lead to

interdepartmental co-operation. However, the financial and performance incentives in government acted against integration and co-operation. Moreover, the project management skills and information systems to support this approach were not available.

- The NCPS did not allocate dedicated government funding towards its implementation but rather encouraged departments to rationalise and allocate existing resources to the national programmes.
- The intersection between the four pillars and the seven priority crimes was not well articulated. This resulted in an over-focus on the pillars, with the result that structures and processes were isolated from the content of the crimes that were meant to be dealt with.

The NCPS was from the outset compromised by differing political needs and competition among officials in the Department of Safety and Security (Pelser & Louw, 2002). After the implementation of the NCPS in 1996, crime did not appear to be lessening, and Rauch (2002:20) states that as a result, ‘the implementation of the 1998-2000 period focused almost entirely on law enforcement and the infrastructural design on an integrated CJS’. The second general election in 1999 played a role in this as politicians tried to gather support from the nation. The consequence of this was that elements of the NCPS and the White Paper that were perceived as ‘soft developmental approaches to crime’ were ‘either entirely ignored or adapted to fit the tough enforcement agenda’ (Rauch, 2002:23). Nel (2007) regards the NCPS’s greatest strength as its greatest weakness: because it is so inclusive and comprehensive it was extremely difficult to implement in its entirety.

By 2007, the NCPS as a structure no longer existed, and various government departments managed its functions and responsibilities. Due to public and political pressure to deliver decisive, short-term solutions to address endemic crime and violence, the NCPS had lost momentum (Nel, 2007). The 12-year-old NCPS had been described as ‘dormant’ and ‘outdated’ (Sunday Times, 2007:12). Instead of a crime prevention approach as advocated in the NCPS, government attention turned to more visible, short-term law enforcement efforts, such as the SAPS National Crime Combating Strategy (2000), which focused on reducing crime levels through high-density search-and-seizure operations (Du Plessis & Louw, 2005). It has been argued that the pressure on the police to reduce the crime statistics undermined the effort to

prevent crime. Even though the NCPS allocated responsibility for projects to various departments, the SAPS has continued to drive most crime prevention initiatives.

### **1.5.2 The National Victim Empowerment Programme (1999)**

Within the first pillar of the NCPS, provision was made for the creation of the VEP (Pretorius & Louw, 2005). This programme was to make the CJS more accessible and sensitive to the needs of victims, as well as to address, more broadly, the negative impact of crime on victims. Initially (1994-1996), the VEP was named the Victim Support Programme and located in the RDP with the SAPS as lead department (Nel, 2007). The NCPS through its VEP advocated the establishment of a victim-centred and restorative CJS and acknowledged that ‘victimisation lies at the heart of much retributive crime’ (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996:20).

The absence of means of victim aid and empowerment play an important role in the cyclical nature of violence and crime in South Africa (Nel & Kruger, 1999). While victim aid is often regarded as ‘remedial rather than preventative in dealing with crime, if untreated, victims frequently become perpetrators of either retributive violence or violence displaced in the home sphere’ (Interdepartmental Strategy Team, 1996:20). According to the crime prevention model, attending to the needs of victims is not only the humane thing to do – it also motivates victims to co-operate with the CJS, improves their ability to do so, and limits the longer term debilitating effects of trauma and victimisation (Unisa Centre for Applied Psychology & Southern Hemisphere, 2009).

One of the key outputs of the VEP within the NCPS was to develop a comprehensive model that brings together integrated service delivery for victims of crime and violence that is in line with national standards (DSD, 2005a). This approach was based on the premise that crime is a social issue and requires multi-agency interventions. It is multifaceted and intersectoral, comprising the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ), the DSD, the SAPS and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) (Snyman, 2005). Also included are departments not formally part of the NCPS but crucial to the programme implementation, such as DoE and DoH. As a partnership between national, provincial and local government departments and organisations of civil society, the programme involves volunteers, businesses, the religious sector, NGOs, academics and research institutions (Snyman, 2003). The leadership role to co-ordinate, manage and facilitate

the implementation of VE policy, initiatives and services is maintained by the DSD, although each role-player is responsible for developing their own VE-related internal strategies, policies, structures and programmes (DSD, 2005a).

At a national VE workshop in 1996, a National VEP Reference Team was established, which in 2001 became the National VEP Management Team. Pretorius and Louw (2005) explain that with the inception of the VEP it was envisaged that the National VEP Management Team would provide strategic direction and co-ordinate and manage the implementation of the programme. Some of the core functions of the National VEP Management Team include formulating policies, advising Parliament on changes made to legislation, developing a programme for victim-offender mediation, setting standards for the rendering of services, rendering and commissioning research, developing a directory for service providers, hosting annual conferences, encouraging the training of service providers, handling communication and co-ordination problems, and developing systems for evaluating victims' satisfaction with the police and justice departments (Pretorius & Louw, 2005:80).

The National VEP Management Team currently comprises representatives from the:

- DSD (Child, Youth and Families Directorate);
- National Office of the SAPS (Social Crime Prevention Directorate);
- DoH (Mental Health Directorate);
- DoE (School Safety Directorate);
- DoJ (Gender Directorate);
- National DCS (Correctional Programmes Directorate);
- Provincial VEP forums (represented by DSD provincial VEP co-ordinators);
- relevant (national) NGOs, and
- academic and research institutions (DSD, 2005b).

In some provinces, provincial VE forums were also established. These forums are responsible for co-ordinating the process in the provinces and liaising with the national structures (DSD, 2005b). The functions and responsibilities of these forums are essentially the same as those of the National VE Management Team (such as to

co-ordinate VE support services in the region/province, initiate new programmes, and amend the existing services based on the needs of victims (Snyman, 1992:486).

### **1.5.3 The Integrated Victim Empowerment Policy (2005)**

The National VEP Management Team developed the Integrated VE Policy to provide a framework to guide and inform the provision of integrated and multidisciplinary services aimed at addressing the needs of victims of crime and violence. The VE Policy aims to:

- give strategic direction to the provisioning of services to victims of crime and violence;
- identify the roles and responsibilities of various role-players, and
- create a common understanding of VE amongst state departments, victims, perpetrators, NGOs, CBOs and individual members of the community (DSD, 2005a).

The philosophical grounding on which the Integrated VE Policy is based holds that individuals, families and communities have the right to privacy, safety and human dignity (DSD, 2005a). The roles and responsibilities of service providers are extensively outlined, inclusive of the principles that ought to inform their services, such as the Batho Pele principles. It is accepted that, rather than being dependent on the expertise and assistance of a professional or someone else, all people have certain skills and competencies which, with the right assistance and/or support, can assist individuals to help themselves or to cope better with an incident of victimisation (Themba Lesizwe, 2005). Victimisation is a violation of human rights. VE aims to restore the damage caused by victimisation.

The 2006-2008 objectives to realise the vision and purpose of the VEP are:

- Policy: To develop, monitor and evaluate the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated policy framework for VE in South Africa.
- Management: To develop and capacitate VE governance structures to ensure effective decision-making and enhance service delivery at all levels.

- Direct service delivery: To develop best-practice models and increase the scope and quality of services for victims of crime and violence.
- Marketing and communication: To ensure effective communication and marketing of VE-related issues to promote accessibility and accountability in service delivery.
- Education, training and development of VE practitioners: To enhance the capacity of VE service providers to provide appropriate and effective VE services for all victims of crime and violence in South Africa.
- Research, monitoring and evaluation: To conduct research on VE-related issues, monitor the implementation of services and evaluate the impact thereof (Department of Social Development, 2005b).

#### **1.5.4 The Services Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa (2004)**

The Services Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa (the ‘Victims’ Charter’) is an important instrument for promoting justice for all. The Victims’ Charter is compliant with the spirit of the South African Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) and the 1985 UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for the Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (Department of Social Development, 2004). This Charter elaborates and consolidates on the rights of and obligations to victims. Nel (2007) reminds us that South Africa is the only country on the African continent that has such a document. It was approved in December 2004 and co-ordinated by the DoJ.

The Victims’ Charter contains seven rights: dignity, privacy, information (receive and provide), protection, assistance, compensation and restitution (Webster, 2008). The objectives of the Charter are to:

- eliminate secondary victimisation;
- put the victim at the centre of the CJS;
- attain and maintain minimum standards, and
- provide for victims’ recourse.

##### **1.5.4.1 A critique**

Research conducted for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the DSD by the Unisa Centre for Applied Psychology and Southern Hemisphere Consultants showed that the general level of awareness of service providers regarding VE policies and victims’

rights prior to 2008 on a national and provincial level was low. The level of awareness of the public regarding the Victims' Charter was very low.

Speaking at the VEP 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in August 2008, Webster outlined that the challenge was how the rights-based approach in various legislation, including the Victims' Charter, policy documents and the Constitution, could be made more real to people. In her opinion it was only achievable if service providers ensured that every intervention and programme linked with people's rights. Multisectoral integration, reward for best-practice models, using Parliament to insist on departments delivering and implementing the VEP and monitoring the implementation of legislation and interventions and co-ordination between the National VEP Management Team and the Victims' Charter Committee working towards a common goal, were a few of the suggestions she put forward.

Although our legislation is considered in line with other countries, it is the implementation that remains problematic for South Africa. This is often attributed to lack of budget and the co-ordination of services both inter- and intrasectorally.

#### **1.5.5 Minimum Standards for Service Delivery in Victim Empowerment (Victims of Crime and Violence) (2004)**

The Minimum Standards, finalised in 2004, are in keeping with the South African Services Charter for Victims of Crime, the NCPS and the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. The Minimum Standards not only outline basic rights and principles, but also supply detailed information to enable victims of crime and violence to exercise their rights and service providers to uphold victims' rights as explained in the Victims' Charter, by setting out the minimum standards that a victim can expect from service providers. The Minimum Standards assist victims in holding everyone involved in the CJS accountable to ensure that a victim receives appropriate assistance and services.

The Minimum Standards are divided into four parts. Part I provides background information on victims' rights and outlines who can access the rights. Part II explains the processes in the CJS and what will happen to a victim should they fall prey to a crime and report the crime to the police. Part III contains the minimum standards on services that a victim can expect from the various role-players in the CJS, with reference to each right explained in the Victims' Charter, and Part IV outlines the complaints procedures.

The Minimum Standards are intended to make the monitoring of service delivery easier as they set out minimum standards against which service delivery will be measured. Relevant institutions, agencies and departments will monitor the application of the rights and standards of services set out in the Minimum Standards (DSD, 2004a). The principles for service delivery are accountability, empowerment, participation, community-centred, rights-based, and appropriateness (Nel, 2007).

#### **1.5.5.1 A critique**

The DSD (as lead agency) of the VEP took more than four years to appoint a full-time National VEP Programme Manager (Pretorius & Louw, 2005). The DSD had to operate for the first five years without an allocated budget<sup>4</sup> and with no support staff to assist with the management and co-ordination of the VEP (Pretorius & Louw, 2005).

Poor co-ordination, conflicting priorities, conflict between experts regarding the nature of the problem and how to deal with it, unhappiness about various role-players' autonomy and area of responsibility, and a lack of knowledge are just a few of the problems encountered in the VEP and mentioned by Graham and Bennett (1995). Many government departments and NGOs work in silos, and often services in urban areas are duplicated whilst the rural areas remain under-resourced. This can be attributed to a large extent to the gaps in the functioning of both local and provincial VE forums. Nel (2007) states that the only department that has established intradepartmental forums is the DSD and previously the SAPS. This does not apply to all provinces uniformly. Local forums are not being held on a regular basis in Mpumalanga, and a provincial forum in Mpumalanga was only re-established late in 2008 (March, 2009). In the North-West Province there is a lack of understanding of the function of the forum and the forum is events-driven (March, 2009).

Conny Nxumalo, DSD Chief Director: Families and Social Crime Prevention, speaking at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the VEP in 2008, regarded marketing and communication strategies as critical to the VEP – the work of the VEP needs to become well known to both victims and potential victims – but she added that there is inadequate funding for marketing.

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<sup>4</sup> The only funds available were from the RDP in the amount of R6 230 000, earmarked to be utilised as seed funding to co-ordinate and implement the VEP. Key governments are required to fund their activities in the Programme from their departmental line function budgets (Pretorius & Louw, 2005).

NGOs working in the sector are also under-resourced. There are neither adequate facilities for victims of crime, nor enough consistency in the geographic spread of such facilities. The research findings of Nel and Kruger (1999; 2004) furthermore indicate that the services need to be accessible with regard to their location and service fees and should be well marketed. Early intervention may prevent deterioration in the socio-economic functioning of individuals or their productivity in the workplace. Should government policies truly be person-centred, this will prevent secondary victimisation (Nel & Kruger, 2004).

Pretorius and Louw (2005:83) summarise the problems that have been encountered in implementing the VEP policy as follows:

- lack of political buy-in and visionary leadership;
- lack of a clear policy framework and strategies to guide the implementation of the VEP;
- delays in the finalisation of key policy documents and legislation;
- a lack of effective co-ordination and integration at national, provincial and local levels;
- insufficient co-ordination within the relevant government departments;
- no guidelines in place for provincial VE Policy co-ordinators;
- staff shortages;
- lack of capacity building for staff of the various departments offering services (especially frontline workers) and for managers of VE at national and provincial levels to effectively manage the VEP;
- a lack of dedicated funding;
- a lack of public accountability and insufficient monitoring and evaluation systems, resulting in developed strategies not being implemented, and
- a lack of community awareness of the VEP and VE services offered.

## **1.6 Summary**

In this chapter, the principal macro-policy frameworks underpinning the rationale and the shift of paradigm towards the establishment, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of social development programmes that focus on improving lives in South Africa since the onset of democracy have been discussed. It is against this background

that the study in this thesis is discussed. The participants in the study were all state-employed VE co-ordinators located within the DSD of the Limpopo Province.

Within each of the nine provinces of South Africa there is a provincial VE co-ordinator who manages and supervises the VE co-ordinators in the various districts or regions of the province. The provincial VE co-ordinator is expected to report to the National VEP Management Team quarterly on the objectives (i.e. policy, management, direct service delivery, marketing and communication, education, the training and development of VE practitioners, research, monitoring and evaluation) that have been achieved in the province. Each district or region within a province has a VE district co-ordinator who is tasked with supervising or managing the VE subdistrict co-ordinators. The VE district and VE subdistrict co-ordinators are expected to develop and administer the VEP as well as other social programmes, such as the HIV/Aids programme, the women and children's programme and the substance abuse programme.

VE co-ordinators are expected to develop and administer the policy for the DSD on VE and to participate in co-ordinating related perpetrator programmes. They have to facilitate, co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the capacity building of departmental and NGO staff in VE and participate in similar activities regarding related issues. They are furthermore required to monitor and evaluate VE policy and legislation and participate in related activities regarding perpetrators. A VE co-ordinator's job description includes developing the VEP protocol document through marketing, communication and in forums. Also included in this job description is interpreting and communicating research needs to relevant bodies. The training for this position is an appropriate bachelor's degree or diploma in Social Work, and the VE co-ordinator must be registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (Department of Social Development, 2004b).

It has been highlighted throughout this chapter that there is a lack of comprehensive 'in-service' training for state-appointed VE co-ordinators who are tasked with implementing, monitoring and evaluating VE services and other social programmes. In the light of the objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), the RDP (1994), GEAR (1999), AsgiSA (2005), Jipsa (2006), The White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) and The Integrated Service Delivery Model (2006) to relieve poverty, violence, lack of resources and unemployment and to rebuild communities, the short learning course 'Group process

and capacity development for effective social programme implementation' was developed. The short learning course could contribute to the future 'in-service' training of healthcare professionals, social workers and community development workers offering VE services in a South African context. It may furthermore offer some insight into the necessary foundation blocks that will take us from 'vision to reality'.

### **1.7 Outline of the study**

**Chapter 2**, *Social development and participatory learning and action*, provides an overview of the history of the field of socio-economic development and community development and explores modernisation theory, dependency theory, the basic needs approach, postmodernism and neo-liberalism. A discussion on the current trends in community development, such as the participatory people-centred approach, highlights the need for social development to embrace the empowerment of communities and encourage local ownership and participation. The chapter sets out why PLA as a methodology was chosen for the short learning course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation'. It also attempts to justify why PLA tools should be incorporated into the 'in-service' training of state-appointed VE co-ordinators in the Limpopo Province.

**Chapter 3**, *Psychology's contribution to community development*, discusses the four theoretical orientations in the field of developmental psychology and Maslow's theory of needs. According to Benson and Dundis (2003), Maslow's theory has relevance for anyone involved in the community as it offers insight into individual factors that contribute to community participation. The tenets and principles of the field of community psychology are outlined. Within the framework of community psychology, two theoretical approaches, psychosocial empowerment and participation, are outlined in order to indicate community psychology's fit with the short learning course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation'.

The purpose of **Chapter 4**, *Building the road to empowerment: No easy ride*, is to contextualise this study in a relevant research paradigm. This chapter provides an outline and discussion of the research approaches, strategies and procedures

applied. The initial section of the chapter focuses on how combining the theories of psychosocial empowerment and experiential problem-based learning have contributed towards the design of the short course ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’.

**Chapter 5**, *Creating change together: Responsive and relevant?* reports on the outcomes of the data-gathering phase. The data collected and the information are analysed in relation to the overarching research objectives posed. Methodological findings have implications for system findings, and so precede them. System findings have implications for findings about change, which therefore come last. This chapter looks at the appropriateness of the methodology of PLA. System findings are discussed and the overall themes that emerged throughout the entire capacity development course are explored. The chapter ends with a discussion on findings relating to possible changes in the tertiary education healthcare system and the benefits of ‘in-service’ short courses for state-appointed social workers.

**Chapter 6**, the final chapter, entitled *Ubuntu at work: The reconstruction and development of the soul*, explores the key considerations, recommendations and conclusions regarding ‘in-service’ training programmes/short courses for state-employed social workers involved in VE services. PLA, experiential problem-based learning and the principles of ubuntu are discussed. The concept of psychosocial empowerment is explored, and in conclusion, the chapter elucidates how critical the ‘in-service’ training of VE social workers is within the new social development paradigm. The chapter ends with a call to ubuntu through a strong sense of community and caring and advocates an environment that enables individuals and communities to receive appropriate VE services and restorative justice.

## Chapter 2

### Social development and participatory learning and action

*I'm an economist. I've been taught to think in terms of per capita income. But to many people, that's not concrete enough. When you say development, what is it all about? Therefore, by telling the world that development is about mothers not dying when they give birth, about children surviving their first few years, about getting every child into primary school, making sure that people have access to clean water where they live, you have concrete ways of framing the objectives for development ... You need a vision to make it happen.* – UN Development Programme Administrator Kemal Dervis in his address at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Philanthropy Forum Conference in Washington, DC, on April 4, 2006 (Dervis, 2006).

#### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 indicated the policy frameworks that govern social development practice in South Africa. Social development values are rooted in the values of the Constitution of South Africa (Patel, 2007). The constitutional values are a call to action – to build the kind of society that meets the standards that the society has set for itself (Ministry of Education, 2001). There has been criticism levelled against the government's perceived inability to turn sound policies into everyday practice, and for not keeping in mind local realities (i.e. socio-economic and cultural factors) during their planning and implementation (Nel, Koortzen & Jacobs, 2001).

Elaborating on the contextualisation provided in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will provide a presentation of a number of community development theories, including a condensed overview of the history of community development practice. The current trends in community development, participatory people-centred development, and the issues relating to community development will then be investigated. This will be followed by a discussion of social development and how it relates to community development practice in South Africa. Chapter 2 concludes with the argument for the PLA paradigm if the policy frameworks set out by the South African government are to be implemented to their fullest extent.

## 2.2 Introduction to theories of development

Although the term ‘development’ carries different connotations in different countries and regions of the world, it has been used most frequently to describe economic growth. However, economic development in many parts of the world has not been accompanied by a concomitant level of social progress. Economic growth that fails to raise standards of living for all can hardly be described as development (Hall & Midgley, 2006).

The term ‘development’ has been applied in various settings and very broadly. It can be used to describe socio-economic development in the individual, or organisational development within organisations, or community development in which poverty and deprivation of entire communities are addressed and which, in turn, is meant to foster individual development. *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (Reber, Allen & Reber, 2009) describes ‘development’ as a very loose term used to reference processes of fundamental importance. Hornby (2005) warns that it is important to be clear about the different meanings ascribed to development. She considers development from a humanist paradigm, which places people at the centre of development – development for the people, by the people, to realise their own potential.

Swanepoel and De Beer (1997b:45) view development as encompassing the whole human being and his or her environment. Swanepoel (2004:72) is of the opinion that development is ‘the opposite of poverty, which manifests itself in many things; development should address all the manifestations of poverty’. Broadly speaking, development approaches can be divided into two categories, namely growth-centred approaches and people-centred approaches (Monaheng, 2004). Monaheng (2004) clarifies these two perspectives further by stating that one stresses economic issues and the other emphasises human factors.

Kaplan (1996) regards development as organic. Humankind is seen as operating within a system with a latent drive to actualise to full potential. Development is the process by which people develop their own power in relation to impediments and constraining forces and enhance the power to engage with realities around them.

In this thesis, development shall be taken to mean a form of growth that holistically embraces the person within his/her socio-economic environment and

creates a milieu that encourages full actualisation of all physical, intellectual, emotional and social potential.

### **2.3 History of development theories**

An in-depth analysis of development theories does not form part of this study. It is, however, necessary to take cognisance of the mainstream arguments in this regard to be able to put socio-economic development and community development in context before moving to the argument for PLA theory.

#### **2.3.1 Modernisation theory**

The modernisation approach drew on economic growth theory that helped provide the rationale for guided intervention in a developing economy by local political elites and foreign donors (Haines, 2004). According to Richards (2004), in modernisation theory it is believed that if underdeveloped countries accept modernisation they can achieve the status of a developed nation. Using the image of industrially developed nations as a blueprint, development is seen as a global process (Richards, 2004). Modernisation theory adopted a 'top-down' approach or 'expert' opinion of the developed countries. Development is seen as related to urbanisation, industrialisation and how much emphasis is placed on science and technology.

A major criticism was the inability or reluctance of modernisation theory to take the global situation fully into account (Richards, 2004). According to Haines (2004), obstacles to change were seen as primarily internal and the advanced industrial societies as the champions of industrial development. It was assumed that the process of modernisation and industrialisation was inevitable and that newly developing countries have as good a chance, or better, of industrialisation.

The popularity of modernisation theory began to diminish in the late 1960s, when it was realised that the assumption that the development experience of First World countries could be applied *ad hoc* to Third World countries without making substantial changes.

#### **2.3.2 Dependency theory**

The dependency theory gained momentum during the 1960s, mostly due to disillusionment with the failure of the development policies of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and was the first development theory to consider

development from the viewpoint of the Third World (Richards, 2004). Dependency theory drew on the theories of imperialism and would dominate development theory for much of the late 1960s and 1970s. The dependency theory is characterised by pessimism about the possibilities for particularly capitalistic forms of development (Richards, 2004). Haines (2004) explained underdevelopment as a state created before a society develops a relationship with a capitalist society – in other words, underdevelopment is what is experienced prior. Dependent nations such as Africa, Asia and Latin America are considered by dependency theorists to be at a disadvantage in their dealings with dominant industrialised nations who pursue their cheap raw materials and labour. The sharing of economic power is not seen as equal as the dependent nations are at the mercy of the demand from the industrialised countries.

Dependency theory has been criticised for its narrow view that Third World countries have not benefited from contact with industrialised nations and that the theory overgeneralises about Third World countries.

### **2.3.3 Basic needs approach**

In the 1970s it was generally felt that a more practical approach to socio-economic development was needed if poverty was to be addressed, and that the reduction of poverty could only be addressed by social services such as education, health and welfare programmes. ‘A school of thought developed which argued that human societies were not to follow luxurious standards for all, and that if the focus was on fulfilling “basic needs” of all human beings, the world still has enough resources to meet the needs of all’ (Kothari, 1993:12).

The underlying tenet of the basic needs approach (BNA) was the view that a level of social services is needed for people to sustain themselves, and that by focusing attention on basic needs such as health, education, income security and shelter, people could become self-sustaining. The role-players in the BNA were governments that financed the basic social welfare programmes and offered a vision, thereby building the capacity and structures for people to participate in social development efforts (Heinonen, Mercader, Quianzon, Penner-Torralla & Baluis, 2000). One of the key assumptions of BNA is that governments have the political will to raise the resources needed to support social welfare for the poorest people. Midgley

(1995) writes that some people still believe that social development can only occur due to people's own efforts and participation in the process.

The definition of basic needs sparks debate with significantly different emphases among the participants (Haines, 2004). The distinction between 'needs', 'wants' and 'rights' creates confusion in public policy decision-making as there is never universal agreement (Gasper, 1996; Whitehouse, 1996).

This approach was the first to be people-centred, contrary to the previous approaches, which were economically centred (Richards, 2004). It does, however, appear that while the BNA focuses on what it wants to achieve, namely meeting the basic needs of the people, it never really developed a methodology on how this should be achieved. 'Consequently, in the early 1980s it lost its appeal as a separate approach and enhancing human potential towards the development of Third World or poor countries' (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005:5).

#### **2.3.4 Postmodernism/Post-industrialism**

*In its 'harder' forms, postmodernism contributes to the concept of 'post-development', in which the idea of reasoned and critically orientated planning for, and reflection on improved socio-economic and political conditions for humankind is seen as an exercise in futility ... in its 'softer' variants it can alert scholars and policy-makers to the variety and diversity of forms of knowledge, the need to locate and learn from indigenous knowledge, and to take more cognisance of localized groups and the plurality of cultural practices and preferences (Haines, 2004:56).*

Postmodernism is 'merely a discourse of power' and not a recipe for change (Haines, 2004:56). Richards (2004) writes that there is no single truth in postmodernism, but rather a plurality of perspectives, each with its own language, rules and myths.

#### **2.3.5 Neo-liberalism**

The global economic recession of the early 1980s as well as mounting Third World debt contributed to neo-liberalism becoming the dominant view of development, especially in the industrialised West and in several of the more influential international bodies in the development field. An important feature of neo-liberalism

is regulation through the market (Haines, 2004). A democracy in the sense of a neo-liberal economic system is ruled by free market ideology. It considers state interference with the market mechanism as ineffective, counterproductive and basically inconsistent (Richards, 2004).

Criticism against the neo-liberal model has started to arise, even from people within the system. The criticism is mostly against the relationships among states, bankers and entrepreneurs, and around the worship of money and success as the criteria. There is also the opinion that the governments that accept neo-liberalism and its principles are neglecting their responsibility towards the poor (Richards, 2004). According to McKinley (2004), the bulk of external recommendations on economic policy-making still being supplied to developing countries remain neoliberal. There are conditions attached to these recommendations if the country wishes to receive debt relief or continue to receive concessional lending and grant-based technical assistance (McKinley, 2004).

#### **2.4 Current trends in development**

Barbanti (2004:5) describes much of present developmental thinking as industrialised nations 'forcing change' onto the beneficiaries of their aid and cites the writings of Crush (1995) and Escobar (1995) to substantiate his view. This results in a change in the identities of those who have 'benefited' and a transference of Western values to non-Western culture (Barbanti, 2004). Research on socio-economic as well as community development in the field of community psychology, development studies, social work studies and development economic studies has become more widespread, and as a result there have been new insights made on the human dimensions of development.

Barbanti (2004) argues that development is not an end in itself, but rather a means for achieving better and more equitable living conditions for human beings. Chambers (1997:189) distinguishes between two contrasting approaches to development: the (conventional) top-down blueprint, which has primarily to do with things, and the (current) bottom-up learning approaches, which have mainly to do with involving people into development. The emphasis in this thesis is on the bottom-up learning approach to development – the participatory people-centred approach.

### **2.4.1 Participatory people-centred approach**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a growing awareness that the problems in development were not simply technological but also social, political and economic, and that these could be addressed by using people-centred approaches. A common belief developed that the answer to the problem of successful Third World development was ‘not found in the bureaucracy and its centrally mandated development projects and programs, but rather in the community itself: its needs, its capacities, and ultimately its own control over both its resources and its destiny’ (Korten, 1986, cited in McKenzie, 2002:1).

People-centred approaches – also referred to as theories of human development – place people at the centre of the development process (Monaheng, 2004). When decisions with regard to the development goals are placed in the hands of the intended beneficiaries and the methods are decided by themselves, then the approach is participatory and people-centred (Richards, 2004). Specifically, the argument is that ‘people come before things; and poorer people come before the less poor. It is right to put the last first, to give priority to those who are more deprived – the poor, physically weak, vulnerable, isolated and powerless, and help them change these conditions. It is also right to enable them to identify and demand what they want and need’ (Chambers, 1993:10).

To summarise: The belief is that at the conceptual, or normative, level of development planning, emphasis should be placed upon primarily helping the poorest members of society achieve goals that they themselves help define (McKenzie, 2002). Chambers (1997:162) is of the opinion that through participation and respect, poor people can be empowered to express and analyse their own individual and shared realities.

### **2.4.2 Participation**

De Beer (2004) maintains that there are two ways of conceiving participation: either as a system-maintaining or a system-transforming process. De Beer (2004:271) cites Wisner (1988) when distinguishing between these two approaches. One approach is conceived as a ‘strong’ interpretation and one is perceived as a ‘weak’ interpretation of participation:

*[The strong interpretation] ... advocated a new style development which was radically participatory and in which land reform, asset redistribution and other necessary preconditions set the stage for the poor to take control of their own development, usually through grassroots organizations ... On the other side was the weak interpretation of participatory development, promoted mostly by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies ... [This] version saw participation as a limited, formalized process, stripped of the political volatility of direct involvement (Wisner, 1988, cited in De Beer, 2004:271).*

Jennings (2000) maintains that participation is often a rendition of the organisational culture defining it. He regards participation as necessary if the power balance between rich and poor is to be corrected. Participation must only to be considered as a means to an end, but as an empowering process both to the community and the organisation involved. In trying to ensure participatory development in projects and programmes, ‘the result is an extraordinary mélange of context-specific, formal methodologies, matrices, pedagogies and ad hoc approaches to enhancing participation in humanitarian aid and development’ (Jennings, 2000:1).

Although some programmes and projects in various countries have experienced difficulties, for example power inequalities between beneficiaries and the ‘change agents’, or differences in the priorities of the beneficiaries (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980), Jennings (2000) and Richards (2004) believe that the potential of the participation of the intended beneficiaries to reach development goals, as it is intended, cannot be disregarded.

### **2.4.3 Social development as a developmental approach**

Visser (2004) claims that the state scaled back on its fiscal commitments due to the recession, and by the mid-1980s, social spending was widely regarded as a burden on the economy and retrenchments in social programmes were common. The African people viewed the welfare system as unresponsive to their needs, and apartheid was thought to have permeated the welfare system (Midgely, 2001). The neo-liberalism movement was at its height during the 1970s and 1980s, and the social development ideas of the 1960s and 1970s were undermined by the growing influence of neo-liberal ideas (Midgely, 2001). However, by the mid-1990s, there seemed to be

growing support among political leaders for the proposition that market forces alone could not solve the serious social problems facing the international community (Visser, 2004).

When the ANC government came to power in South Africa in 1994 and agreed to adopt the RDP, it was not surprising that the past injustices of the welfare system under the apartheid regime were reviewed and the 'concept of developmental social welfare was emphasised' (Visser, 2004:7).

In 1995, the UN held a World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had convened the summit to reaffirm the organisation's commitment to a style of development that differed significantly from the neo-liberal policies that were aggressively being promoted. The style of development being promulgated was the social development approach. The South African government supported the World Summit on Social Development, and President Nelson Mandela announced that the ANC government was in agreement with the social development approach and that the South African government policies were in line with the humanitarian and people-centred values of the social development approach. The White Paper for Social Welfare also draws extensively on international thinking in social development (Midgely, 2001).

Social development is essentially a people-centred approach to development that promotes citizen participation and strengthens the voice of the poor people in decision-making and in building democratic and accountable institutions (Patel, 2007:30). Social development, which emerged within the context of Third World development (Midgley, 1995), embodies the philosophy of a positive, humane, people-orientated development in society, centrally concerned with social justice and equitable distribution of resources.

Higher levels of empowerment, ownership, and free, meaningful and active participation by putting beneficiaries in charge of development are the key tenets of the social development approach. It is now widely recognised in development circles that local ownership and participation are fundamental to sustainable improvements. It involves not just economic growth, but equitable distribution, the enhancement of people's capabilities and the widening of their choices. Patel (2007) warns that economic growth does not automatically translate into social improvement because not all economic growth reaches the nation equally. Empowerment of people to take increasing charge of their own development is the key ingredient, combined with 'a

clear knowledge of environmental constraints and of requirements to meet basic needs' (Holmberg, 1992, cited in Richards, 2004:124).

Social development has been defined differently by the social work discipline, the discipline of psychology and the discipline of community development. All these disciplines have, however, contributed to the formulation of the social development perspective (Richards, 2004).

At present it appears that a social development model in which new skills are fostered that empower people and ultimately contribute to their own personal growth, is the paradigm in which to work in the new South Africa. Writing in 2004, Swanepoel explains that development should be holistic by encompassing the whole human being and his/her environment and that the poor themselves should take charge of their development so that they become the owners of that development, and that the development agencies involved should only play a facilitating or supporting role. If South Africa is to embrace this paradigm of social development (rights-based economic and social development, participation, welfare pluralism) then service providers such as social workers, community development workers, psychologists, NGOs, CBOs and FBOs will have to adjust their current repertoire of skills. It is these skills that will be strongly highlighted in this thesis.

*The transformation of welfare services requires the adoption of new principles and values that are pertinent to organisational change and development in the new context and the skills of effecting organisational change and building a rights-based culture in the organization (Patel, 2007:323).*

## **2.5 Community development**

The proponents of social development argue that social investments in social programmes that enhance people's welfare through their participation in the productive economy are the most effective ways of enhancing people's welfare and achieving economic development (Patel, 2007). Community development is therefore the intervention that aids social development.

In social work, the intervention strategy used to address poverty and social and economic development is based upon the tenets upheld by community development

(Patel, 2007). According to Cornwell (1986, cited in De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005:1), there is no clear definition of community development:

*Considering that the concept community development has no firm, precise and generally agreed upon meaning, it can be used arbitrarily to indicate a number of policies or programmes.*

Although there are various definitions in the literature of community development, there appears to be some consensus that community development encompasses the following themes: participation, institutions, project management, training, community, co-ordination, funding and the influence of politics on community development (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005). It is clear that, given the history of South Africa, politics have had a definite influence on policy-makers when community development has been addressed. Political, ideological, economic, social and cultural beliefs have a direct bearing on how social welfare is conceptualised and characterised (Patel, 2007). It is for this reason that the next section will look at the history of community development.

### **2.5.1 History of community development**

De Beer and Swanepoel (2005) believe a realistic starting point for explaining the origin of community development was the attempt made by the Institute for Rural Reconstruction in 1920 and 1930 in India, where villagers were encouraged to be self-sufficient and an integrated approach was used. The launching of India's community development programme after its independence in 1947 also stimulated community development efforts in neighbouring Asian countries and further afield in the developing world.

‘In the third world, community development became a popular development approach in the 1950's and 1960's’ (Monaheng, 2004:126). However, according to De Beer and Swanepoel (2005:10), initially ‘community development was not popular in South Africa during its international heyday’, and they ascribe this to the fact that there was scepticism and mistrust in government circles about its potential for political change.

*The dichotomy of community development – applied either to maintain the status quo of oppressive practices which enslaves people in circumstances in which they are deprived of development opportunities, or to liberate people from oppression and generate possibilities for the actualisation of their inherent human potential – is clearly illustrated in the history of community development in South Africa (Richards, 2004:127).*

The South African government used community development as a vehicle to implement the apartheid policy in the homelands (Richards, 2004). The literature on community development (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005; Monaheng, 2004; Richards, 2004) shows that the South African government promoted the premises of community development specifically in rural development efforts in local self-help groups during the early 1970s and 1980s. De Beer and Swanepoel (2005) are of the opinion that the Black Consciousness Movement was perhaps the most important exponent of radical community development (empowerment) in South Africa.

There is presently a remarkably renewed interest in community development in many parts of the world, including South Africa. There is an emerging trend in South Africa that recognises that development is much more than the expansion of income and wealth and that economic growth, though essential, is not enough (Khan & Haupt, 2006). The focus is increasingly on human development, which ranges from enjoying a decent standard of living to enjoying a greater sense of participation in the various activities within their communities. Seen in this light, projects in developing areas increasingly include objectives that go beyond the mere provision of physical facilities. How a project is undertaken and by whom, are just as important as what is delivered (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 1998).

Hornby (2005) states that in the current democracy of South Africa, community development is the most appropriate intervention to combat poverty, as the primary objective of community development is to build healthy, functioning individuals, families and communities.

Monaheng (2004) believes that the RDP has close similarities to community development in that it also stresses the alleviation of poverty. Patel (2007) states that the RDP advocates a developmental approach to social security and social welfare in order to provide a framework that would help to create a just and democratic welfare system for all South Africans. The policy frameworks like the Constitution, the Bill of

Rights, the RDP and the White Paper for Social Welfare clearly demonstrate in their underlying tenets that there is political will for community development. This is considered essential by De Beer and Swanepoel (2004) if community development is to succeed.

In the current economic and ideological environment where the limiting of the state's responsibility in social welfare has become a priority, governments also look favourably on community initiatives that promote alternative forms of development, as it can assist them to achieve their political agendas while also leaving space for those involved in community development (Campfens, 1997:6).

## **2.6 Capacity development**

At present it appears as if there is a need to research a methodology that embraces people-centred development and truly builds the capacity of South African social workers, community development workers and psychologists who are implementing or monitoring social programmes. This became evident to me after reviewing the policy frameworks currently governing social development policy in South Africa and having presented the VE short course at Unisa for the past four years. Many of the 'in-service' capacity development short courses/programmes that I reviewed in the course of my studies appeared to 'pay lip service' to capacity and empowerment. They seemed to impose rigid frameworks, and had no real sustainability.

There are many short courses/programmes that claim to foster empowerment and develop capacity. One of the difficulties seems to be establishing agreement around the definition of the terms 'capacity' and 'empowerment'. According to Page and Czuba (1999), defining the concept of empowerment evokes debate. The emphasis placed on empowerment within recent years has sometimes resulted in the use of the word in funding proposals as a popular buzzword to be thrown in to make sure old programmes get new funding. Rappaport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence, but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts.

According to Page and Czuba (1999:3), empowerment is '... multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey,

one that develops as we work through it. Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected.’ The core of this definition is that empowerment is multidimensional; it is a process and it addresses both the individual and the community.

Capacity building has been popularly adopted by community service providers such as nurses and those providing services to the elderly and the youth, to strengthen and support the ability of communities to grow and change (Moyer, Coristine, Maclean & Meyer, 1999). Capacity building, ‘empowerment’, ‘participation’ and ‘gender equity’ are all considered essential elements of a development model that is sustainable and centred on people (Eade, 1997; Plummer, 2000, cited in Bun Ku, Chung Yeung & Sung-Chan, 2005:5). The term ‘capacity building’ goes beyond the conventional perception of training. Allen (2007) believes that one needs to adopt a broad, holistic view of capacity development as community building requires not only managing change, but resolving conflict, managing institutional pluralism, enhancing co-ordination, and fostering communication.

## **2.7 Participatory methods**

According to the Department for International Development (DFID) (2002), PLA is an umbrella term for a wide range of similar approaches and methodologies, including participatory rural appraisal, rapid rural appraisal, participatory learning methods, participatory action research (PAR), farming systems research and *Méthod Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative*. ‘The common theme to all these approaches is the full participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs and opportunities, and in the action required to address them, promotion of interactive learning, shared knowledge, and flexible, yet structured, analysis’ (DFID, 2002:7.1).

In order to foster empowerment and develop capacity, I regarded a participatory methodology as the best vehicle for training the VE co-ordinators, as it would model what needed to happen in the field of VE services. As Cameron, Hayes and Wren (2000) point out, participatory methodology is appropriate in situations undergoing social change. At the time of this study, social workers in South Africa

were being called upon to implement the Integrated Service Delivery Model and the emphasis had shifted from social welfare to social development.

Jennings (2000:6) warns that participatory methodologies are not the perfect answer to all research – they are ‘not the linear descendants of industrial age production-orientated development understandings nor part of a larger accumulation of wisdom in the field. They, like all paradigms, are spontaneous reflections of their historical moment.’

The fundamental tenets of participatory methodology had much to offer in a country that had previously been subjected to a ‘top-down’ approach during the apartheid era, when policy and practice had been dictated to South African citizens, who therefore never had the opportunity to participate in social policy development. Participation is involvement by a local population and, at times, additional stakeholders in the creation, content and conduct of a programme or policy designed to change their lives (Jennings, 2000:6). Examples of participatory approaches as empowerment rhetoric can be seen in Camilo Torres’ work with disempowered groups in Colombia, Paulo Freire’s work in Brazil, Mahatma Gandhi in India and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania (Fals-Borda, 2001, cited in Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007).

Unlike the conventional approach to social work/psychology practicum, the participatory approach advocates an educational practice of capacity building, not only for local people and learners, but for facilitators as well. It stresses that the facilitator should assume a non-expert role in relating to his/her students so that the students will do the same with local people. Through adopting a particular kind of attitude, one in which respect and openness is fostered, the key role of the facilitator becomes a sharing of power.

PLA places a great deal of pressure on its participants in that it requires that the production of knowledge and action has to be directly useful and empower the community/participants through consciousness raising. The purpose of PAR is to generate knowledge to inform action: the research methodology is conducted *with* people as opposed to *on* people. The participants are encouraged to consider themselves as co-researchers, driving the study forwards as a group of individuals with shared objectives and decision-making powers. It is because of this that when using PLA methodology the established methodological tenets of traditional research strategies no longer apply. Research agendas, sampling, informed consent are all

viewed differently. Informed consent should not be required as ideally it should be at the request of the participants that the project is undertaken in the first place. Alternatively it may be that there is a chance meeting between the researcher and a group of individuals who wish to take action on a problem (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007)

Participatory methods are challenging as one has to be particularly aware of issues relating to unequal power relationships amongst the participants and with the main researcher. Who is being silenced and by whom for what reason? During the entire process there is a need for the primary researcher to continually reflect on the delicate balance between incorporating and imposing knowledge (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007:340).

Research findings have to be handled with respect as they are likely to be a shared experience of multiple perspectives and what is for the public domain and what remains with the group becomes an important discussion between the main researcher and participants.

Richards (2004:137) makes the point that government departments and NGOs are becoming more interested in participatory approaches as they realise that to involve the community can often be more beneficial to communities and a less costly exercise for government agencies:

*Government agencies are searching for alternatives as they begin to accept that 'blueprint' development strategies have been shown to be ineffective in meeting the basic needs of large numbers of marginalized, vulnerable people.*

An example of participatory projects in South Africa can be found in the community policing forums in various communities.

## **2.8 Closure**

The VE co-ordinators work very closely with communities in establishing core services. Working within the field of VE in the Limpopo Province and North-West Province and building on the results of the research by Nel and Kruger (1999; 2004), I was of the opinion that a participatory approach could develop the capacity of the VE co-ordinators in meeting the needs of the communities in which they work. The

participatory approach appeared to stress many of the skills needed in meeting the job descriptions of the VE co-ordinators.

The next chapter discusses the potential contribution of psychology to the ‘in-service’ training of the VE co-ordinators. The tenets and principles of the field of community psychology are outlined. Within the framework of community psychology, two theoretical approaches, psychosocial empowerment and participation, are outlined in order to indicate community psychology’s fit with the short learning course ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’. Chapter 3 will also offer arguments for a crossover of the disciplines of psychology and social work in the ‘in-service’ training of healthcare professionals, social workers and community development workers within the South African context if social programmes are to be established and sustained.

## Chapter 3

### Psychology's contribution to community development

*Nations, like plants and human beings, grow. And if the development is thwarted they are dwarfed and overshadowed (McKay, 1943:41).*

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a presentation of a number of development theories, including a condensed overview of the history of developmental practice as it manifests in the community and the social, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of humanity. The theories of development discussed were all based on the fields of social development, social work and community development. This chapter deals with development as expressed within the field of psychology. Richards (2004) highlights the influence of poverty on a community and how it hinders the development of potential within communities. This, by implication, has an adverse effect on individual potential. It is against this framework that human needs and the theory of the hierarchy of human needs will be presented in this chapter.

#### 3.2 Mainstream psychology and human development

A study of the history of the field of psychology reveals that psychology as a science was formally established in Europe in the 1800s, when the individual was exalted (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). Since then, the theory and practice of mainstream psychology have concentrated on the functioning of the individual and individual consultations with the client. Nel (2007) believes that mainstream psychology previously only equipped professionals to focus on the individual and on micro-systems, and makes an argument for the training curricula of psychology students to include community interventions.

In mainstream psychology, the term 'development' has a wide range of meanings. According to Meyer and Van Ede (1996), it means the overall qualitative and quantitative changes that accompany human growth and maturation. In this regard, these two terms (growth and maturation) have also been subsumed under the general meaning of development. The scope of developmental psychology is as wide as is implied by the meaning of 'development'. Shehu (2002) purports that

development thus covers both prenatal and postnatal development – embryonic, infant and child development, adolescence and adulthood, maturity and old age. By the same token, it covers physical, cognitive, personality, social, emotional and moral aspects of development. In fact, most theories of development are part of a comprehensive theory of personality in which a detailed view of humanity has been constructed (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1989). Because theorists have differing views of humanity, they emphasise different processes and determinants of development (Meyer & Van Ede, 1996).

### **3.3 The four theoretical orientations in developmental psychology**

Theories play a part in shaping our understanding of human behaviour and provide the frameworks for assessing processes that account for behaviour. According to Newman and Newman (2007), there are theoretical orientations of development that emphasise biological factors of development, theories that emphasise environmental factors of development, and theories that emphasise the relationship between the person and the environment. Meyer and Van Ede (1996) distinguished between four broad theoretical orientations in developmental psychology: the psychoanalytic approach, the learning theory approach, the cognitive approach and the humanistic approach.

Psychoanalytic theories are those influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud, who believed in the importance of the unconscious mind and childhood experiences. Freud's contribution to developmental theory was his proposal that development occurs through a series of psychosexual phases. If these psychosexual stages are completed successfully, the result is a healthy personality (Cherry, 2010). If certain issues are not resolved at the appropriate stage, fixation can occur. According to Cherry (2010), a fixation is a persistent focus on an earlier psychosexual stage. Newman and Newman (2007) state that Freud gave us insight into the subconscious so that we could understand the tension between motives and desires and the constraints against achieving these desires and how this tension affects our behaviour and development.

According to Berk (2006), Erik Erikson took Freud's ideas further by proposing that psychological conflicts arise at the different stages of psychosexual development and that this allows the individual to acquire skills and attitudes that permit him or her to contribute constructively to the society. Erikson's theory has been criticised because it covers only a few aspects of human development – such as a

person's basic attitude towards people and towards life – and consequently does not deal with other developmental aspects at all. No attention is given to cognitive development and very little to emotional development (Meyer & Van Ede, 1996).

Learning theories focus on how the environment impacts behaviour. Important learning processes include classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning. In each case, behaviour is shaped by the interaction between the individual and the environment. Bandura's (1986) social learning theory expounded on how children learn to model their behaviour through observation and imitation of others (Newman & Newman, 2007).

Cognitive theories focus on the development of mental processes, skills and abilities. Examples of cognitive theories include Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which led to an understanding of the way children create meaning out of their experiences.

The humanistic approach in opposition to the elementalism of the psychoanalysts and particularly of the behaviourists, maintain an organismic and holistic point of view (Meyer & Van Ede, 1996). The underlying tenet of the humanists' paradigm is that people can shape their own development. For the humanists, the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and considerable emphasis is placed on the individual's ideals and plans for the future (Meyer & Van Ede, 1996). A distinct tenet of humanist theory is that an individual's development never stops.

As stated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, development shall be described as a form of development that *holistically* embraces the person, socio-economic factors and his/her physical environment, which by implication means that human development is continuous. Human development must address changes over a long period of time and should have patterns of change or constancy. Development implies that change has a form of direction and moves from the more simple to the more complex, or as Newman and Newman (2007:6) write: '... from the less organised and unco-ordinated to the more organised and co-ordinated or less integrated to more integrated'. According to Meyer (1988), humanists try to incorporate the whole person into their theories. It therefore seems appropriate to discuss one of the humanistic theories of development. Child (1973) states humanistic theorists respect individual initiative and freedom, as well as efforts at promoting the optimal development of people.

As one of the key assumptions in community development is that there are needs that have to be met within a community (Monaheng, 2004), it follows that a

definition of needs is required that accounts more directly for the influence of poverty that characterises day-to-day living in South Africa and how this correlates with individual development. Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, meets this requirement with his theory of the hierarchy of needs.

### **3.4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs**

Maslow postulates that the individual is an integrated and organic whole. His theory of motivation includes the study of ultimate human needs and goals appropriate to humanity's full range of being (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006). Fundamental to Maslow's theory of motivation is that human needs are hierarchical – that unfulfilled lower needs dominate one's thinking, actions and being until they are satisfied (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006).

The most basic needs are the physiological needs, which are related to survival, such as the need for food, drink and sleep. If these needs are not satisfied, the person cannot function properly, and these needs may then dominate all other forms of behaviour. According to Ranis, Stewart and Samman (2005:3), Doyal and Gough's (1991) definition of basic needs is very different from this, as their definition is based on the principle of 'the avoidance of serious harm', where 'harm' is defined as preventing people realising activities that are essential to their plan of life.

The need to feel safe, both physically and emotionally, constitutes the second level of need. According to Richards (2004), if a person experiences feelings of safety, he/she will have the confidence to venture to the next level. The third level of need is belonging and love. These needs involve the giving and receiving of affection. When they are unsatisfied, a person will feel keenly the absence of friends, a mate or children (Benson & Dundis, 2003). Having obtained relationship/belongingness security, it is then possible to look to the fourth level, which is self-esteem. In this arena the individual seeks to feel competent, confident and self-assured (Benson & Dundis, 2003).

The fifth level, the need for self-actualisation, entails maximising one's unique potential in life. Living at this level can lead to peak experiences and even transcendence – the experience of deep connection with others, nature, or God, and the perception of beauty, truth, goodness and the sacred in the world (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006).

This theory of a hierarchical arrangement of human needs implicates successive needs gratification: humankind's development progresses through successive stages of need gratification (Richards, 2004). Only after all these needs have been met, the person will strive for the final goal of development, namely the need for self-actualisation, of becoming all that you are capable of being, making full use of your abilities, talents and potential (Meyer *et al.*, 1989).

People differ enormously in the amount of satisfaction they require for a particular need before moving on to satisfy another need or desire. They also differ greatly in how much discomfort they are willing to experience before they give attention to a need. Theorists differ on whether one or multiple needs may be influencing our actions simultaneously, and on whether there is a standard order in which needs have to be met. Research by Goodman and Friedman (1968) indicates that the order in which needs have to be met varies dramatically from person to person. Maslow's theory has been questioned by social scientists. For example, postmodern notions such as the politics of knowledge might suggest that there are more accurate representations of contemporary cultural forces and the dynamics of motivation. The discourse of how knowledge is legitimated, for whom, and for what purposes, might challenge Maslow's notion of a universally shared human nature. Social constructivism, as well, would argue that such knowledge of needs is local, context specific, and culturally configured rather than total, universal, and natural (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006:1122). A further criticism of the theory is that Maslow was eurocentric in his thinking and created the theory from an individualistic stance. The needs and drives of those in an individualistic society are different from those in a collectivist culture. In a collectivist culture the needs of acceptance and community will outweigh the needs for freedom and individuality.

As humankind is unique, we cannot predict that development will follow the same path for all. There are distinct differences in socio-economic background and exposure to various experiences that can influence maturity.

*It may be accepted that human needs present a pattern of regularity and repeated occurrences, as disclosed by Maslow (1970), however it can only be truly understood within the context it appears (Richards, 2004:103).*

Maslow's model is used in various disciplines, including business and the social sciences. It has been studied to explore human motivation and to explain how adults learn. It is also sometimes used in psychology to explain the 'why' of human behaviour (Benson & Dundis, 2003; McMahon & McMahon, 1982).

In teamwork it is considered a valuable tool for team leaders, members of a team and even for social scientists working in communities (Benson & Dundis, 2003). The behaviour of an individual at any given moment will be largely determined by that person's strongest need. For example, it may be that in attempting to get the community involved in a particular issue or initiative, the participation levels remain low. If we view this in terms of Maslow's hierarchy, the lack of support may have more to do with community members attempting to get lower order needs met than genuine lack of interest. For instance, if a community has high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, it will be unlikely that they will become as involved in a community development initiative as a community where members' lower order needs are already satisfied. Food and shelter may be of prime importance in a community where perhaps a development initiative is trying to enforce education or security. The initiative will then not be considered as essential or desirable in such a community. In the design and implementation of development initiatives, social scientists should have a keen understanding of both individual and group needs if participation is what they are hoping to achieve.

The above discussion referred to how the development of the individual is seen according to traditional tenets of mainstream psychology. In terms of the current study, the incorporation of empowerment theory from community psychology with humanistic theory from mainstream psychology can give developmental breadth and depth to understanding how communities become empowered and are developed. The next sections will therefore discuss community psychology, human development and empowerment theory.

### **3.5 Community psychology and human development**

The Swampscott Conference, held in Massachusetts in 1965, is usually considered as the starting point of community psychology. One of the aims of the conference was to reflect on 'the place of psychology in the community mental health movement' (Heller & Monahan, 1977, cited in Seedat *et al.*, 2001:23). A number of clinical psychologists were discontent with the individualistic approach in psychotherapy, and

professionals in the area of psychiatry experienced a change of paradigms ‘when it became apparent to military psychiatrists that environmental stress associated with combat contributed to mental illness and that treatment in non-institutional settings produced favourable outcomes’ (Meritt, Greene, Jopp & Kelly, 1999:3). It was thought that clinical phenomena had some origin or connection to social conflicts such as the interaction patterns of people, economic backgrounds, institutional settings and even ideologies held by society (Bergold, 2000). This conference was to become a cornerstone for shaping the field, particularly in the United States, and subsequently a new era of advocacy work, driven through legislative frameworks and the civil rights movements (Sigogo, Ngonyama, Hooper, Long, Lykes, Wilson & Zietkiewicz, 2004).

According to Bergold (2000), community psychology as a discipline within mainstream psychology was formally adopted after the Swampscott Conference as Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. Division 27 differed from the traditional positivistic orientation – theoretically as well as methodologically (Bergold, 2000). Community psychologists acknowledged that individual behaviour was linked to a complex interaction within society and at the same time recognised that there was a need to develop action programmes for communities that would aid groups as well as individuals (Bergold, 2000). The emphasis had shifted to the community as a unit of analysis.

The 1965 Swampscott Conference introduced the notion of the community psychologist as a social interventionist fulfilling multiple roles. The mandate of psychologists changed and they now operated within a much wider scope – from individual interventions to organisational, family and community interventions. Working collaboratively, community psychologists seek to understand and enhance quality of life for individuals, communities and society (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001:5).

In South Africa during the 1980s and 1990s, the response for a more relevant approach to the system of apartheid was community psychology (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001).

*As a discipline, community psychology was developed in South Africa as a response to three broad demands: (1) a demand for appropriate services for people who could benefit from psychological interventions; (2) a*

*sociopolitical demand for the effective use of psychology in the fight against oppression (or to help victims of oppression); and finally, (3) a demand from inside psychology for a more relevant psychology at the levels of application, theory and research (Seedat et al., 2001:18).*

A central premise of community psychology is the empowerment of individuals, groups and communities (Kroeker, 1995; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, cited in Seedat *et al.*, 2001).

### **3.6 Community psychology and empowerment theory**

There are different models within the field of community psychology. Nel (2007) broadly classifies four models of community psychology: the mental health, social action, ecological and organisational models. The social action model primarily informs this thesis. This model, similar to the rights model, views socio-economic equity, political mobilisation and community control to be crucial for positive psychosocial health (Nel, 2007).

Social action implies social change. Community psychologists frequently examine processes of change, for example the course of events in the life of people and groups affected by empowerment processes. They want to gain knowledge about the conditions of such processes. Lorion (1990) therefore required that not only the development of individuals be examined, but also the development of organisations. '[C]ommunity psychology's challenge is to establish comparable developmental indices to differentiate between the maturational stage of the programs and organisations that it studies' (Lorion, 1990:33).

Seedat *et al.* (2001) are of the opinion that the most important contribution to social change that community psychology can make in South Africa is to help develop a sense of community after years of interracial conflict. The participation and collaboration efforts of community psychology should foster a secure and stable society from the fragments left by apartheid (Seedat *et al.*, 2001). These authors state that community psychology developed out of a need to address social problems and the realisation that social, political and physical systems affect individual as well as community behaviour.

In community psychology literature (Nel, 2007; Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001; Bergold, 2000), three concepts are central: prevention, empowerment and

participation. Bergold (2000) claims that the aim of researchers in the field of community psychology is participation and empowerment. All three of these concepts – prevention, empowerment and participation – evoke much discussion as they are defined according to individual scales of value, intentions, processes and ideas about the results. Julian Rappaport and Marc Zimmerman are leading scholars in empowerment theory and have, both individually and jointly, developed a large body of work on empowerment (Lawson, 2001).

Empowerment has been promoted as a principal theory within the field of community psychology approaches (Rappaport, 1981; 1984; 1987), identified as a major goal of health promotion (Braithwaite & Lythcott, 1989; Breslow, 1992) and social work (Itzhaky & York, 2002; Pinderhughes, 1989), and used as a guide for intervention in high-risk communities (Bentley, 2000; Minkler, Thompson, Bell & Rose, 2001, cited in Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). Rappaport (1984:2) attempted to define empowerment ‘as a process: the mechanism by which people, organisations and communities gain mastery over their lives’.

Bergold (2000) believes that a set of values is clearly defined in this definition: Implicit in this definition of empowerment is that people and groups are able to meet their needs and that the focus is on the people and groups who do not have the opportunity to master their lives with self-determination. The difficulty in understanding this concept empirically is shown in the footer in which Rappaport (1984, cited in Bergold, 2000:6) referred to the uncertainty of this concept: ‘The idea is more important than the thing itself. We do not know what empowerment is, but like obscenity, we know it when we see it. The idea stimulates attempts to create the thing itself.’

Lawson (2001) writes of the themes that are consistent in the empowerment literature. These include our perceived control over our lives (which is ongoing), self-efficacy, mastery power and autonomy. Rappaport (1987) believes that our aim in empowerment theory should be to enhance the possibilities for people to have control. This not only includes what people perceive as control, but also their legal rights, political power and social power.

Zimmerman (1990) acknowledges the difficulty of trying to define empowerment theory because of its many different forms and how context-specific it is. Later on in his writings Zimmerman expanded on his theory of empowerment and included three areas in which he thought empowerment occurred: psychological

empowerment (PE), organisational empowerment (OE) and community empowerment (CE). Zimmerman (1995:581) stated that:

1. *PE refers to empowerment at the individual level of analysis. The construct integrates perceptions of personal control, a proactive approach to life, and a critical understanding of the sociopolitical environment.*
2. *OE includes processes and structures that enhance members' skills and provide them with the mutual support necessary to effect community level change (i.e., empowering organization). It refers to improved organizational effectiveness by effectively competing for resources, networking with other organizations, or expanding its influence (i.e., empowered organization).*
3. *At the community level of analysis, CE refers to individuals working together in an organized fashion to improve their collective lives and linkages among community organizations and agencies that help maintain that quality of life.*

As the short course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation' attempts to embrace all three levels of empowerment – PE, OE and CE – it is necessary to look at each of these constructs in further depth.

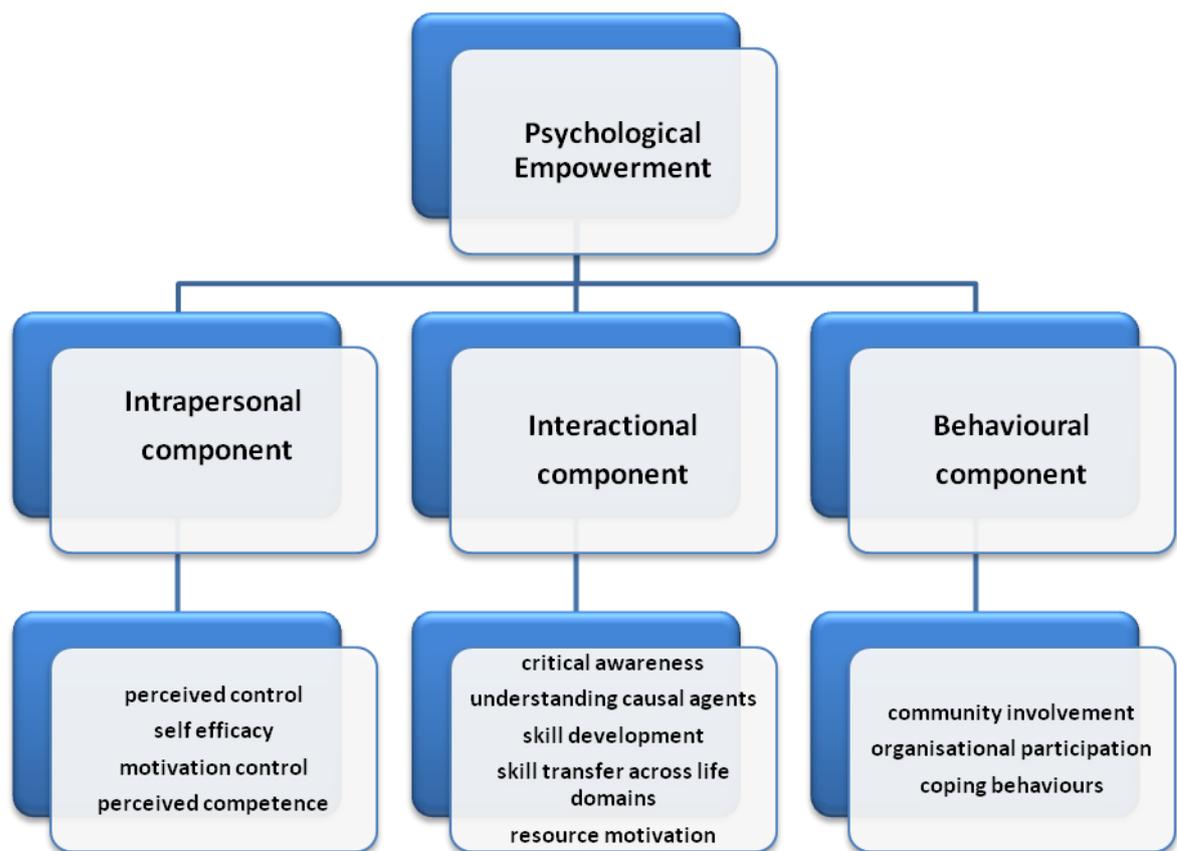
### **3.6.1 Psychological empowerment**

Zimmerman (1995) writes of PE as not simply self-perceptions of competence, but as including active engagement in one's community and an understanding of one's sociopolitical environment. Houghton and Yoho (2005) view PE as having meaning and being purposive if there is congruence between one's values and work roles. If one views oneself as being competent enough to achieve action, there is self-determination, and one is aware of how much control or choice one has in achieving desired outcomes. PE also includes learning about controlling agents and acting to influence those agents (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz & Checkoway, 1992). The measurement of PE may be especially difficult because '(a) psychological empowerment manifests itself in different perceptions, skills, and behaviours across people; (b) different beliefs, competencies and actions may be required to master

various settings; and (c) psychological empowerment may fluctuate over time' (Zimmerman, 1995:584).

Zimmerman (1995) postulates that PE includes beliefs that goals can be achieved (*intrapersonal*), awareness about resources and factors that hinder or enhance one's efforts to achieve those goals (*interactional*), and efforts to fulfil the goals (*behavioural*). 'The intrapersonal component refers to how people think about themselves and includes domain-specific perceived control and self-efficacy, motivation to control, perceived competence, and mastery' (Zimmerman, 1995:588). The *interactional* component of PE refers to the understanding people have about their community and related sociopolitical issues. This aspect of PE suggests that people are aware of behavioural options or choices to act as they believe appropriate to achieve goals they set for themselves (Zimmerman, 1990). The *behavioural* component of PE refers to actions taken to directly influence outcomes.

These three components of PE merge to form a picture of a person who believes that he or she has the capability to influence a given context (*intrapersonal component*), who understands how the system works in that context (*interactional component*), and who engages in behaviours to exert control in that context (*behavioural component*) (Zimmerman, 1995). Figure 3.1 demonstrates Zimmerman's (1995:588) nomological model of PE.



**Figure 3.1 Zimmerman’s (1995:588) nomological model of psychological empowerment**

The *behavioural* component of PE is demonstrated by Zimmerman (1995) using an example of a voluntary service organisation<sup>5</sup>. Community activities expected to be related to PE in this context might include voting, writing letters to an editor or elected official, helping to organise neighbourhood health fairs, or taking part in neighbourhood crime watch activities (Zimmerman, 1995). The level of involvement in a voluntary organisation might refer to attendance at organisational meetings, leadership positions held, length of time involved, and average number of hours volunteered on a monthly basis. Relating this to the duties of the VE co-ordinators,

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5. A voluntary service organisation is one in which the primary goal is to provide some benefits to the community. Services provided might include fundraising for Little League Baseball, neighbourhood crime watch, volunteer help at a local hospice, or the provision of unique opportunities for community members to have access to media outlets. Organisational examples include neighbourhood associations, Kiwanis Club and community radio stations. These types of organisations are distinguished from organisations whose primary goal is to provide benefits to individual members, such as mutual help groups or hobby clubs (Zimmerman, 1995).

activities such as advocacy campaigns, conducting VE forum meetings and writing to various municipal officials or NGOs for resources would all be considered by Zimmerman to be part of the behavioural component of PE.

The theoretical orientation of the field of positive psychology, which encourages PE in humankind through the fostering of human strengths such as courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skills, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance and the capacity for flow and insight, has much to offer to empowerment theory. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) write of the need to develop a climate in which the aforementioned strengths are encouraged within families, schools, religious communities and corporations. One of the underlying themes of positive psychology is the belief that people are decision-makers that have choice; they are self-directed and self-organising.

According to Ronen (2009), positive psychology therapy is more about empowerment than 'curing'. Through placing more value on positive skills and knowledge about both oneself and one's interaction with the environment, self-efficacy and fulfilment are encouraged. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) argue for a change of emphasis in the field of psychology from a focus on the negative, which highlights mental illness, to a more balanced science in which psychologists facilitate the factors and strengths in humankind that would allow communities and societies to flourish. Seligman, Parks and Steen (2004) suggest that there should be a study of strengths and virtues, and that more should be done towards developing interventions in the field of psychology that can help people become lastingly happier.

### **3.6.2 Organisational empowerment**

Hardiman and Segal (2003) write of OE occurring when individual members of the team experience PE. Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) suggest that there are three components to OE: *intraorganisational*, *interorganisational* and *extraorganisational*. The intraorganisational component refers to the infrastructure necessary for members to engage in proactive behaviours necessary for goal achievement. The interorganisational component of OE refers to the relationships and collaboration across organisations. The extraorganisational component of OE refers to actions taken by organisations to affect the larger environments of which they are a part, and represents organisational or multi-organisational efforts to exert control.

### **3.6.3 Community empowerment**

Many writers have attempted to define CE. The term by its very nature is open to numerous interpretations and understandings. Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) write of CE as both a process and an outcome, as an interpersonal concept and a broad sociopolitical context. The concept CE can also be considered ‘an interaction of change at multiple levels’ (Wallerstein, 1992, cited in Laverack & Wallerstein, 2001:179).

Zimmerman (1995) distinguishes between empowering processes and empowered outcomes. According to Zimmerman (1995), empowering processes refer to how people, organisations and communities become empowered. Empowered outcomes then refer to the consequences of those processes. Four aspects of an empowering process are highlighted by Zimmerman: (a) involving community members in the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions; (b) developing an eco-identity (Kelly, 1971), whereby professionals become members of the community to some extent; (c) working with community members as co-equal partners, and (d) creating opportunities for community members to develop skills so that they do not have to be dependent on professionals. By necessity empowering processes therefore entail that ‘people create or are given opportunities to control their own destiny and influence the decisions that affect their lives’ (Zimmerman, 1995:583). Empowered outcomes refer to specific measurement operations (whether measured either quantitatively or qualitative in nature) that may be used to study the effects of interventions designed to empower participants, investigate empowering processes and mechanisms, and generate a body of empirical literature that will help develop empowerment theory. Empowerment outcomes are one consequence of empowerment processes and concern the effects of the interventions designed to empower participants (Zimmerman, 1995).

Underlying Zimmerman’s theory of empowerment is the understanding that CE is a process and cannot be quantified as a single set of operational rules and definitions. The individual, community or organisation is unique, and the situation or moment in history is unique to the intervention. Laverack and Wallerstein (2001) emphasise that CE can be viewed as a process along a continuum. Ultimately CE should be about facilitating individual action to collective social and political change.

The complexity surrounding the definition of empowerment suggests a distinct approach for developing interventions and creating social change. Rappaport and Seidman (2000) suggest that it includes the perspective that many social problems exist due to the unequal distribution of and access to resources and state that empowerment has its own distinct language for understanding lay efforts to cope with stress, adapt to change and influence communities (Rappaport & Seidman, 2000). These authors offer the example of the terms ‘client’ and ‘expert’ becoming ‘participant’ and ‘collaborator’ in CE interventions. An empowerment approach requires that the social scientist becomes a collaborator and facilitator rather than an expert and counsellor (Rappaport & Seidman, 2000).

Much has been written (Bergold, 2000; Rappaport & Seidman, 2000) about Kelly’s (1971) attempt to describe the qualities of the community psychologist that he considered consistent with an empowerment approach. These qualities include a tolerance for diversity, an understanding of self within a community, and being able to let go enough to allow others to take control over their own outcomes. The approach also demands that the community psychologist is flexible enough to work with whatever resources are available. Kelly (1971) also identified several strategies for training that would help prepare community psychologists for applying an empowerment approach, including field assessment skills, integrating theory and practice, and identifying resources in the community.

### **3.7 Community psychology and social programme evaluation**

According to Orford (1992), community psychology is a growing discipline that considers people within all social contexts, such as the sociophysical context, sociocultural contexts and socio-economic contexts. The individual is not just part of a social system – the person and context are intertwined inseparably. Bergold (2000) writes of social context as a social grouping, large or small, such as family, clan, work organisation, cities, countries and cultures. Humankind is seen as inextricably linked to the social environment or social context in which all action or change takes place. In order to understand humankind’s attitudes, thoughts and actions it is necessary to study the social field in which the interaction takes place. ‘Such a definition has a number of consequences and poses certain demands on theoretical concepts and empirical methods’ (Bergold, 2000:3).

Inherent in the basic tenets of community psychology is that people cannot be studied in a laboratory setting as it is their interaction with their environment that is of importance to the community psychologist. By implication the basic research methods versus applied research and based on the positivist paradigm are not applicable.

According to Potter (2006), various writers have expressed concerns about the limitations of the use of traditional and predominantly quantitatively based research designs in psychology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Breakwell, 1995; Woolgar, 1996). Potter (2006) argues for a paradigmatic shift that is both epistemological and methodological in order to understand human behaviour in naturalistic settings.

Pretorius-Heuchert and Ahmed (2001) write of a need for multiple understandings of reality in postmodernism and that the single pursuit of truth in the positivist paradigm merely emphasises unequal social relations. According to these authors, community psychology should seek to support social change. They are also of the opinion that no one single paradigm can be used to describe this heterogeneous branch of psychology.

*Community psychology strives to combine theory and praxis and fits well within the tradition of action research, where expert knowledge is applied in collaboration with affected community members or clients in an attempt to solve problems, while knowledge is also acquired through the very involvement of the clinician in practice* (Newborough, 1992, cited in Nel, 2007:146).

Potter (2006) argues for programme evaluation as a field that is relevant for evaluating social programmes in community psychology or for psychologists working as agents for social change, due to its multimethod, multifaceted and eclectic nature. Bergold (2000) states that the challenge to find a suitable methodology for community psychology lies in the complexity of mankind and his everyday life. Community psychology is one of the first disciplines that made use of qualitative methodology (Bergold, 2000). Bhana and Kanjee (2001) are of the opinion that both qualitative and quantitative methods are applicable to community psychology research and therefore put forward an argument for methodological eclecticism.

The next chapter will provide an outline and discussion of the research approach, methodology, strategy and procedures applied in this study.

## Chapter 4

### Building the road to empowerment: No easy ride

*Empowerment of staff is one important tool to allow for productivity and innovativeness to flourish. However, the road to empowerment contains many obstacles that may slow down, delay, or even prevent empowerment to occur (Cornwall, 1994:19).*

#### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise this study in a relevant research paradigm. The chapter provides an outline and discussion of the research approaches, strategies and procedures applied. Two paradigms were chosen for this research – the first being participatory action research (PAR), and the second, the qualitative paradigm.

In Chapter 3, descriptions of mainstream psychology's view of empowerment and community psychology's view of empowerment were discussed. Chapter 4 focuses on how the combining of the theories of empowerment and adult education/experiential learning have contributed to the *design* of the course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation'. The *implementation* of the programme was grounded by the theories of PLA, group process and facilitation, and the *research methodology* was informed by PAR and the qualitative paradigm.

#### 4.2 Research objectives

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- to describe an empowerment programme for social workers working in the field of VE in the Limpopo Province in South Africa;
- to critically review the value of continuing professional development (CPD) through short learning courses for the 'in-service' training of healthcare professionals, social workers and community development workers within the South African context, and

- to explore and describe the range of skills and abilities needed to initiate and maintain viable VE services, such as those offered by the Department of Health and Welfare<sup>6</sup> in the Limpopo Province.

### **4.3 The paradigmatic perspective of the research**

A paradigm is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994:107) as a worldview or basic beliefs that may be directed at a variety of relationships for an individual and his/her world. The paradigm is used as a vehicle to systemise the gathering, interpretation and application of knowledge (Mouton & Marais, 1991). Philosophical beliefs are bases for research, and such beliefs lead to the identification of a theoretical framework for a particular study (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004). Guba and Lincoln (1994) emphasise that a paradigm is not open to proof in any conventional sense.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) have pointed out the importance of identifying the paradigm within which research is conceived and carried out. This research has taken an eclectic approach with regard to the research paradigm in which it is situated. A fundamental choice regarding the choice of paradigm had to be made, as the knowledge generated from the research had to be usable and, more importantly, it had to create change within the system of the VEP. The overall research paradigm within which this research was situated was PAR, as according to Dick (1993), one of the virtues of action research is its *responsiveness* to the situation in which the research takes place.

#### **4.3.1 Logical positivism**

The main research paradigm for the past several centuries has been that of logical positivism (O'Brien, 2001). The rise of positivism was linked to the Darwinian and modernist ideas of establishing a scientific society (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). This paradigm is based on a number of principles, including a belief in an objective reality, knowledge of which is only gained from sense data that can be directly experienced and verified between independent observers. Its methods rely heavily on *quantitative measures*, with relationships among variables commonly shown by mathematical means (O'Brien, 2001). *Positivism*, used in scientific and applied research, has been

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<sup>6</sup> Until 2006, the Department of Social Development was called the Department of Health and Welfare in the Limpopo Province. In 2007 it was named the Department of Social Development.

considered by many to be the antithesis of the principles of action research (Susman & Evered, 1978; Winter, 1987).

#### **4.3.2 Phenomenological paradigm**

Whereas positivism interprets the aim of the social sciences against the background of biomedical analogy and the success story of the natural sciences, the phenomenological paradigm is based on a predominantly ‘mental metaphor’ – i.e. the centrality of human consciousness (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Writing in 2001, O’Brien refers to this paradigm as the ‘interpretive paradigm’ and states that it contains *qualitative methodological* approaches such as phenomenology, ethnography and hermeneutics, and is characterised by a belief in a socially constructed, subjectively based reality, which is influenced by culture and history. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002), the insistence on the interpretive (‘*verstehende*’) understanding of the meanings and self-descriptions of the individual requires a methodology that emphasises the following: unstructured observation and open interviewing; idiographic descriptions; qualitative data analysis (e.g. grounded theory), and objectivity, understood as the intersubjective attitude of the insider. In other words, it still retains the ideals of researcher objectivity, and the researcher as passive collector and expert interpreter of data.

#### **4.3.3 Paradigm of praxis**

Although action research shares a number of perspectives with the interpretive paradigm and makes considerable use of its related qualitative methodologies, there are some researchers who feel that neither the phenomenological paradigm nor the positivist paradigm are sufficient epistemological structures under which to place action research (Morley, 1991, cited in O’Brien, 2001). Rather, a paradigm of praxis is seen as where the main affinities lie. Praxis (a term used by Aristotle) is the art of acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them (O’Brien, 2001). It deals with the disciplines and activities predominant in the ethical and political lives of people. Aristotle contrasted this with *theoria* – those sciences and activities that are concerned with knowing for its own sake. According to Aristotle, both were equally needed for positive thought. That knowledge is derived from practice, and practice informed by knowledge is an ongoing process, and a cornerstone of action research. Action researchers also reject the notion of researcher neutrality, understanding that

the most active researcher is often one who has most at stake in resolving a problematic situation (O'Brien, 2001).

#### **4.3.4 Action research as a paradigm**

Action research is a research paradigm that subsumes a variety of research approaches. Dick (1993) writes of action research as a methodology that has the dual aims of action and research in the following sense:

- action to bring about change in some community, organisation or programme, and
- research to increase understanding on the part of the researcher or the client, or both (and often some wider community).

Action research takes its cues, its questions, puzzles and problems from the perceptions of practitioners within particular, local practice contexts (Argyris & Schön, 1989). Action research lends itself to use in work or community situations (Dick, 1993). The whole purpose of action research is to determine *simultaneously* an understanding of the social system and the best opportunities for change. In particular, it allows practitioners to achieve better research outcomes from their practice without undermining the changes their practice is intended to achieve (Dick, 1993). Action research is cyclic, qualitative and uses participative approaches. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the fundamental feature of action research is a collective participatory reflection on systematic objectifications of a community's efforts to change the way they work, constituted by discourse, organisation and power relations and practice (McTaggart, 1997). At its broadest, action research can refer to any process with the dual aim of changing a situation and producing knowledge (Mason, 2007).

Neuman (1997:23) identifies the following characteristics of action research:

- Knowledge is viewed as a form of power.
- The dividing line between research and social action falls away; research is directly tied to social action.
- Participants take part in the process.
- General (local) knowledge is incorporated in decision-making.

- It focuses on power with the aim of empowering the participants and attempts to improve understanding.
- It is politically orientated and not value-free.
- It attempts to improve standards of living by increasing public knowledge.
- It believes that knowledge develops from experience, especially political actions.
- It believes that people can be informed of circumstances and could implement actions in order to improve their living standards

Approaches to action research vary. Rappaport (1981) identifies four types of action research, namely diagnostical, participatory, empirical and experimental. Mason (2007), when discussing action research, refers to reflexive critical action research and PAR, where the emphasis is on authentic participation.

#### **4.3.5 Participatory research and participatory action research**

Participatory research developed directly as a result of an increased emphasis on participation in development projects in general (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Whyte (1995) states that people who describe action research, participatory research and PAR as if they all refer to the same phenomena are not correct in their assumption and feels that a clear distinction should be made between the three labels. As Whyte (1995:289) points out:

*To be clear as to what we are talking about, it is important to attach those labels to distinctively different phenomena. As I see it, there can be action research without any participation in the research process by the subjects of study. The professional researcher seeks to control as far as possible the course of research and the action outcomes designed to follow it.*

Not all action research is participatory and not all participatory research is action-orientated. Action research and participatory research are combined in PAR (Mason, 2007). Whyte (1995) describes participatory research as a process only involving the recruitment of, for example, key informants as active participants. According to

Whyte (1995), there can also be participatory research without any action planned or implemented. The professional researcher invites some of the subjects of the study to help him/her in the research process in the hope that such involvement will be interesting to them and that publication will add to knowledge that might someday be useful – an objective that hardly qualifies as action.

Reason and Rowan (1981:489), when writing about the participatory research paradigm, proclaim that the '[n]ew paradigm research involves a much closer relationship than that which is usual between the researcher and the researched: significant knowledge of people is generated through reciprocal encounters between subjects and researcher, for whom research is a mutual activity involving co-ownership and shared power with respect to both the process and the product of the research'.

It is important to note, however, that for many scholars (for instance Dick (1993) and Argyris and Schön (1989)), PAR is considered to be a form of action research. In a special edition of '*Human Relations*' on action research, the editors Elden and Chrisholm (1993, cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2002) refer to PAR as an emerging variety of action research. PAR is a form of action research that involves practitioners as both subjects and co-researchers (Argyris & Schön, 1989).

Babbie and Mouton (2002) go to great lengths in describing PAR and participatory research as separate terms. They justify their argument that separate terms for PAR and participatory research should be used by stating that there can be participatory research in which individuals in a community or organisation participate in a research process without any action planned or implemented. Participatory research does not necessarily seek to change some aspect of society in the way that action research does (Mason, 2007).

Babbie and Mouton (2002) also suggest that PAR's relationship to action research is not as uncomplicated as it seems; it does not merely imply that action research plus participation equals PAR. Babbie and Mouton (2002) argue that PAR redefines participation by according co-researcher status to the participants. Participation is understood in the sense of co-managing and co-generating problem solutions and new knowledge (Elden & Chrisholm, 1993, cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

Drawing on the work of Biggs (1989), Cornwall and Jewkes (1995:1669) propose that researchers tend to use the following four modes of participation:

- *Contractual* – where people are contracted into the projects of researchers and act as informants.
- *Consultative* – where people are asked for their opinions and consulted by researchers before interventions are made.
- *Collaborative* – where researchers and local people work together on projects designed, initiated and managed by researchers.
- *Collegiate* – where researchers and local people work together as colleagues, combining their different skills in a process of mutual learning.

These different modes of participation in the research process show the relationship between participation and control. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) argue that most conventional research is contractual and tends to maintain rather than challenge the relations of power. Participatory research, in contrast, is aimed at the collegiate level of participation and can transform social arrangements. However, Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) state that in practice, few researchers adopt this mode through their entire research process.

Participatory research is theoretically situated at the collegiate level of participation. Scrutiny of practice reveals that this level is rarely, if ever, achieved. Much of what passes as ‘participatory’ research goes no further than contracting people into projects that are entirely scientist-led, -designed and -managed (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). In reality, Cornwall and Jewkes propose that researchers use different modes at different stages in the research process. A researcher, for example, may be very collegiate in identifying a ‘community problem’, but more consultative or contractual when it comes to analysis and the presentation of the findings.

Seymour-Rolls and Hughes (1995) suggest that PAR is a method of research in which creating a positive social change is the predominant driving force. PAR grew out of social and educational research and exists today as one of the few research methods that embraces principles of participation and reflection, and the empowerment and emancipation of groups seeking to improve their social situation. As a research paradigm, PAR is a family of research methods integrated by a certain set of fundamental principles (Mason, 2007). According to Dick (1993), the aim of PAR is to bring about action in the form of change, while simultaneously developing an understanding that, in turn, again informs the change. The process continues in a

cyclical fashion from there and the qualitative researcher is led mainly by the information gathered from participants (Dick, 1993).

#### **4.3.6 The participatory action research orientation in this study**

The aim of the current study was to create change within a system – change that would be relevant and valid for the environment in which the participants worked. I (as researcher) felt that if the participants were actively involved in creating their own change, their input would be of great value and that they would therefore commit to making changes. PAR seemed to have the potential to do this. When change is a desired outcome – and it is more easily achieved if people are committed to the change – some participative form of action research is often indicated (Dick, 1993).

In PAR there are no fixed hypotheses that need to be proven (Mason, 2007). Meaning is captured and discovered only once the researcher becomes immersed in the field notes or reflective journal (Neuman, 1997). The initial guidelines for this research were the results of Nel and Kruger's (1999; 2004) research (see Appendix 2), which showed that some of the key problems in the implementation process of the VEP were the lack of human and material resources and a high workload. Their report emphasised that capacity development and the skills enhancement of service providers needed to be prioritised. No formal, fixed hypotheses were therefore stated at the outset of the research. The initial study was a pilot to ascertain what skills the VE co-ordinators required in order to implement the VEP. It must be emphasised that the co-ordinators themselves, along with the researcher, needed to identify the necessary skills and competencies required by the VEP as the research developed.

The first phase of this study, in which the seven co-ordinators were used as key informants who became active participants in the process, could be deemed *participatory research*. By definition, Phase 1 of this study used three modes of participation, namely contractual, consultative and collaborative. The research in Phase 1 was led by the researcher, who designed and managed the process, and therefore the fourth mode of participation, collegiate, was not achieved. If one uses Babbie and Mouton's (2002) definition of participatory research, where the community or organisation participates in a research process without any action planned or implemented, this is where the pilot study would fit, as no real action was planned. The action only took place in Phase 2 of the study.

Phase 2 of the study became more collegiate as the researcher and district co-ordinators and subdistrict co-ordinators worked together as colleagues, combining their different skills in a process of mutual learning. The researcher handed over power and became a mentor and participant, and the VE co-ordinators became co-researchers who designed and presented their own adaptation of the short course to their fellow participants. Phase 2 of the study became PAR, as all four modes of participation were used.

#### **4.4 Qualitative and descriptive research**

For many community researchers, the potential of qualitative research lies in its ability to empower groups of people who are typically marginalised by society (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Stein and Mankowski (2004) regard researchers interested in empowerment as a social agenda among the early advocates of case study and qualitative research approaches in community psychology. Terreblanche and Kelly (1999) state that qualitative research is an interpretive and multidimensional approach to research where the investigation occurs within the participants' natural environment or context.

It is important to note that in the qualitative approach, the researcher is looking for meanings of actions and perceptions of the participants, therefore a strategy that is exploratory, descriptive and contextual was used in this study. For data collection, interviews and focus group and participant observation were used. Interviewing is the most common form of data collection in phenomenology (Morse & Field, 1997). De Vos (2002) contends that qualitative interviews attempt to understand the world from the participants' points of view to unfold the meaning of people's experiences. When employing a qualitative approach, the researcher attempts to gain a better understanding and provide a detailed description of a specific phenomenon – i.e. explain the phenomenon differently (Mason, 2007).

Estroff (1995:98) argues that in interpreting qualitative data, one confronts a fundamental question: 'Whose story is it anyway?' In the desire to amplify or critically analyse the voices of participants, one must confront one's own authority in interpreting their words (Stein & Mankowski, 2004). The act of interpreting involves the transformation of 'participant stories' into 'research stories', as shaped by the experiences and expertise of the researcher (Denzin, 1989). Regardless of what approach to analysis one takes, interpreting qualitative material is deeply personal

(Stein & Mankowski, 2004). Throughout this study, I (as researcher) constantly had to critically reflect on the lessons learnt and my own subjective experiences and what contribution this was making to my theoretical understanding of the ‘in-service’ training currently being offered to state-employed social workers in the province of Limpopo.

PLA primarily uses qualitative data, but in this study, both qualitative data and descriptive statistics were used. This added value to the short learning course in two ways: Firstly, the use of descriptive statistics as part of the learning process allowed the VE co-ordinators to systematically summarise some of the information they gathered. By strengthening their research capabilities in this way, they could also better defend their conclusions, goals and plans than before. Babbie and Mouton (2002) state that it is essential for research methods to be popularised. This in effect means that participants are taught simpler, more economic and controllable methods of gathering systematic information. The examples given by Babbie and Mouton (2002) are simple methods of registering, counting systematisation and data analysis. Secondly, by being part of the data-collection and data-analysis process, the VE co-ordinators were also able to frequently monitor and revise the development of the course.

#### **4.5 Critical reflection**

Throughout the study, critical reflection was employed. This was done on two levels: The facilitators employed critical reflection among themselves during the delivery and execution of the short course in Phase 1 and Phase 2. Critical reflection was also encouraged among the participants in Phase 1 and Phase 2. In this study, critical reflection is defined as students processing their experiences in such a way that they know *what* they are doing and, perhaps most importantly, *why* they are doing it (Boud, 1999:123). For experiential learning to move through the entire process from concrete experience to active experimentation – whether it is from a ‘real-world’ experience or from a simulation – critical reflection on the event is essential. Through critical reflection, the implications, alternatives and consequences of the experience become evident, and learning is enhanced (Le Roux & Steyn, 2007).

I documented each encounter with the participants in the study and reflected on my behaviour, interpretations of events and interaction with the groups. A fair amount of travel was involved in the research, and the travelling time was usually

spent critically reflecting with my co-facilitator. These conversations were invaluable, as questions were raised such as, ‘What is not working and needs to be changed?’ and ‘What is working in this process?’ Learning took place and changes to the programme were sometimes made through this reflection. Mason (2007) states that in action learning and action research, action informs reflection and reflection produces the learning (action learning) or research (action research) and leads to further learning or research.

The participants were also developing their own critical thinking skills and the ability to ask questions and find answers when they were involved in the group discussions and the actual training. It is to be noted that most of the participants had trained as social workers in situations where questioning of educational material was not encouraged; they were used to an authoritative environment, hence for many, critical reflection was a relatively new concept.

It has been acknowledged that experiential learning can be greatly improved by incorporating critical reflection into the experiential learning and simulation environment (Bourner, 2003; Cope, 2003; Fripp, 1997; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Politis, 2005; Wolmarans, 2006, all cited in Le Roux & Steyn, 2007). Mezirow (1991) argues that adult learning emphasises contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions and the validation of meaning by assessing reasons. Le Roux and Steyn (2007) believe that critical reflection should be considered part of experiential learning, not as a separate action following experiential learning. It seemed justified from the outset to use critical reflection, as the theory of experiential learning influenced the design of the short course, notwithstanding the fact that the cycle of participatory action learning is action-reflection-action.

#### **4.6 Theoretical approaches that informed the design and implementation of the short course**

Theoretical approaches in two main fields of study informed the *design* and *implementation* of the short course entitled ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’. The first of these includes theoretical approaches within the field of adult education or adult experiential learning; the second includes approaches within the field of psychosocial empowerment.

#### **4.6.1 Adult education/Adult experiential learning**

The theoretical framework of adult education or adult experiential learning has diverse sources of inspiration: the T-group movement, the learning style technology, humanistic psychology and critical social theory (Miettinen, 2000). Experiential learning and self-directed learning are keystone constructs in adult education (Zepke & Leach, 2002). Experiential learning programmes and practices espouse a student-centred approach designed to develop the individual and to encourage learning as a lifelong process (Hickcox, 2002). Without doubt, the two concepts that characterise the approach most clearly are experience and reflection (Miettinen, 2000).

Caffarella and Barnett (1994, cited in Zepke & Leach, 2002) enumerate five reasons why experiential learning is seminal to adult learning. Firstly, rich life experiences and background provide necessary building blocks for learning. Adults can reflect on past experiences to make and remake meanings. Secondly, even where the actual experience is the same, different individuals construct different meanings. This implies that knowledge is constructed, not fixed. Thirdly, the learning process usually involves students' active engagement. It is not sufficient to transmit information from one person to another. Fourthly, people construct meaning for themselves. Many students also want to be connected to others' learning. Group interaction is therefore important. Fifthly, adults' unique life situations form contexts for their learning. Unique life situations influence the meaning they will draw from experiences (Zepke & Leach, 2002).

Lave and Wenger (1991, cited in Clark & Rossiter, 2008) argue that adults learn by working together within a community, using tools that are part of the community. This learning is highly pragmatic and deeply embedded within a social context, and in fact is the form of learning most common to our everyday experience (Hansman, 2001).

As described in Chapter 3, the research methodology used in the short course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation' was PAR. Dick (1997) states that both action research and action learning may be compared to experiential learning: Both action research and action learning are about learning from experience. Action research, action learning and experiential learning are all cyclic. All involve action and reflection on that action. All

have learning as one of their goals. As Dick (1997) points out, experiential learning is the basis for the learning component of both action learning and action research.

Kurt Lewin is generally credited as the person who coined the term ‘action research’ (Smith, 2001). His approach involves a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action (Smith, 2001). Lewin (1948:206) described action research as follows:

*[It is] composed of a circle of planning, executing, and reconnaissance or fact finding for the purpose of evaluating the results of the second step, and preparing the rational basis for planning the third step, and for perhaps modifying again the overall plan.*

According to Smith (2001), what Lewin put forward is an approach to research that is oriented to problem-solving in social and organisational settings. Many significant aspects of learning and intelligence theories apply to experiential education, including (1) Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (assimilation and accommodation); (2) Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (basic needs of participants), and (3) Bloom’s taxonomy of cognition (level of complexity of an experience) (Foster, 1993). Maslow’s theory of development was discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis, as it is strongly aligned to community development and individual development. Experiential learning theory therefore appeared to be a good fit with both the aims and objectives of the short course, as well as the research methodology used by the researcher.

A number of scholars have put forward their own perceptions or models of experiential learning, such as Lewin (1948), Kolb (1984), Knowles (1994) (his conception of andragogy), Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) and Mezirow’s (1991) transformative theory. Full descriptions of all the models of experiential learning are beyond the limits of this thesis. As Kolb’s model of experiential learning was selected, this will now be discussed.

#### **4.6.1.1 Kolb’s model of experiential learning**

Kolb’s model was selected because it has been applied to educational settings (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 1990) and has been successfully adapted for use in experiential workshops (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 1999). It is also demonstrated to be successfully applied in group situations, it is applicable to adults, and it emphasises

multidimensional learning. Kolb's (1984) model defines four learning styles, namely diverging, assimilating, converging and accommodating, determined by how people perceive information (i.e. concrete experience or abstract conceptualisation) and how they process it (i.e. active experimentation or reflective observation). Recent research has relabelled these learning styles as *imaginative, analytic, common-sense* and *dynamic* (Brooks-Harris & Stock-Ward, 2005).

Kolb's work illustrates how people learn from various perspectives. The perspectives include our direct experiences with events, reflection on our experiences, conceptualisation of what we have experienced, and testing what we have learnt by applying our knowledge (Hickcox, 2002). In other words, Kolb's model of experiential learning consists of a four-stage cycle of learning, beginning with the students' concrete experience, followed by reflective observation on the nature and meaning of the experience. This leads to the students' formulation of generalisations and theories about the experience and culminates with their active experimentation and application of derived concepts in new situations (Baker & Kolb, 1990). A separate individual ability corresponds to every phase of the model, described by Kolb (1984:30) as follows:

*Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities – concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualizing abilities (AC) and active experimentation abilities (AE). That is they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experiences (CE). They must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives (RO). They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC) and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE).*

The core of Kolb's model of experiential learning is 'a simple description of a learning cycle and how experience is translated into concepts, which in turn are used as guides in the choice of new experiences' (Kolb, 1976, cited in Miettinen, 2000:62).

Adults learn best when experiences are a starting point for learning (Brookfield, 1996; Knowles, 1994), but reflecting on those experiences and linking

them to emerging knowledge structures are critical for students to make the best use of experience (Kolb, 1984).

The above theoretical tenets were applied in the development of the short course as follows: The researcher's positionality as a facilitator of the learning experience had to be carefully approached so as not to appear as the 'expert'. The facilitator's positionality, all the things that make him/her who he/she is – his/her gender, social status, age, power, values, emotions, ethnicity, sexuality – influence how he/she deals with meaning-making (Tisdell, 1998, cited in Zepke & Leach, 2002). Juan Nel, as co-facilitator, and I, as the facilitator/researcher, constantly explored and critically reflected on each session to ensure that neither of us was becoming dominant in any of the discussions in the group. Initially it was evident that the group expected the two academics (Juan Nel and I) to answer their questions and solve the problems presented.

The short course consisted of multiple sessions, and of two phases, phase 1 and phase 2. In the first phase there were seven VE co-ordinators and in the second phase there were twenty-nine VE co-ordinators. In addition to the establishment of community programmes; the facilitation of the co-ordination of 'one stop' centres or victim support rooms; and assistance and capacity building of NGO's and CBO's working in the VE sector VE co-ordinators are also expected to offer frontline services such counselling and support to victims of crime and violence. I was an intern research psychologist and my co-facilitator Juan Nel is a research and clinical psychologist as well as being the director of the Unisa Centre for Applied Psychology. At various times during the short course other psychologists either in the research arena or clinical arena would join the group.

As a facilitator of the learning experience, I tried to create an environment in which members of the group could engage in contextualised meaning-making. A safe environment was created in which the learners could share and critically reflect on experiences and their meaning, and to ensure that the group delved into the hidden connections between meanings made by group members. The group was also encouraged to identify where the meanings came from. A space was sought where those members whose voices were not often heard in the group felt comfortable enough to be identified, heard and considered.

Many ways of contextualised meaning-making were used in the short course. In some instances, the participants presented their own meanings. An example of this

was the concept of 'trauma'. The participants had gathered meaning from readings, personal experiences and clients' experiences. Through discussion, other meanings were exposed and made accessible to all members of the group, who processed these and integrated them, as they wanted to, with their own sense of meaning. Critical questioning of all meanings was part of the process.

According to Hickcox (2002), when one is designing an experiential learning course, the 'x' amount of content is less of an issue – rather, one begins with questions about the best ways for students to learn through experiences that not only personalise but also reinforce important concepts in the field. Teaching for learning in this way helps students to acquire broad principles and major facts through real or simulated activities (Hickcox, 2002). In the short course, the content for each workshop was defined by the VE co-ordinators themselves. On many occasions, the issues raised in the work of the VE co-ordinators during the month led the discussion and content.

Essentially what happens when experiential learning processes are used is that the content of the endeavour expands (Hickcox, 2002). Instead of an exclusive focus on acquiring discipline knowledge, the reactions of students to experiences outside of their institutions become important.

On occasion, case studies were used. The case would be a story of professional practice, real or fictional, and had the usual elements of a story: characters, setting and plot. The case study would present a problem that had to be solved or an issue that had to be addressed, and this was the location of the learning because the problem or issue was complex, reflecting real-world practice.

According to Foster (1993), in order to capitalise on specific behaviour for focused training, experiential education often uses a simulated experience rather than real-life experiences. The identification and linkage of similar attributes of a modelled experience with attributes in a real-life experience is called isomorphism (Foster, 1993). The key to positive growth or behaviour modification is the transfer of learning from the simulated environment to future real-life behaviours. The case studies generated problem-solving behaviour. We discussed theoretical concepts and then linked the concepts with prior experience. Through this, new insights and interpretations were created.

In the best-case scenario, an inquiry into one's experiences (reflection) results in forming and integrating a new understanding of one's experiences that can inform

future experiences and perhaps a new or revised understanding that can benefit others (Fiddler & Marienau, 2008). Discussions were held at the beginning of each session and debriefings at the end of each session of the short course. These discussions encouraged the VE co-ordinators to put forward their own beliefs and strategies employed in the various scenarios that they had encountered during the previous month in their work. The other participants then reflected back to the speaker their own variety of strategies. Through this practice, multiple possibilities and the beliefs of others encouraged reflective thinking. Allowing one's own ideas, theories and beliefs to be informed by the ideas, theories and beliefs of others in order to interpret one's experience(s) characterises rich reflection (Fiddler & Marienau, 2008).

#### **4.6.2 Psychosocial empowerment**

In the previous chapters, community psychology and how it relates to empowerment theory was discussed in detail. Zimmerman's (1995) three areas in the lives of human beings in which empowerment occur were briefly mentioned. These three areas are psychological empowerment (PE), organisational empowerment (OE) and community empowerment (CE).

If Zimmerman's theory is brought in relation to the short course 'Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation', then the intrapersonal component for the VE co-ordinators might include the fact that they are the leaders of fellow social workers in their respective districts, and they have to be involved in the community for resource development (e.g. fundraising), policy issues and service provision. For Zimmerman (1995), this would illustrate that the mentioned short course should encourage a critical understanding of the VE co-ordinators' sociopolitical environment, and that the cultivation of personal and collective resources for political action as well as the development of interpersonal skills and knowledge should be encouraged.

The interactional component for the VE co-ordinators would be that on a daily basis they have to practise decision-making skills about victims or programmes, critically assess resources available for victims, and learn about the factors that influence causal agents when they work on campaigning for a new project or are raising funds. They are also responsible for designing new projects such as shelters and victim support centres and ensuring continuity of established services.

Furthermore, they need to organise others to achieve common goals and often give presentations to large groups in the community.

The *behavioural* component of the duties of the VE co-ordinators, activities such as advocacy campaigns, conducting VE forum meetings and writing to various municipal officials or NGOs for resources could all be considered part of the behavioural component of PE.

The tenets of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) were also used in the design. As the co-ordinators were constantly encouraged to focus on developing their skills and optimism, motivation and self-determination were facilitated.

#### **4.7 The rationale for the research methodology**

The research methodology used in the short course ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’ was PLA. This methodology falls under the umbrella term of action research. A full discussion of PLA is contained in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

A key rationale for using PLA and participatory evaluation is that they can produce psychosocial indicators of empowerment. This can result in an increased sense of assertiveness, self-validation, confidence and control, which is often the consequence of successful action (Claridge, 1996). Empowerment can occur at the level of the individual, the group and/or the community (Claridge, 1996).

Figure 4.1 places the research intervention within the theoretical grounding of PAR and attempts to explain the theories that informed the methodology.



**Figure 4.1. Theoretical grounding of the research intervention in relation to the research approach adopted in the present study**

Dick (1993) states that both action learning and action research are intended to improve practice. Action research intends to introduce some change; action learning uses some intended change as a vehicle for learning through reflection (Dick, 1997). This relates back to the reflective process in experiential learning. It also embraces the notion that community psychology encourages social action for social change.

Another important aspect of action research methodology is that it is capable of recording change (Bachmann, 2000).

PLA is an explorative qualitative research method and was deemed appropriate by the researcher, as the situations in which the VE co-ordinators were working were too ambiguous to frame a precise research question. The project was embarked upon as a pilot study. Action research is chosen when circumstances require flexibility or the involvement of the people in the research, or when change must take place quickly or holistically (O'Brien, 2001). Nel and Kruger's (1999; 2004) initial research into the implementation of the state-sponsored VEP in the province of Limpopo revealed that many core activities were not being carried out in the VE sector due to a lack of skills. The current crime statistics in South Africa, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, also demonstrate that change is essential if the VEP is to be of value to communities.

The portfolios of the VE co-ordinators discussed in Chapter 1 include the facilitation of the establishment of community programmes such as Thuthuzela Rape Care Centres. These centres are linked to the Sexual Offences Courts, with access to two prosecutors and a dedicated magistrate. They are staffed by medical personnel trained in forensic evidence gathering and social workers, legal personnel and/or staff from NGOs who provide basic victim support, trauma counselling and intermediary services, such as court preparation and support during the trial (Pretorius & Louw, 2005).

In addition to the Thuthuzela Rape Care Centres, the VE co-ordinators are also responsible for the facilitation of the co-ordination of services at 'one-stop centres' for survivors of sexual offences and domestic violence. Other responsibilities include shelters for women and children and victim support rooms at police stations. A key aspect of the VE co-ordinator function is assistance of capacity building of NGOs and CBOs working in the VE sector. The training of frontline workers, the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and the establishment of advocacy and awareness campaigns all form part of the job description of a VE co-ordinator. As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the VEP is to develop, strengthen and monitor integrated VE policies, programmes and services at all levels through strategic partnerships within and between government and civil society (DSD, 2005a). This requires working as a unit both intersectorally and intrasectorally and correlates with the principles of the participatory approaches.

All of these functions are grounded within the applied discipline of community development. The VE co-ordinators work very closely with communities in establishing core services. Working in the field of VE in the Limpopo Province and building on the results of the research by Nel and Kruger (1999; 2004), I (as the researcher) was confident that a PLA approach would develop the capacity of the co-ordinators, as this approach appeared to offer many of the skills needed in meeting the job descriptions of the VE co-ordinators.

#### **4.8 The research intervention: ‘Group process and capacity development for effective social programme implementation’**

The handbook *Tools for development: A handbook for those engaged in development activity*, developed by the DFID (2002) at the University of Wolverhampton in the United Kingdom, was used as a starting point for the training programme, as it offered a PLA approach to project management. *Tools for development* draws together a range of techniques designed to help DFID officers and others undertake development activities and interventions of any size and kind. The VE co-ordinators are expected to monitor all aspects of project implementation, identify problems and expedite delivery of inputs, as well as establish and maintain financial records in respect of project expenditure. This, in essence, is a form of project management and the reason why *Tools for development* seemed ideally suited to the capacity development programme. Skills included in the training programme were stakeholder analysis, problem and situational analysis, visioning and logical framework-forming. Risk management, participatory methodologies and participatory management, conducting workshops, working in teams, building partnerships, conflict resolution and monitoring and evaluation were also included in the capacity development programme.

One of the findings in the Nel and Kruger (1999; 2004) research (see Appendix 2) was that in all provinces across South Africa, one of the top five training priorities mentioned by the respondents in the research was learning how to cope with stress and burn-out. The training programme therefore also addressed the managerial training concerns of personal health and self-management.

#### **4.8.1 Group development and group facilitation**

Along with project management skills and personal health and self-management, the training programme incorporated the theory of group development and group facilitation. It was considered essential by both the researcher and the participants that these skills be learnt because the VE co-ordinators often have to present workshops and training programmes to other NGOs and CBOs in their districts and then find themselves working with groups.

A certain mindset is required for facilitation. Justice and Jamieson (2006:31) describe it as a way of thinking and valuing; empowerment in place of dependence; inclusion over exclusion; a framework for action. This in some ways parallels the research methodology PLA. According to Justice and Jamieson (2006:31), facilitation is characterised by ‘we’, not ‘I’; it is collaboration rather than control; a level playing field; a suspension of hierarchy; jointly creating instead of someone directing; using influence, not power, and being of service rather than being in charge.

Much of experiential education happens in the context of groups, which is only appropriate since much of real life happens in groups (Foster, 1993). Smith (2005) notes that the most influential model of the developmental process – certainly in terms of its impact on texts aimed at learners – has been that of Bruce W. Tuckman (1965). However, there are other models of team development, such as those of Kormanski and Mozenter (1991), Drexler and Sibbert (1994) and Jones and Bearley (1985), as well as Gersick’s (1988; 1989; 1991) punctuated equilibrium model (all cited in Smith, 2005).

In the capacity development programme, the Tuckman model of group development was used as it is considered useful in creating a learning experience based on the pattern of group behaviours (Foster, 1993). The Tuckman model provides a convenient set of patterns for an instructor when creating a learning experience. Based on simple assessment activities and critical observations of individuals in the group, interpersonal behaviours can be identified and ‘labelled’ according to the model. Based on these labels, appropriate activities can be implemented (Foster, 1993).

In Tuckman’s model, four stages are elaborated in terms of the patterns of psychosocial dynamics that characterise the group as it evolves as a system. While there are various differences concerning the number of stages and their names, many people have adopted a version of Tuckman’s model, namely orientation (forming),

conflict (storming), collaboration (norming) and productivity (performing). Tuckman was later to add a fifth stage – changing (adjourning) (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The model suggests that teams go through five major, but quite separate, stages of development. At each stage, therefore, activities to build and reinforce teamwork can be introduced. The model can also be used to help team members build an understanding of teamwork and the issues they can expect to meet at each stage.

While Tuckman's model addresses both the task and interpersonal realms, his analysis builds on the premise that 'any group, regardless of setting, must address itself to the successful completion of a task' (Tuckman, 1965:385). Tuckman's analysis of the interpersonal issues of member dependence, intimacy, control, cohesiveness, conflicts and the emergence of roles and norms was relatively elaborate (Seers & Woodruff, 1997).

Applied aspects of the theory of group dynamics and group facilitation were used in the short course in many ways. Few leaders are trained to chair group meetings; they learn to run meetings from prior experiences and seldom receive feedback to develop superior meeting-management skills (Tropman, 1996b, and Bottorff, 1997, cited in Kloppenbog & Petrick, 1999). The VE co-ordinators are leaders, as they have groups of subdistrict co-ordinators to train and inform and often have to hold meetings. They are never trained on how to hold meetings or how to be aware of group process. It is felt that this is possibly because the theory of group process is a psychological one and therefore not something that would be incorporated into a social work curriculum.

According to Kloppenbog and Petrick (1999:166), in group dynamics it is often noted that groups 'get stuck' in defensive routines in meetings that inhibit effective learning and may 'remain stuck' unless their dysfunctional cycles are interrupted. They delineate the self-fuelling, counterproductive group dynamic processes that lead to dysfunctional meetings as follows: (1) issues that are perceived as embarrassing or threatening in meetings become undiscussable or attributed to 'internal politics'; (2) sensitive meeting issues are then bypassed or covered up to protect group members while inhibiting organisational learning; (3) actions that excuse and maintain the original bypass and cover-ups are employed, such as blaming others and distancing oneself from responsibility, and (4) the adverse consequences of actions that harm meetings prevail, such as arriving late, leaving early, missing meetings, discussing only boring, safe topics, or informal group dissolution

(Kloppenbog & Petrick, 1999:166). A section of the short course was devoted to training on how to run effective meetings.

The group facilitator is the process champion. He/She carefully observes group dynamics, employs justified methods to ensure balanced participation and systematic analysis, suggests alternative approaches, challenges group thinking and orchestrates consensus on key decisions (Justice & Jamieson, 2006). The modelling behaviour of both the facilitator and co-facilitator demonstrated to the group of VE co-ordinators how to overcome dysfunctional group behaviour.

#### **4.8.2 Co-facilitation**

An understanding of how co-facilitation relates to the development of the group climate is important, because group climate is believed to be an important part of the change process that occurs in group interventions (Miles & Kivlighan, 2008). The skills of co-facilitation also formed part of the short course. As stated previously, the co-facilitator in Phase 1 of this study was Juan Nel. In Phase 2 of the study, the VE co-ordinators worked with various members of the team and selected their own co-facilitators. It was of great benefit to the co-ordinators to co-facilitate, as it was an excellent way of empowering members while modelling mutual support through shared leadership. Modelling in this instance refers to a procedure whereby the subjects (in this case the sub district co-ordinators) observed the model (the district co-ordinators) perform the behaviour and then they could attempt to replicate the behaviour themselves.

Co-facilitation is not only a common practice in group interventions – it may actually be the preferred method for leading psychotherapy and other types of change-orientated groups (Yalom, 1995). According to Miles and Kivlighan (2008), the use of co-facilitators has many assumed benefits. The use of co-facilitators, for example, has practical administrative advantages for the group (e.g. groups can still meet when one facilitator is unavailable, and the training and supervision of facilitators is more efficient). Co-facilitation may also have direct benefits for the group members. The co-facilitation relationship, for example, can provide a model of healthy interpersonal interaction for group members (Dies, 1994, cited in Miles & Kivlighan, 2008).

#### **4.9 Sampling and sample characteristics**

Mouton (2002) describes a population as individuals with a common characteristic that the researcher is interested in. In this study, the population is comprised of state-appointed social workers working in the field of VE in the Limpopo Province. Streubert and Carpenter (1999) state that individuals are selected because of their experience with the phenomenon of interest.

Since the research project was conducted from a qualitative and exploratory approach, the sample was selected purposively. Patton (1990) views purposeful sampling in qualitative research as appropriate if the research question is likely to benefit the participants. He argues that '[t]he logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research' (Patton, 1990:169).

There were two groups of participants in this study. In Phase 1 of the study, the participants selected each represented one of the six districts of the Limpopo Province and were VE district co-ordinators. As these districts have limited access to travel funds (hence they do not meet regularly), it was argued that the VE district co-ordinators would benefit from sharing among themselves their experiences and skills as well as broaden their base of resources. The provincial VE director, nominated the target group. The provincial VE co-ordinator and the district co-ordinators had previously attended a short course on VE at the University of South Africa and therefore had a basic understanding of the components of the VEP.

A unique feature of the Limpopo Province is that it shares international borders with three countries: Botswana to the west and north-west, Zimbabwe to the north and Mozambique to the east. On its southern flank, the province shares borders with Gauteng Province, specifically with its Johannesburg-Pretoria axis, the most industrious metropole on the continent (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2006).

The population of the province is estimated at 3.6 million, of which 51% are female, 49% male and 36% youths (National Development Agency, 2008). The unemployment rate is at 48.6%, and the HIV infection rate at 22.9% (National Development Agency, 2008).

Table 4.1 details the six districts in the Limpopo Province and shows the subdistricts within each district.

**Table 4.1. The districts and subdistricts in the Limpopo Province**

	<b>DISTRICTS</b>					
	<b>(n = 6)</b>					
	<b>Waterberg</b>	<b>Vhembe</b>	<b>Sekhukhune</b>	<b>Capricorn</b>	<b>Bohlabela</b>	<b>Mopani</b>
<b>Subdistricts</b> <b>(n = 30)</b>	Modimolle	Matale	Tubatse	Polokwane	Maruleng	Letaba
	Treves	Thoyandou	Fetakgomo	Molemole	Bushbuckridge	Tzaneen
	Bakenberg	Vhufuli	Marble Hall	Aganang	Hluvukani	Giyani
	Bela Bela	Musina	Makhuthamaga	Lepelle- Nkumpi	Thulamashe	Phalaborwa
	Thabazimbi	Saselamani	Grobblersdal	Blouberg	Belfast	Lenyenye

The six districts of Limpopo are Waterberg, Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Capricorn, Bohlabela and Mopani. Waterberg is in the north-west district of Limpopo. This is the tourism centre and has most of the natural resources, being one of the most mineralised regions in the world (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2006). It is a very large area with a large farming community. The main languages spoken are Northern Sotho and Tswana. This area has many different rural cultural groups, such as the Bapedi, Tswana and Basotho.

Vhembe is one of the northern districts of Limpopo. In this district, the former independent homelands of Lebowa and Venda are found. The primary language spoken is Venda.

Sekhukhune is in the southern district of Limpopo. This is Limpopo's biggest district. It is a completely rural area and does not have a town. Northern Sotho and Ndebele are spoken here.

Capricorn is the centre of Limpopo and is the capital. It is well populated and the economic growth point. Northern Sotho is spoken here.

Bohlabela is the eastern district of Limpopo. It is a rural district and considered to be one of the most poverty-stricken areas in Limpopo. Shangaan, Swazi and Sotho are spoken here.

The main seat in Mopani is Giyani, and in this district, the majority of the people speak either Tsonga or Northern Sotho.

Each district municipality is further demarcated into five local municipalities, giving a total of 25 (National Development Agency, 2008).

#### 4.9.1 Sample: Phase 1

There were seven ( $n = 7$ ) participants in Phase 1 of the study, as the provincial VE co-ordinator was also included in this phase. The provincial VE director, Linda Kaba, nominated the target group. Linda Kaba and the co-ordinators had previously attended a short course on VE at Unisa and therefore had a basic understanding of the components of the VEP. This was one of the criteria for selection. The two tables that follow outline the frequency distribution of the age, gender and race of the participants in Phase 1 of the study.

**Table 4.2. Frequency tables: Age and gender of the participants in Phase 1 of the study**

N = 7		
Age	Male	Female
25-31	0	0
32-38	1	2
39-45	0	0
46-65+	0	4

**Table 4.3. Frequency tables: Race and gender of the participants in Phase 1 of the study**

N = 7		
Race	Male	Female
Black	1	5
White	0	0
Coloured	0	1
Asian	0	0

All the district co-ordinators were responsible for a district and all of them were in charge of five subdistrict co-ordinators. Six of the participants were female and one was male. Four of the participants were between 46 and 60 years old and three of the participants were between 32 and 38 years old. A bachelor's degree in social work was held by six of the participants, and one had an honours degree in social work.

According to Mason (2007), six to eight participants or data sources will suffice for a homogenous qualitative sample. Since the district co-ordinators were a homogenous group (mainly black female social workers), I felt that the sample would be large enough to obtain rich information.

A further consideration in the selecting of participants was a cost factor. As the short course took place over a year, costs for venue hire and travelling had to be carefully calculated.

#### **4.9.2 Sample: Phase 2**

The two tables that follow outline the frequency distribution of the age, gender and race of the participants in Phase 2 of the study.

**Table 4.4. Frequency table: Age and gender of the participants in Phase 2 of the study**

<b>N = 29</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
25-31	3	9
32-38	1	11
39-45	0	2
46-65+	1	2

**Table 4.5. Frequency table: Race and gender of the participants in Phase 2 of the study**

N = 29		
Race	Male	Female
Black	5	23
White	0	0
Coloured	0	1
Asian	0	0

In Phase 2 of the research, the participants were VE subdistrict co-ordinators. There were 29 (n = 29) subdistrict co-ordinators in Phase 2 of the study who were coached by the six district co-ordinators and the provincial co-ordinator who had participated in Phase 1 of the study. The two most represented age groups were 25 to 31 years (42%) and 32 to 38 years (42%). The remaining 16% were 46 years old and older. Five of the participants were male and 24 were female. The majority of the participants (63%) had a bachelor's degree in social work, while nine had an honours degree and one person a master's degree.

#### **4.10 Data Collection Tools**

Action research is a more holistic approach to problem-solving rather than a single method for collecting and analysing data (O'Brien, 2001). It therefore allows for several different research tools to be used while the project is conducted. These various methods, which are generally common to the qualitative research paradigm, include keeping a research journal, collecting and analysing documents, recording participant observation, conducting questionnaire surveys, conducting structured and unstructured interviews, and performing case studies (O'Brien, 2001).

##### **4.10.1 Questionnaires**

In the first phase a questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was compiled, that was used to evaluate the level of satisfaction of the participants and to establish the needs of the participants in relation to phase two of the short course. The questions were generated by previous qualitative work captured during the workshops. Questions were rated on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5. 5 indicated that participants were completely satisfied and 1 that they were completely dissatisfied.

In the second phase two evaluation questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire in phase 2 (see Appendix 5) was created by the VE district co-ordinators for the subdistrict co-ordinators after they had presented an initial three day workshop. A further questionnaire was completed (see Appendix 6) at the end of the phase 2, stage A, VE short course and phase 2 stage B, the methods and principles of group facilitation short course. This questionnaire consisted of both quantitative and qualitative sections. A biographical section dealt with issues pertaining to age, sex, level of education and occupation. The quantitative section consisted of closed-ended questions that were rated on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5. 5 indicated that participants were completely satisfied and 1 that they were completely dissatisfied. The questions were quantitatively analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme. Frequency analysis and some descriptive analysis were used. The qualitative section of the evaluation questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions such as: What did you like most about the short course? These questions were qualitatively analysed and thematically coded where the most prominent themes were extracted.

#### **4.10.2 Semi-structured interview**

In the initial stage of the study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the provincial VE co-ordinator to obtain background information on what she felt the challenges were in offering VE service delivery in her province. It was felt that this would allow for a rich and detailed discussion of the key elements.

Semi-structured interviews allow for a free-flowing engagement that changes the ordinary question-and-answer routine into a two-way discussion process (Seidman, 1991:3). Kvale (1996, cited in Nongauza, 2004) describes this type of interview as based on the conversation of daily life. He regards it as aimed at obtaining the description of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. This assumes that social

knowledge and reality are not objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted (Kvale, 1996, cited in Nongauza, 2004).

#### **4.10.3 Participant observations and reflections**

Participant observations and reflections were also used. According to Merriam (1988), one should describe various elements when using participant observations. This includes observation of the physical environment and the surroundings of the setting, as well as description of the participants in detail. Merriam (1988) records the activities and interactions that occur in the setting. She also looks at the frequency and duration of those activities and interactions and other subtle factors, such as informal, unplanned activities, symbolic meanings, nonverbal communication, physical clues, and what should happen that has not happened. In her 1998 book, Merriam adds such elements as observing the conversation in terms of content, who speaks to whom, who listens, silences, the researcher's own behaviour and how that role affects those one is observing, and what one says or thinks. Creswell (2002:200) defines participant observation as 'an observational role adopted by researchers when they take part in activities in the setting they observe'. To conduct participant observation, one must live in the context to facilitate prolonged engagement. Prolonged engagement is one of the activities listed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to establish trustworthiness. The findings are considered to be more trustworthy when the researcher can show that he/she spent a considerable amount of time in the setting, as this prolonged interaction with the community enables the researcher to have more opportunities to observe and to participate in a variety of activities over time. This research was conducted over two years, and based on the above requirements, I (as the project co-ordinator/participant/mentor) was a member of the collaborative partnership as well as the researcher investigating the process.

#### **4.10.4 Field notes**

Polit and Hungler (1999) identify categories of field notes, such as observational notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes and personal notes. Newbury (2001) explains that Schatzman and Strauss (1973) advocate an approach that packages material into three categories, not four. These are observational notes, theoretical notes and methodological notes.

In this study, the following categories of field notes were used:

- Observational notes: These notes describe what was seen and heard by the researcher. Observational notes are statements bearing on events experienced (Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001).
- Theoretical notes: These notes are the researcher's interpretation of what was taking place. Theoretical notes represent self-conscious, controlled attempts to derive meaning from any one or several observational notes (Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001).
- Methodological notes: In this study, these notes reminded the researcher of what needed to be changed or what approach could be tried in a subsequent workshop. Methodological notes are statements that reflect an operational act completed or planned: an instruction to oneself, a reminder, a critique of one's own tactics. It notes timing, sequencing, stationing, stage-setting or manoeuvring (Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001).

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggest that researchers consider their relationship to the participants when they write field notes. This relationship has a direct bearing on how researchers compile documentation in that 'it makes a difference as we create field notes if we see ourselves as recorders of events 'over there' or if we see ourselves as 'characters in the events'' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994:422).

As the methodology PAR had to be upheld throughout this study, the field notes were discussed at each meeting with the co-ordinators and their feedback was actively sought. Their observations were recorded and added to the field notes.

#### **4.10.5 Reflective journal**

The researcher kept a reflective journal and discussed participant observations with the co-facilitator after each workshop. Participant comments during the course and feedback after completion of the course were used to illustrate the findings that emerged from the two phases of the research.

Merriam (1998:116) points out that one of the goals of qualitative research is to 'reflect the participants' perspective'. Since this was a process study, the perceptions of all participants were a key consideration (Patton, 1990). By reading through the process notes and recording the participants' comments and actions, I (as the researcher) immersed myself in the data. These reflections were noted in

memorandums and stimulated further discussions with the co-facilitator and the participants, and hence a cycle within a cycle (constant reflection) was set in motion.

Keeping reflective journals is a strategy that can facilitate reflexivity, whereby researchers use their journal to examine ‘personal assumptions and goals’ and clarify ‘individual belief systems and subjectivities’ (Ahern, 2002, cited in Ortlipp, 2008:695). Ortlipp (2008:696) states that the goal of a reflective journal is to provide a research ‘trail’ of gradually altering methodologies and reshape analysis. Keeping and using reflective research journals can make the messiness of the research process visible to the researcher, who can then make it visible for those who read the research, and thereby avoid producing, reproducing and circulating the discourse of research as a neat and linear process (Ortlipp, 2008).

According to Phelps (2005), action research provides a vehicle for researchers and co-researchers (the participants in the research) to seek and to share meanings constructed from shared experience. Reflective journals are consistent with these principles in that they allow a dialogue between students, teachers and researchers, and hence a co-emergence of new understandings and knowledge that are of benefit to all participants (Phelps, 2005). Reflective journals provide the opportunity for researchers ‘to look at a phenomenon while it is evolving ... to look at the potentially myriad variables that might be coming into play as they occur’ (Hase, 2002, cited in Phelps, 2005:50).

It is of importance to note that I was aware on many occasions that I represented the values associated with a white, middle-aged, middle-class woman. In my reflective journal I tried to unpack the complex dynamics that were associated with my age, gender, race and education. My values and what they represented to the participants also played a role in the power dynamics within the group. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

#### **4.10.6 Dialogue**

Dialogue is a key notion in collective research techniques and PAR in general, given that participation is perceived in terms of ‘continuous dialogue’ (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:58). Information was collected and systematised on a group basis while the group was performing various activities. The monthly meetings were a ‘continuous dialogue’ in which members argued, reflected and developed their own knowledge. Through dialogue, participants are helped to develop knowledge by learning from

their own reality and specifically by learning to critically analyse their own particular situations and problems (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

#### **4.10.7 Team contracts and interactions**

Initially, a contract was entered into between the participants and the researcher. This contract expressed the agreed norms of behaviour and the modes of interaction that were acceptable to both teams. As this gave important insights into the participants' perceptions of the researcher and their expectations of the short course, the contract was considered research data.

#### **4.10.8 Shared presentations and analysis**

A further method of data collection was that of shared presentations, where the researcher and co-facilitator would present their findings to the group. These were then corrected, discussed and checked. Brainstorming on the problems in VE service delivery was conducted joint sessions. During these sessions, notes were made of aspects such as the following: Who talks? Who talks how much? Who interrupts whom? Whose ideas dominate? Who lectures?

#### **4.10.9 Contrast comparisons**

In Phase 2 of the study, the groups gave feedback to each other. The Phase 2 participants often gave the seven participants of Phase 1 feedback on their workshops. During Phase 2, many participants took turns to present aspects of the short course, after which their fellow participants would give them feedback on their performance.

#### **4.10.10 Trustworthiness**

The first procedure that was employed for trustworthiness was prolonged engagement in the field, or what Merriam (1998:204) calls 'long-term observation'. I (as the researcher) worked on the first case study with the co-ordinators for a period of a year, and in Phase 2 of the study with the subdistrict co-ordinators for a further period of a year.

Another important validity procedure that was employed was triangulation (Creswell, 1998). Merriam (1998:204) defines triangulation as 'using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings'. Methodological triangulation was used, since different forms of data were

collected: observations and field notes, interviews, the researcher's reflective journal and questionnaires. The process of triangulation was used to seek convergence in the data and to confirm or disconfirm emerging categories and themes (Creswell, 2002). The variety of methods used to collect data, the settings used and the number of years over which a study is conducted facilitate a process of triangulation to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The feedback from the VE co-ordinators and their perceptions of the short course were an integral part of the research. Constant checking was done to ensure that their perceptions were accurately portrayed. In Phase 2 of the study, when the participants conducted the short course themselves, both the researcher and the seven co-ordinators wrote memorandums. The 29 subdistrict co-ordinators then also gave feedback to their peers in the form of open-ended and closed questionnaires. The participants acted as project designers and co-researchers in this phase of the research.

Feedback from peers was also used in the study. The peers consisted of colleagues who either hold doctorate or master's degrees, and all have qualitative research experience. This was done as an attempt to minimise my own bias in the research.

Theoretical triangulation was also achieved in the form of reflecting Nel and Kruger's (1999; 2004) initial research in the field of VE against appropriate literature in the fields of social work, psychology and community development.

#### **4.11 Data analysis**

Aimers (1999) points out that care must be taken that data collection and display methods allow for the cyclic nature of PAR. Hart and Bond (1995) warn that there may be a blurring of boundaries between collecting more data and acting on findings. Analysis, they maintain, should therefore take the form of discussion, which defines common understandings of the stakeholders.

The foremost purpose of the analysis of the information that came to light was to take the cycles of participatory reflection into learning and action. A second purpose was to record the concerns of the VE co-ordinators and to accurately reflect the uniqueness of their experiences within the field. Another purpose was to identify the range of skills and abilities needed to initiate and maintain viable social programmes such as the VEP, the HIV/Aids Programme, the Children's Programme and the Domestic Violence Programme.

Data in the field notes and the reflective journal was analysed according to the following steps:

- The transcripts were carefully read to understand the whole.
- Ideas that emerged as the researcher asked herself questions were written down.
- Major topics were identified and listed in the margin.
- A category was created for each topic and then relationships between the categories were searched for.
- The relationships became the subcategories.

On the initial level of analysis the researcher specifically searched to identify themes that described action plans, as well as themes related to participation. In the notes, the researcher reviewed the information that was gathered again and described the process of each interaction that took place during the different meetings. Each sentence from the different meetings was examined and the process of the interaction described. The interaction processes in each group were described. This was the second level of analysis. The data analysis process presented by Terreblanche and Kelly (1999) was used to analyse the data. The field notes were broken down into codes. The codes evolved and grew as the programme continued and more topics and themes became apparent. From these codes thematically relevant codes were extracted. The qualitative data analysis software programme Atlas.ti (2004) version 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> was utilised to manage the process.

#### **4.12 Chronology of the research activities**

The main research activities are discussed in chronological order. All activities are explained briefly, and reasons for a better understanding of the sequence of the research activities are given.

##### **4.12.1 Phase 1**

The research activities that were carried out in Phase 1 are set out in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6. Project plan for Phase 1 of the study**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location (district, community)</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>
<b>2004</b>			
Month 1	Preparation of Situational Analysis Questionnaire. Designing of three-day workshop.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project co-ordinator, project supervisor, team member, secretary
Month 2	Three-day workshop. Collecting feedback data. Conducting field visits and interviews in Limpopo.	Gauteng (Unisa), Limpopo	Project co-ordinator, project supervisor, team member, secretary
Months 2-3	Three 4-hour coaching sessions per month for two months. Writing interim report.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project co-ordinator, project supervisor, team member, secretary
Months 4-10	Seven 4-hour coaching sessions each month. Planning and producing directory of services and volunteers for each district.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project co-ordinator, project supervisor, team member, secretary
Month 11	Conducting final consultative workshop. Writing final report. Disseminating report.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project co-ordinator, project supervisor, team member, secretary

**4.12.1.1 Stage A (January – February 2004)**

In this stage, the three-day workshop was designed in collaboration with the provincial co-ordinator. The workshop included the following: facilitation skills;

problem tree analysis; stakeholder analysis; key informant interviews; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis; stakeholder mapping; project management principles, and PLA techniques.

#### **4.12.1.2 Stage B (February 2004)**

The three-day workshop was held with six VE district co-ordinators and one provincial co-ordinator for organisational and intersectoral planning and intersectoral management.

#### **4.12.1.3 Stage C (February – April 2004)**

Four-hour training and coaching sessions were held every second week for six weeks. This was done in order to receive implementation feedback, solve problems, do planning, document the process and discuss the lessons learnt. The interim report was completed.

#### **4.12.1.4 Stage D (April 2004 – October 2004)**

Four-hour training and coaching sessions were held every month for seven months in order to receive implementation feedback and to do problem-solving and planning. The planning and producing of the directory of services and volunteers for each district were completed. The process was documented and lessons learnt were discussed on an ongoing basis.

#### **4.12.1.5 Compilation of final directory of services and volunteers for each district**

All participants contributed to writing the introduction and conclusion of the directory of services and volunteers. The final layout of the directory was discussed, the table of contents was compiled and the title pages agreed upon. The draft was made available to VE co-ordinators by email or post for comment.

#### **4.12.1.6 Stage E (November 2004)**

A final consultative workshop with the VE co-ordinators was held. The Unisa Centre for Applied Psychology conducted a ceremony for participants who successfully completed the course. The writing up of the final report and supporting documents was completed and disseminated for input.

#### 4.12.2 Phase 2

The research activities that were carried out in Phase 2 are set out in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. Project plan for Phase 2 of the study**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location (district, community)</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>
<b>2005</b>			
Months 1-3	Three-month VE course including four-day workshop with subdistrict co-ordinators.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project supervisor, project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist member, centre manager
Month 2	Three-day group facilitation workshop with district co-ordinators and provincial co-ordinator.	Gauteng (Unisa)	Project supervisor, project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist, centre manager
Months 2-3	One-day Train-the-Trainer workshop with district co-ordinators and provincial co-ordinator.	Limpopo	Project leader, intern research psychologist, project supervisor, technical specialist
Month 4	Three-day workshop by district co-ordinators to subdistrict co-ordinators. Collecting feedback data. Conducting field visits and interviews in Limpopo.	Limpopo	Project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist, project team
Months 5-6	Three 4-hour coaching sessions per month for two months.	Limpopo	Project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist, project team

	Writing interim report.		
Months 7-10	Five 4-hour coaching sessions each month. Planning and producing district resource directories.	Limpopo	Project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist, centre manager, project team
Month 11	Final consultative workshop. Writing final report. Disseminating report.	Limpopo	Project supervisor, project leader, intern research psychologist, technical specialist, project team, centre manager

#### **4.12.2.1 Stage A: Unisa Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support**

In the first stage, the 29 VE subdistrict co-ordinators participated in the three-month course inclusive of a four-day workshop for the Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support (see the official brochure attached as Appendix 2) at Unisa's main campus in Pretoria. This was in order to gain a 'bigger picture' of VE and support and to ensure that all participants were at the same level of competence.

The Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support has been running since 1998 and is the only one of its kind presented by a tertiary institution in South Africa. This is a three-month distance education course with a compulsory four-day workshop at the beginning of the second month and the successful completion of two assignments.

The course consists of two modules. Module 1 consists of the theory of VE and support in the South African context and includes the following: a theoretical overview of the field, including both international and South African perspectives, and a 'how to' model for setting up a new VE initiative at local level and understanding the impact of a traumatic experience on the victim of, among other things, crime and violence, and of the basic tasks and skills required to render empowerment services to victims. Module 2 is a workshop that aims to consolidate learning with regard to the theory covered in Module 1.

#### **4.12.2.2 Stage B: Unisa Group Facilitation workshop for district co-ordinators**

Stage B ran concurrently with Stage A. During this phase, the six VE district co-ordinators attended a three-day workshop in Methods and Principles of Group Facilitation (see the official brochure attached as Appendix 3) at Unisa's main campus in Pretoria. This three-day experiential workshop provided an understanding of the theory applicable to group facilitation, introduced the participants to reading group processes, and provided them with techniques and exercises to enhance self-awareness and change. Attention was also given to the planning and structuring of group learning experiences within the framework of outcomes-based education and adult learning. The emphasis was on practical techniques and skills development to assist the VE district co-ordinators in coaching and facilitating the VE subdistrict co-ordinators in Stage F of this project.

#### **4.12.2.3 Stage C: Train-the-Trainer workshop for district co-ordinators**

The third stage consisted of the design of a three-day workshop by the project leader and the intern research psychologist in collaboration with the provincial VE co-ordinator and the district co-ordinators. The workshop included facilitation skills, problem tree analysis, objectives tree analysis, stakeholder analysis, key informant interviews, SWOT analysis, stakeholder mapping, project management principles and PLA techniques. The workshop was held in Limpopo.

#### **4.12.2.4 Stage D: Workshop for subdistrict co-ordinators**

In the fourth stage, the six VE district co-ordinators and provincial VE co-ordinator presented the three-day Capacity Development and Coaching workshop to the 29 VE subdistrict co-ordinators. Feedback questionnaires were used on a daily basis. Comprehensive evaluation questionnaires were administered at the end of the workshop. The workshop was held in Limpopo.

#### **4.12.2.5 Stage E: Network building and coaching of local co-ordinators**

In the fifth stage, five-hour sessions were held every second week over six weeks for training and coaching purposes (receiving implementation feedback and doing problem-solving and planning). The process was documented. These sessions were held in the Limpopo Province. The purpose of these sessions was for the VE subdistrict co-

ordinators to be coached by the VE district co-ordinators, assisted by the project leader and the intern research psychologist.

#### **4.12.2.6 Stage F: Training and coaching of local co-ordinators**

In the sixth stage, five-hour training and coaching sessions were held monthly for five months for training and coaching purposes (receiving implementation feedback, doing problem-solving and planning). Again, the VE district co-ordinators facilitated this process to their VE subdistrict co-ordinators. These coaching sessions were again held in the Limpopo Province. The process was documented. During this stage, the VE district co-ordinators and their subdistrict co-ordinators compiled the final directory of services and volunteers for each district.

#### **4.12.2.7 Stage G: Evaluation and consultative workshop**

In the seventh stage, a final consultative workshop was held with the VE district co-ordinators and the VE subdistrict co-ordinators to reflect on, and document, the process and lessons learnt. The final report was written up and supporting documents were provided.

### **4.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an outline and a discussion of the research approaches, strategies and procedures applied. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to discuss the themes that emerged from the data. The applicability of the research methodology (PLA) and the content of the short course are also reviewed. Chapter 5 also considers whether this empowerment programme has in fact empowered the participants with psychological and behavioural competencies for their own well-being and for the delivery of quality services in the field of VE.

## Chapter 5

### Creating change together: Responsive and relevant?

*Action learning makes inquiry and reflection central to the group as members learn with and from each other. The changes implemented in the organization are called 'action' and the changes breaking through the mindsets of the participants are called 'learning' (Kramer & Esons, 2007:5).*

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 gives an account of the methodologies that were selected to investigate the research propositions. This chapter reports on the outcomes of the data-gathering phase. The data collected and the information are analysed in relation to the overarching research objectives posed.

Inherent in the first objective – describing an empowerment course for social workers working in the field of VE in the Limpopo Province in South Africa – is the assumption that the empowerment programme was designed and delivered using a participatory methodology. The notion of whether this is an appropriate methodology is explored as a subsidiary question. Semi-structured interviews, participant observations and reflections, field notes, and a reflective journal were used to investigate all of the research objectives. The central question was qualitative in nature and therefore critical reflection was used, which is reported on later in this chapter.

The research encompassed two distinct phases, which were detailed in the preceding methodology chapter. This chapter outlines the findings of the broad-level investigation into the following:

- action research methodologies;
- the participants' assumptions and beliefs, and
- the value of continuing professional development (CPD) through short-course learning programmes for social workers and other healthcare workers.

Methodological findings have implications for system findings and so precede them. System findings have implications for findings about change, which therefore come last. As a researcher, I believe that the qualitative and PLA methodologies assisted in achieving a positive outcome in this study. To be more specific, I thought that the methodologies enabled me (as the researcher) to emphasise and facilitate a non-judgmental and non-hierarchical relationship with the VE district co-ordinators and the VE subdistrict co-ordinators in the Limpopo Province. I also learnt more about my own style of engagement with others from the dialogue with the participants and co-facilitators, and self-reflection. The methodology also helped to gather, analyse and interpret the subjective realities of the participants and to explore the range of skills needed to initiate and maintain viable social programmes.

## **5.2 The appropriateness of the methodology of participatory learning and action research**

To uncover the principles that were naturally underlying the data and codes I started off analysing the data by constructing thematically relevant themes. Within these themes I attempted to explore more closely the various texts that had been gathered over the years of the research. Next, the interpretation of data, involved a written account of relevant data, contextualised in relation to relevant literature of PLA where applicable. The participants were also consulted on what they considered relevant as themes. Primary themes and relevant sub-categories emerged from the data analysis. The themes included:

- Participation
- Non-hierarchical partnerships
- Patriarchy
- Empowerment
- Change.

### **5.2.1 Participation**

An important feature of PLA is its dialogical nature, which enhances participation (Bachmann, 2000). Several actors are actively involved in the research process. Ehret (1997, cited in Bachmann, 2000:37) explains what creates participation:

*Discussion with the clientele, iteration, triangulation, verification – all are essential parts in PLA for obtaining information. Thus, participation is not an add-on; it is the basis of research. The style of co-operation and the attitude of partners determine their interaction and the joint search for improvements. There is no ‘subject’ which has to be researched, but a partner who is accompanied in a situation-improving process.*

As a focus of this study was directed at improving the training within VE services and thereby the standard of the services themselves, the main partner identified was the Department of Social Development (DSD). The DSD is the lead government department in VE and should therefore model ‘ideal services’. However, there were other role-players who also played important roles in gaining information and discussing findings and implications. In this respect, NGOs and the SAPS in particular should be mentioned. PAR methodology involves a cyclic rather than linear process, which generally begins with building a basis for participation by developing relationships between stakeholders and negotiating roles and responsibilities (Roberts & Dick, 2003).

One of the findings mentioned by the participants was that after the short course, there appeared to be wider intersectoral collaboration, as other role-players within the Limpopo Province started to recognise the DSD as the leading department in the field of VE. Intersectoral networking has long been regarded as a crucial component of VE (Nel *et al.*, 2001). The participants regarded the networking relationship with the NGOs and members of the SAPS as mutually beneficial. Dialogue was created with these partners aimed at improving problem-solving and ultimately improving services to victims.

The qualitative and participatory methodologies in the study allowed for the participants to participate fully in the programme because a non-judgmental, non-hierarchical and collaborative environment was created.

**Process notes from 19/06/2004: Phase 1. (Summary of discussion agreed by group)**

The Care for the Caregiver session held at the beginning of the session was very well received and it was felt that this was almost like a supervision session. The participants perceive the supervision sessions that are held by the DSD as a power

struggle between themselves and their supervisor. They feel unable to display or discuss work/life stress, as it may affect the promotion of individuals. Vicarious trauma was considered an occupational hazard. It was stated that participants are never offered individual psychotherapy in their tertiary training and most participants felt that perhaps this should be a necessary requirement of their training in order to gain a clearer picture of one's self.

A quotation from the participants demonstrates the environment of caring that was provided:

*'This was an extremely worthwhile session – we really need supervision and we need more time on this.'* Participant 5

### **5.2.2 Non-hierarchical partnerships**

The study required of me to perform several roles/functions, namely that of trainer and teacher, resource person, facilitator and moderator and, of course, researcher. The trainer/teacher role was evident for the first phase of the PLA training course. The role as resource person related to specific areas of competence and experience. These were useful for the PLA team members, but also in particular during the discussions with the VE co-ordinators. The differences in experience and knowledge between the researcher and the VE co-ordinators were an asset for discussions. As information was shared, discussions became more meaningful and practice-orientated.

'Handing over the stick' to the VE co-ordinators required staying in the background, thereby empowering and enabling them to express their own views. In addition, during the preparation and analysis stages, I (as the researcher) tried to facilitate rather than teach in order to enable more learning through self-discovery by the team members. Lastly, my actual role as the researcher was to keep an overview, plan the activities, and observe and analyse the ongoing processes. An important aspect of the research role was the systematic documentation of the process and its findings.

In the period after the first phase, my role as researcher can best be characterised as that of an external observer and analyst. The activities in Phase 2 of the research were followed on the basis of workshop planning reports, observation in the workshops, and email correspondence with the VE co-ordinators. These activities

highlight the role of the observer. My role as researcher also relates to the intensive literature studies and the analysis of all the data collected in the field, which in turn provided new insights and room for reflection.

Working in these different roles and positions made it easier to understand the participants and to slip into other roles. According to Bachmann (2000), playing various roles in a project increases one's awareness of the rationale, worldview, context and behaviour of any actor in a knowledge system. Changing roles facilitated the understanding that my current perception is only a tiny part of reality. This again helped me to become more aware of my own subjectivity, which in turn increased the tolerance of and interest in other views and ideas.

However, the different roles held by myself also created some irritations. At the beginning of Phase 2, partners were not always clear about my role in the group. They often looked to me (as facilitator) to provide all the answers and hesitated when they had to make decisions. At a national VE management meeting, an NGO manager in the Limpopo Province who was not involved in the training challenged me publicly. She thought that because of the training course, all VE co-ordinators should be able to make decisions. The NGO manager was irate as she had experienced a crisis with a victim and the VE co-ordinator within her district had not responded to her satisfaction. The VE services provided were not timeous or necessarily appropriate. The NGO manager felt that the co-ordinator appeared unable to make decisions alone and had relied on the workshop group for answers. This indecision from participants was experienced many times by me (as facilitator). The group at times appeared 'stuck' and unable to respond in the workshops, which gave the impression that they were waiting for all the answers from the 'experts'.

As stated by Bachmann (2000), overall, the different roles held permit a deeper penetration into the subject and enable a more comprehensive understanding. I (as the researcher) began to realise the full extent of the limitations that had been experienced by the participants in the educational system of the previous government. Questioning of the systems and boundaries were not encouraged and as a result, the participants had not developed a sense of self-confidence, or self-worth, which led to a lack of assertiveness.

Prior to 1994, the authoritarian apartheid education system in South Africa had not encouraged diversity of thought or an outcomes-based education system. The VE co-ordinators were initially hesitant about voicing their opinions or questioning

authority. The underlying tenet of PLA methodology is that we are experts in our own experiences and have many different ways of knowing and getting information about our conditions. It took time for the participants to realise that they controlled the gathering and use of information about their communities. They could decide what information they needed to make the changes they wanted, and how to get information. They decided what questions they needed to answer, and how.

A quotation from one of the participants demonstrates that initially the participants were unaware of how to gather the information they required for projects:

*'Our communities are so difficult; they come with their own ideologies and agendas. It can be difficult. As a facilitator I have to control and guide if I want progress. I didn't realise this before. It was always just an argument and people left meetings.'* Participant 3

The participants eventually took the lead and were integrally involved in all aspects of the design and implementation of the research, and of the analysis and distribution of the information gathered. This was one of the greatest changes in the participants' mindsets: They realised that they were not simply the passive recipients of information from me (as the facilitator) and had to learn to develop leadership and to empower themselves. They also had to agree on principles and values and had to stay accountable to them.

### **5.2.3 Patriarchy**

The pre-1994 autocratic paradigm also had the effect of creating patriarchic views in the group. This was evidenced when the group was divided into smaller teams and were given a task in which they had to choose a rapporteur to give feedback to the plenary. Time and time again it would be a male participant in the group who was chosen, and this man was not always the strongest participant. In fact, in the initial group of six VE co-ordinators, the male participant was the least able to convey the group's opinions. His demeanour was that of a small, quiet man who held no strong views on any topic. An interesting finding based on this observation was that when the group was repeatedly asked to choose a rapporteur who was confident and understood processes, they always chose a male participant. It was subsequently

established by the researcher that it was considered 'respectful' to the male participants for women to choose men to facilitate or become the rapporteur.

**Process notes from 24/08/2004: Phase 1 (Facilitator)**

The group was now being co-ordinated by the only male participant of the group and it appeared as if he took this responsibility very seriously and at times seemed to dominate the group. The participants allowed this to happen. This may be attributed to his new role (he has been made acting provincial co-ordinator while Linda is on sick leave), but could also be because he is the only male participant. He constantly spoke on behalf of the group, addressed all conversation to the other male facilitator (Juan Nel) and did not make eye contact with his fellow participants. Why is he doing this? We must revisit the ground rules and emphasise the participants' insistence on allowing everyone a voice.

**Process notes from 22/11/2006: Phase 2 (Facilitator)**

The group was still being pulled in an authoritarian manner by the male participants – evident in their standing over the group and trying to lecture rather than facilitate and not remaining in their chairs within the circle. Clearer instructions will have to be highlighted to the facilitators. Both the facilitators and the participants were still unable to give negative feedback. The second group with seven men had a large effect on the way in which this group is moving. The big group has become silent and the smaller group of men is taking charge. The coaches must be aware of this in future planning and never break the groups up in this manner again.

A further result of never having questioned authority or being given a voice was that in the beginning the participants were extremely hesitant to offer any negative feedback to their peers. When tasked with facilitating the group, the participants would be asked how it felt to facilitate, and the group would be asked about how they experienced the facilitation. In the beginning of the process, the feedback would be positive even if the peer facilitator really struggled. This later changed when it was realised by the group that we were all together to empower one another in a respectful manner. This change took almost a year to come about – it was only in late 2005 that participants felt confident enough to offer constructive feedback.

**Process notes from 20/07/2005: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

The group brought up the fact that previous alliances were destructive to the group process and the one alliance within the group admitted that their alliance was not very productive for the group. This is a significant shift as they can now accept criticism and find it constructive. One co-ordinator was still uncertain of her role as a facilitator but was corrected by the group members and could then move forward. Again, this is evidence of the shift that has taken place within the group. All participants except one are now addressing each other even when they have a negative comment to make.

**5.2.4 Empowerment**

PLA as a methodology was also appropriate in that it allowed for empowerment among the participants, as is evident from the following remark:

*'It makes me feel proud to plough back what I have learnt. Very often members of my team at the office perceived this course as a luxury and that I was being advantaged and I felt their resentment. Now I can plant back what I have learnt and they will also benefit.'* Participant 6

**Process notes from 19/10/2004: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by facilitator and co-facilitator)**

The team could draw on each individual's wisdom and there was a collective sharing of ideas. The team has built cohesion and learnt from each other. They stated that they had only ever met at brief departmental meetings during which they were never given the opportunity of talking to each other and consequently felt very defensive about their individual districts.

Management has recognised their important roles and even other departments recognise the DSD as the leading department. It was felt that there was wider intersectoral collaboration and even the DoJ had come to one of their forums. There has been a paradigm shift from expert to facilitator.

Another comment, made by the VE district co-ordinators during the session, was that they were now regarded as VEP experts, and all victim cases are being referred to them from NGOs and from other government departments, especially the

SAPS. An example of their empowerment is that the participants are now presenting workshops to other NGOs/CBOs and the DSD on VE.

**Process notes from 9/11/2004: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

It was mentioned by all participants that before this programme they ran their departments in isolation from the other districts but have since come to see ‘the bigger picture of VE’ and are now taking an interest in all the districts, as they feel connected to each other and have learnt from each other. The national VE co-ordinator feels that the process has been enlightening, as she now seems to have a great deal more respect for her team and does not feel so unaligned from the team.

A quotation from one of the participants demonstrates the level of self-growth that was created:

*‘I have experienced self-growth and am confident about my skills. This has enabled me to deal with all the other stakeholders in the victim empowerment programme.’ Participant 14*

In the literature review in Chapter 2 it was brought forward that higher levels of empowerment, ownership and free, meaningful and active participation, by putting beneficiaries in charge of development, are the key tenets of the social development approach. Based on this, it follows that PLA as a learning approach and methodology was the right choice if the short course was to dovetail with the current paradigm of social development that is being promulgated by the South African government.

### **5.2.5 Change**

An important aspect of the PLA methodology was that it was capable of recording change. This was of particular importance for the analysis of a dynamic subject such as the VEP. According to Bachmann (2000), the use of learning cycles in timed intervals permits the investigation of changes into a dynamic system in order to better understand the reasons for the current situation and also to identify potential for future development. By focusing on what had happened in the past and analysing each event, change was created.

Bachmann (2000) suggests that a system can only be understood with great insight if a moment in time is captured repeatedly. This was attempted in this study in numerous ways. Firstly, the study took place over four years, which meant that I (as the researcher) was immersed in the system for a long period of time, repeatedly capturing field notes or 'moments in time', as it were. Secondly, the demographics of the first group of participants in Phase 1 were very different to that of the second group of participants in Phase 2. Not only were there more participants, but also the average age was younger in Phase 2, so an even broader perspective could be gleaned. Thirdly, the cycle of change of roles for me from facilitator to participant to researcher meant that self-reflection enabled change all-round, and finally, the VE co-ordinators taking ownership of the process meant further change within the system.

The short course content also echoed 'change'. A large section of the DFID activity cycle, which the course followed (refer to Chapter 4), involved the development of a SWOT analysis, a problem tree and then an objectives tree. This can be thought of in terms of a snapshot of a 'moment in time' and by its very nature creates change within a system.

A study of the process notes evidences many changes that were brought about during the four years.

**Process notes from 21/09/2004: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

During the first session, 'Where are you at and how are you feeling?', many participants spoke of the limited financial rewards for their profession. They also discussed how the lack of finality regarding funding issues within the VEP affected their capacity as district co-ordinators. It was felt that very often funds were blocked because correct protocols were not in place to access the funds. This created fear that further funding would be withheld, as the present funding remained inaccessible. The funding was desperately needed to establish new interventions. The 'Service Plan' to access funds was not user-friendly, and often district co-ordinators are called upon by NGOs to assist in completing the funding form, which should be self-explanatory. The district co-ordinators felt that they themselves were unsure of how to complete the form. A suggestion was made within the group that the participants should sit as a group and try to work out a blueprint that was user-friendly and that could be offered to management so that the funding becomes accessible. This was duly approached

during the session and a new blueprint was created. The blueprint is to be presented to management.

**Process notes from 20/07/2005: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

There was a request from the participants that they needed a session on data collection, analysis and information management with the aim of being accounting to the DSD on a monthly basis. They felt that a standardised format for data collection was required. Each co-ordinator undertook to design – in collaboration with their subdistricts – a monitoring and evaluation tool. It was suggested by the participants that they use the process of facilitation with their subdistricts that had been modelled for them in the workshops. The tool will be presented at the next workshop and a standardised tool will be drawn up as a collective. The group appeared to have low energy this time and hence did not achieve all the objectives for the session. The participants felt that the reason for this was the tremendous workload the previous month.

As problem-solving impacts on new action, the impact of change needs to be taken into account for those involved. Strategies used during the inquiry need to enable the participants to feel supported, valued and respected throughout the process (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007). The changes made by the co-ordinators were very evident in Phase 2 of the research, because it was at this stage that they took full ownership of the programme. Savin-Baden and Wimpenny (2007) emphasise that the effects of the research process should include consideration of the participants' sense of pride and belief in themselves, recognition of the importance of validating individuals' social identities, and the involvement of participants in the control of resources in making decisions and deciding on actions and activities.

In Phase 2, decisions made on which issues would be addressed in sessions and work programmes (see Appendix 2) were emailed in advance to me (as project co-ordinator and the researcher), in which the topics to be facilitated were outlined. The responsibility for the work programmes lay with the district co-ordinators and no longer with the so-called experts from the university. In these sessions, the district co-ordinators became the mentors of the subdistrict co-ordinators. This process echoed the self-reflective cycles of PLA methodology: the planning of change, then the actual implementation of the change and then the observation of the consequences of the

change. I (as the researcher and co-facilitator) mentored the district co-ordinators. At times, a mentoring letter (see Appendix 3) would be sent to each co-ordinator. This was a process that required much planning, as it entailed a delicate balance between mentoring and coaching. The researcher and facilitator could not become a coach, as this would not have been in synchronicity with PLA methodology. Starcevitch (2009) writes that mentoring should be free of any form of power and mutually beneficial to both parties. Mentors are not only to be considered as teachers, but also as facilitators. The underlying value system of mentoring was a good match with PLA, as it emphasises personal growth and a trusting relationship.

**Process notes from 22/11/2005: Phase 2 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

The majority of the participants identified time management within this workshop as the aspect they liked the least. It was felt that the facilitators were the main offenders in this area, as they never started a session at the prescribed time and did not manage the time within sessions correctly. Respondents also complained that some facilitators did not appear to be adequately prepared and they felt that this impeded the information flow within the workshop. It was also felt that facilitators did not give adequate feedback between sessions and therefore often failed to link exercises and the aims of the workshop. Other aspects commented on included the division of the group into two separate groups, and that some felt that the icebreakers were too connected to VE so there was no opportunity to ‘tune out’ for a few minutes.

From the process notes captured above, another important change can be noted. One of the limitations elaborated on earlier in this chapter entailed how reticent the VE co-ordinators were about critiquing each other and also how defensive they became when given feedback. In Phase 2 this appeared to change, with participants freely offering advice and commenting both negatively and positively on the processes.

The use of the methodology also meant that the VE co-ordinators learnt PLA methods and could then apply these methods in the community when they were busy with community projects. This would then ensure that communities took ownership of their projects. The methodology was concerned with the transformation of existing activities to try to bring about improvements.

### **5.2.6 Participatory learning and action tools and the training course**

In the case of this study, the PAR findings in the field had an influence on the concepts of how fieldwork should be done. It also had implications for me (as facilitator, participant and researcher) and the participants on the question of how things should be organised. Finally, it had an influence on the actual delivery of services to the victims. One of the victims interviewed for SABC 2's 'Kaelo: Stories of Hope' programme had the following to say:

*'I am pleading with all women in my situation to come forward and approach the VE co-ordinators for help because they have really helped me.'* Victim 2

Depending on the subject researched, multiloop learning implies that different other levels (or dimensions) of a given study case may be investigated in a single research cycle (Bachmann, 2000). Besides the analysis of the VE services, this type of research or multiloop learning mode was relevant during the phases of the PLA training course. While the practical subject of PLA was to investigate victim services and the training of the VE co-ordinators, the second level of learning investigated the best ways of teaching PLA tools.

### **5.2.7 Shortfalls of the use of participatory learning and action methodology**

Although the use of PLA methodology in this research created the opportunity for experiential learning for both the participants and the researcher, there were some shortfalls and needs, which were not met by the methodology. This will be discussed in full in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

## **5.3 System findings**

In this section, the more general results of the research – that is, the themes that emerged during the various phases of the research – are discussed. The phases will be dealt with in the chronological order in which they occurred.

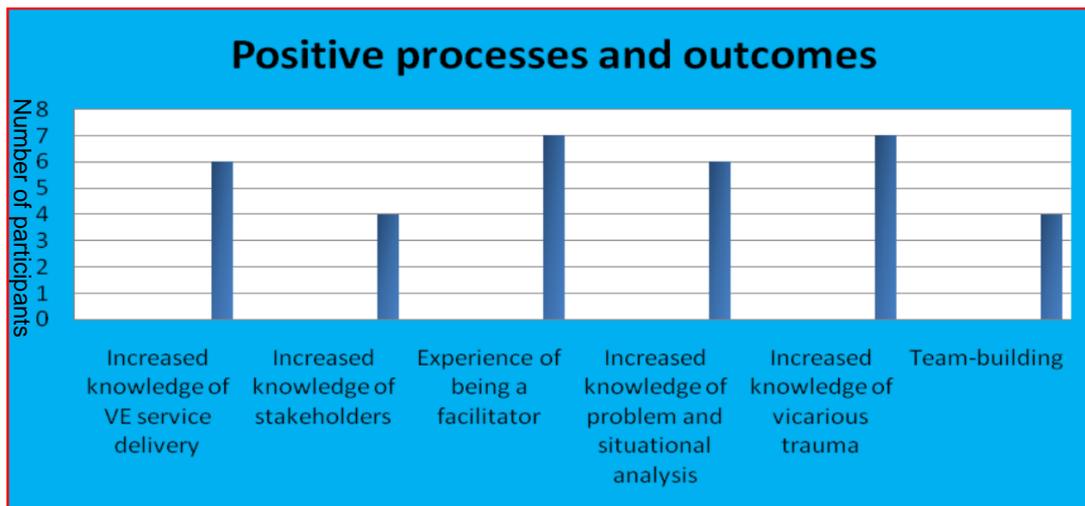
### **5.3.1 Phase 1**

#### **5.3.1.1 Stage B (February 2004)**

A three-day workshop was held with six VE district co-ordinators from Limpopo and the provincial co-ordinator for organisational and intersectoral planning and management.

The initial three-day workshop was well received by all seven participants and all the participants commented on the practical involvement and experiential learning environment created by the facilitators. The workshop designers (the researcher, the co-facilitator and the provincial VE co-ordinator) paid attention to both content and process issues. Participatory methodology was a feature of the workshop design. Overall impressions of the content and implementation of the workshop were very favourable, with participants appearing to have significantly deepened their knowledge and extended their facilitation, team-building, identification and problem- and situational analysis skills. A system of rapid feedback from the participants throughout the workshop ensured that continuous adjustments were made in response to the participants' needs and requirements.

Overall, trends were highly favourable. The participants all indicated that they enjoyed the participatory method of facilitation and the interaction with other participants. The participants were asked to complete a quantitative and qualitative questionnaire after the workshop. The open-ended questions and the process notes were then thematically coded. Table 5.1 details some of the positive processes and outcomes that were captured after the workshop.



Response options included 0 – disagree completely

1 - agree completely

**Figure 5.1. Positive processes and outcomes of Workshop 1 (February 2004)**

Some of the positive processes and outcomes that were captured were the following:

- Six participants stated that they had increased knowledge of VE service delivery.
- Four participants thought that they had increased knowledge of the different levels of stakeholders and felt empowered to bring them on board without alienating them.
- All seven participants had practical experience of being a facilitator, which could be used to facilitate stakeholder meetings as well as workshops with supervisees.
- Six participants had increased knowledge of problem and situational analysis, which helped them to determine the real as opposed to the apparent developmental issues. One participant remained unsure of how to create a problem tree.
- All seven participants stated that they had increased knowledge of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, and skills that enabled them to manage the costs of caring.

- Four participants stated that they had increased knowledge of the team-building model proposed by Tuckman and Jensen (1977).

All seven participants stated that the aims and outcomes of the workshop were achieved. Comments centred primarily on how empowered the district co-ordinators felt after the workshop and how this sense of empowerment would capacitate them to sustain the VEP within their districts. There were no negative ratings of the workshop; however, two participants were of the opinion that the sessions were too long.

There were also secondary positive processes and outcomes. The workshop was a catalyst to improved morale and co-operation, and it was a positive learning experience for the workshop facilitators in terms of group processes and dynamics.

**Process notes from 22/02/2004: Phase 1 (Summary of discussion agreed by facilitator and co-facilitator)**

Some members of the groups appeared to be quite cautious of this programme and it is evident that at least three of the co-ordinators have not read the introductory letter that was sent to them. These three co-ordinators are quite dependent on each other and were not offering much during the discussions on day one. The Unisa team was not aware that all the district co-ordinators had previously only met each other briefly and therefore are not yet a cohesive team. During lunch today I discussed with my fellow Unisa lecturers their feelings as to why the participants were so reluctant at times to offer any feedback. I learnt a lot from Juan Nel on group process. I will be very aware tomorrow of how the group reacts to certain tasks and discussions.

The participants were assigned a task at the end of the workshop, which was to be completed in groups of two, in which they refined and clarified a problem tree analysis of the VEP in the Limpopo Province. The objectives of this exercise were to build a better understanding of the underlying causes of development issues, to build stakeholder analysis, to identify potential constraints, and to establish meaningful relationships with the other district co-ordinators. Problem-tree analysis helps find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of the problem. It looks upstream at causes and determinants, and downstream at consequences and effects. The problem then becomes clearer as the participants build a shared understanding of what is needed by the programme and how it can be achieved. In creating a problem tree roles of

different partners become clearer, timescales are more evident and future problems can be envisaged. Problem tree analysis is undertaken in a workshop setting, where a variety of stakeholders are brought together to analyse the existing situation.

The first task is to formulate the problems. The participants brainstormed suggestions to identify the focal problem that is what they considered to be the central point of the overall problem. In step two the participants discuss each proposal and try to agree on one focal problem. During this step they try to identify causal relationships between the problems and try to reach agreement. If no consensus is reached further brainstorming takes place and problems are given values by the participants. Next the problem tree is developed by identifying immediate and direct causes of the focal problem. A problem tree is constructed showing the cause and effect relationships between the problems. Lastly the problem tree is reviewed, its validity verified for completeness and any necessary adjustments are made.

After a common understanding of all problems is reached, the analysis is presented in the form of a diagram, or a problem tree. A problem is never an isolated negative perceived situation, but relates to other problems. In the problem tree, the relations and hierarchy among all identified problems are expressed. Each stated problem is preceded by the problem or problems that cause it, and followed by the problem it causes itself (Management for Development Foundation, 2005). In pairs, the co-ordinators completed a problem tree of all the difficulties they experienced or perceived within the VEP. At the first coaching session held at the end of February, all the information in each problem tree was collectively collapsed using the steps discussed above into a single problem tree, which is captured in Figure 5.2 on the following page.

This exercise not only demonstrated the actual causes of no proper implementation of VEP in Limpopo but also showed the effects of not implementing the programme. This allowed for participants to gain an overview of the situation and deepened their understanding not only of the present constraints but also what resources and skills were required in the future if the programme was to become sustainable.

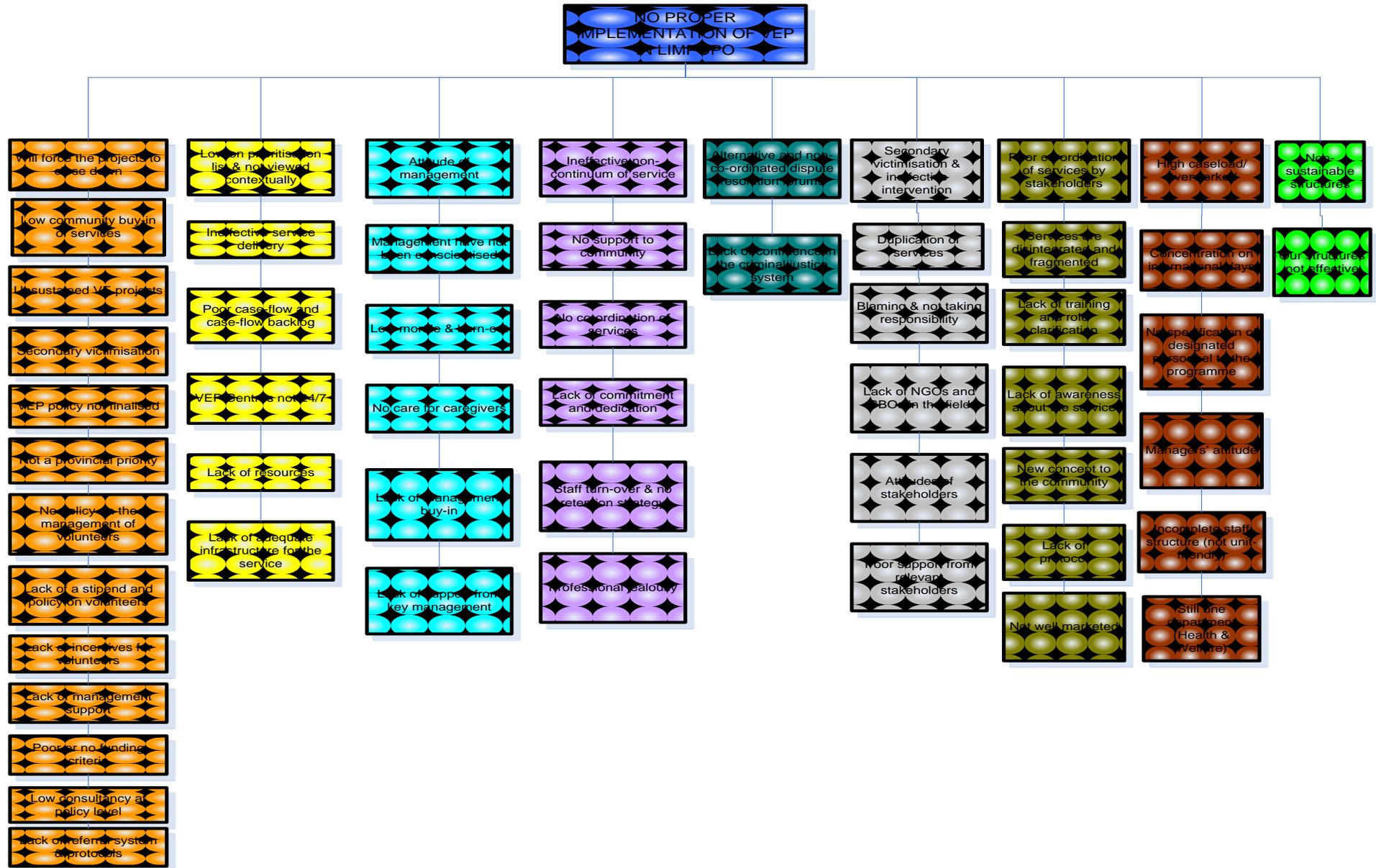


Figure 5.2. The problems concerning the VEP in the Limpopo Province as indicated by the VE co-ordinators

‘The way forward’ discussion at the end of the workshop revealed that the majority of the participants wanted further coaching in project management. A further two supervision sessions dealt with project management, objective tree analysis, visioning, the role and qualities of the project manager, and the log frame.

### **5.3.1.2 Stage C (February – April 2004) & Stage D (April – October 2004)**

The next phase consisted of monthly meetings held over six months in Limpopo. In these sessions the co-ordinators would discuss problems encountered in their work during the month. They would also discuss the results of certain measures that were implemented from our decisions made in the previous month. The process notes from the supervision sessions were analysed and the data was then categorised and compared.

Each time the group met and the session began, the co-ordinators would be consulted on what possible themes had emerged for them from the previous month’s session. At the end of the sessions, questions such as the following were asked:

- ‘Where are you at emotionally and cognitively?’
- ‘What have you understood the best? And the least?’
- ‘Has the session met your expectations?’
- ‘What would you like more, or less, of?’
- ‘Is there anything that we have discussed today that is most relevant to you personally?’
- ‘Where is the group at as a team? How you would like to implement what we have discussed today in your district?’
- ‘What common themes have you noticed during today?’

The themes were therefore derived from group participation and consensus in discussions. The input and ideas of all participants were gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. In these discussions all participants were encouraged to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. As stated previously the participants had previously had very limited opportunity and little training in these areas, and had to unlearn many behavior patterns in order to practice good consensus process. Consensus does not mean that

everyone thinks that the decision made is the most efficient way to accomplish something, or that they are absolutely sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her or his position on the matter wasn't considered carefully. When consensus works properly, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals. There may have initially been some limitations to this approach as perhaps some members of the group were quieter than others before they had become accustomed to the group and been encouraged to offer opinions. The seven supervision sessions held monthly over six months in Limpopo were generally considered very useful. The VE co-ordinators and I (as researcher) jointly agreed that there had been many positive processes and outcomes, some of which are:

- The cross-district contact in the supervision sessions opened up interdistrict communication and the team members were now acknowledged as part of the provincial VE team.
- The team built cohesion and there was a collective sharing of ideas.
- The supervision sessions were a catalyst to improved morale and co-operation.
- Management recognised the important roles of the VE co-ordinators and drew on their expertise.
- Participants presented workshops to other NGOs/CBOs and their own departments on VE.
- There was wider intersectoral collaboration and it was stated that other departments were recognising the Department of Health and Welfare as the leading department in the VEP.
- The group was of the opinion that they were empowered to deal with difficult group processes and could facilitate the 'buy-in' of various stakeholders that previously alienated them in the delivery of VE services.
- The group designed a standardised format for data collection that was used for accountability to the provincial department. It was thought that this achieved clarity and eased workloads considerably.

- The resource directory for VE services and volunteers in the Limpopo Province had been updated by all the districts and was forwarded to the national VE forum for inclusion in the national resource directory.

The Second National Conference on Victim Empowerment was held in KwaZulu-Natal in 2004. I (as researcher) presented the programme at the conference and was approached by other government departments and NGOs/CBOs to present a similar programme to their co-ordinators/managers. A significant change noted was that for the first time in the history of the National Conference on Victim Empowerment, the VE district co-ordinators of the Limpopo Province were in attendance at the conference and could make their input to government and NGOs/CBOs.

### **5.3.1.3 Stage E (November 2004)**

At the final workshop and certification ceremony, ‘the way forward’ discussion revealed that a follow-up programme was necessary to provide an opportunity to the six VE district co-ordinators to disseminate their knowledge regarding information management, project management, facilitation skills, personal health and self-management and the bigger picture of VE to the 29 subdistrict co-ordinators. To advance their own skills, the six VE district co-ordinators would be responsible for planning and facilitating an initial three-day workshop, as well as seven coaching and supervision sessions for the VE subdistrict co-ordinators. Consensus was reached that there was a need for a departmental VEP funding master plan with clear implementation guidelines, goals and directives, and a very real need to develop formal and accessible support systems within the context of the Employee Assistance Programme to facilitate ‘care for the caregivers’ in times of personal and work-related crises and distress.

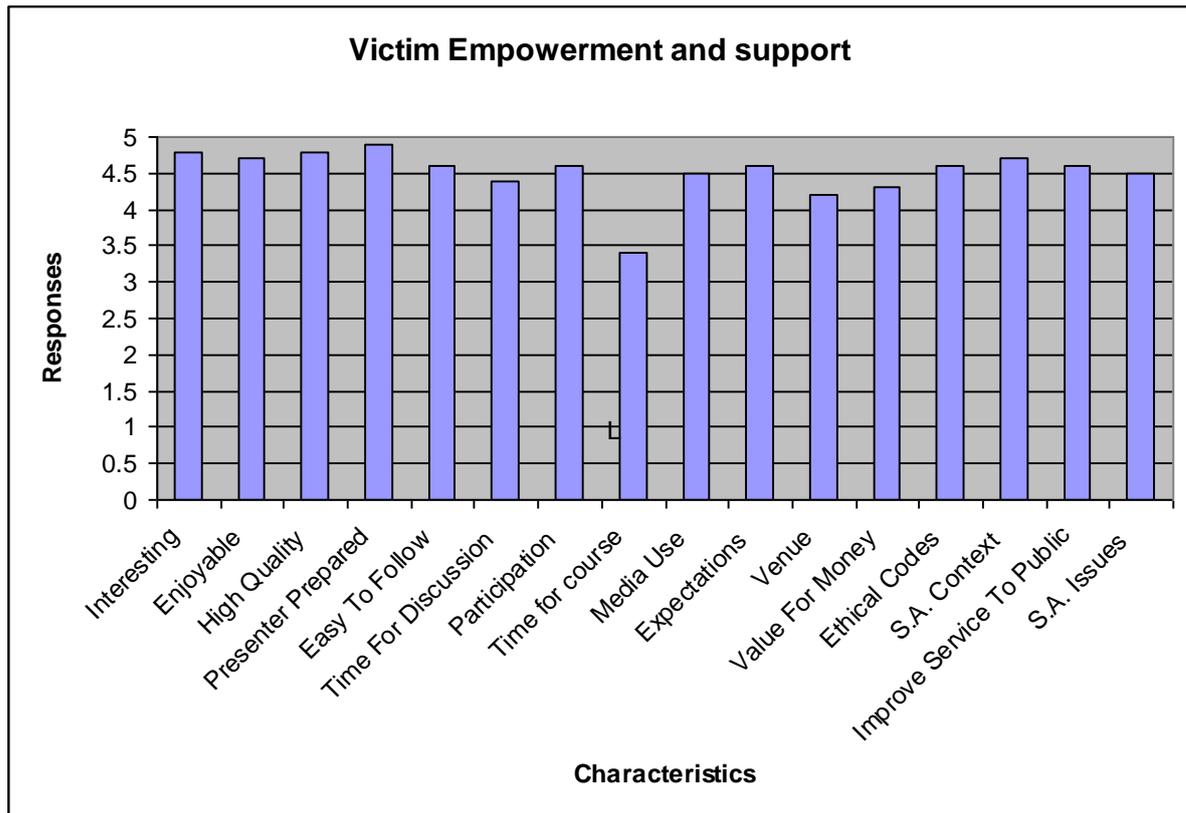
## **5.3.2 Phase 2**

### **5.3.2.1 Stage A: Unisa Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support (2005)**

During this stage, the 29 VE subdistrict co-ordinators attended the Unisa Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support held at Unisa. After the short course, the 29 participants completed an evaluation questionnaire. The evaluation questionnaire consisted of both quantitative and qualitative sections. A biographical section dealt

with issues pertaining to age, gender, level of education and occupation. The quantitative section consisted of closed questions that were rated on a Likert scale, where 5 represented ‘unqualified agreement’ with the statement and 1 represented ‘unqualified disagreement’.

Figure 5.3 shows how the short course was evaluated by the participants. The evaluation was based on a scale from 1 to 5 (n = 29).



**Figure 5.3. Evaluation of the Unisa Short Course on Victim Empowerment and Support (2005)**

Twenty-six of the participants rated that the best aspects of the VE short course and workshop were the debriefing skills and practical exercises. Participants were very complimentary about the expertise and presentation skills of the facilitators and their ability to accommodate all group members in a non-judgmental way. Many participants enjoyed the sharing of ideas and discussions as well as the role-play, which enabled them to feel involved. Twenty-seven (93%) of the participants regarded the topics as relevant and stated that they had gained increased knowledge

regarding VE. The majority of the participants – 28 (97%) – enjoyed the group work and participation.

In general, 27 (93%) of the participants considered that the aims of the workshop/short course were to learn about VE, develop skills in trauma counselling and debriefing, and learn how to empower victims. Two participants thought that the aims also included gaining practical knowledge to break the cycle of violence. The majority of the participants – 28 (97%) – were of the opinion that these aims were very well achieved and resulted in improved professional skills.

Participants commented on areas they regarded as the most significant and important aspects of the workshop. Ninety-five per cent of the participants viewed debriefing skills as an extremely important topic covered in the sessions and considered themselves empowered by the practical skills that they gained in implementing the debriefing model. Other significant aspects mentioned were the gaining of skills and knowledge regarding anger and stress management, group work, and understanding the difference between victim support and VE. Practical aspects noted by 25 of the participants included crisis intervention strategies, role-plays, presentation skills, and the application of theory to practice.

The weakest area identified by all 29 participants was that there was too much theory and information, which they found difficult to integrate. Four individuals thought that there were too many groups and often friends ended up in the same group, which interfered with the group dynamics.

#### **5.3.2.2 Stage B: Unisa Group Facilitation Workshop for district co-ordinators (2005)**

The aims and objectives of this workshop were to equip the district co-ordinators with the necessary skills to be able to facilitate the supervision sessions with the subdistrict co-ordinators over the nine-month period. This workshop provided an understanding of the theory applicable to group facilitation. It furthermore introduced the participants to an understanding of how to read group process and provided them with techniques and exercises to enhance self-awareness and change. Attention was given to the planning and structuring of group learning experiences within the framework of outcomes-based and adult education. The emphasis was on practical techniques and skills development. The group consisted of the six district co-ordinators and the

provincial co-ordinator. Evaluation of this short course was gathered through a questionnaire consisting of closed questions as well as open-ended questions.

The seven participants emphasised the professionalism of the presenters, the manner in which they were prepared and their exceptional facilitation abilities. The majority of the participants (86%) commented positively on the experiential learning experience they encountered in this workshop. Other comments included reflection, theory, creativity, sharing of ideas and workshop design.

All seven of the participants stated that the aim of this workshop was the gaining of sufficient knowledge to be a competent facilitator. Five of the participants stated that they not merely received knowledge but also obtained skills and techniques, as well as theoretical grounding, and therefore the aim of this workshop was successfully achieved.

A quotation from one of the participants demonstrates the level of experiential learning that was created:

*'I really enjoyed the interactive group dynamics and role-playing.'*

Participant 5

When probing participants as to the least liked aspect of the workshop, 57% of the responses included reflection and brainstorming at the end of a tiring day and the focus on systems theory. Time constraints caused discussions to be terminated and practical exercises curtailed, and this was found to be a frustrating aspect.

### **5.3.2.3 Stage C: Evaluation of the three-day Train-the-Trainer workshop held in Polokwane, Limpopo, for six VE district co-ordinators and the provincial VE co-ordinator (2005)**

The aims and objectives of this workshop were for the district co-ordinators to plan the roll-out of the Capacity Development Programme to the subdistrict co-ordinators. Aspects covered in this workshop included workshop design, role-modelling, time management, team-building and managing group processes, as well as participatory management. This workshop was designed in such a way that by the end of the workshop, the participants (the district co-ordinators) had planned the workshop they were going to present to the subdistrict co-ordinators, had made sufficient preparations regarding the venue, thought through the initial introductions and the

expectations, norms and values, and had some idea of the time management necessary for each slot.

During a consensus discussion the participants commented on the fact that as social workers, they are promoted to VE co-ordinators without prior training in managing any social development programme. They considered the training in developing workshops crucial because the skills required of a co-ordinator are very different from those of a social worker. It was thought that it is vital to have skills such as facilitation, negotiation and project management capabilities, knowledge of research processes, stakeholder analysis and liaison competency, and communication and team-building expertise to competently manage such a programme.

The six district co-ordinators and the provincial co-ordinator are frequently called upon to plan advocacy campaigns on national holidays such as Women's Day or Trauma Day, and observed that they had never been trained on how to execute these types of tasks. After this workshop, all seven participants considered the skills required for holding a stakeholder meeting or a support group meeting to be well within their capabilities.

A quotation from one of the participants demonstrates her newly found sense of self-confidence:

*'I think we have learned a lot and what we have learned doesn't just apply to this programme but to all our programmes. I can now run a focus group or hold a forum meeting on any programme.'* Participant 4

#### **5.3.2.4 Stage D: Evaluation of the three-day introductory workshop held in Polokwane, Limpopo, for six VE district co-ordinators, 29 VE subdistrict co-ordinators and the provincial VE co-ordinator (2006)**

The purpose of this workshop was to introduce the subdistrict co-ordinators to the training and to ensure that all subdistrict co-ordinators were on the same page. Key issues addressed during this workshop were the following:

- What are VE services?
- Challenges/Key problem areas in the implementation of the VEP
- Operational requirements
- Responsibilities of role-players

- Completion of a SWOT analysis of VE services in the Limpopo Province
- Creation of a mission statement
- How an efficient and effective service can be rendered to all victims in the Limpopo Province
- Care for the caregiver to prevent burn-out and stress
- Activities planned for 16 Days of Activism

**Process notes from 28/10/2006: Phase 2 (Summary of discussion agreed by the group)**

The participants captured the following notes after completing a SWOT analysis on the VEP:

**1. What are VE services?**

Support and empowerment services offered to victims and survivors of crime and domestic violence and vulnerable groups at risk, such as children. It includes counselling, debriefing and information sessions. VE services can also include provisioning of shelter. The overall aim is to help the victim to deal with trauma and go back to normal functioning and prevent secondary traumatisation.

**2. Challenges/Key problem areas in the implementation of the VEP**

- Lack of integrated services by other stakeholders, such as the DoJ, DoH, DoE and municipality
- Insufficient financial support from the DSD
- Lack of specialisation by workers in the field. This slows down processes as all newcomers have to be trained.
- Interference of traditional authorities such as tribal leaders

**3. Operational requirements**

- Need integrated services
- Establishment, maintenance and sustainability of centres
- Capacity building of all stakeholders and communities
- Specialised services by social workers

## **4. Responsibilities of role-players**

### **4.1 Department of Social Development**

- The DSD needs more trained social workers and management
- Render the following services: counselling, debriefing, support and capacity building
- Finance and maintain centre
- Incentives from the Department to employees
- Have monitoring tool in place for monitoring and evaluation of the programme

### **4.2 South African Police Service**

- Ensure sustainability of centres by providing resources
- Manage cases properly

### **4.3 Department of Justice**

- Be involved in the VEP
- Implement Domestic Violence Act
- Make victims aware of legal rights
- Give feedback on progress to victims
- Make arrangements for Sexual Offences Court

### **4.4 Municipality**

- Provide structures and funding
- Give support to other departments
- Ensure a safer environment by providing streetlights and cutting grass and trees

### **4.5 Department of Correctional Services**

- Implement restorative justice programmes

### **4.6 NGOs**

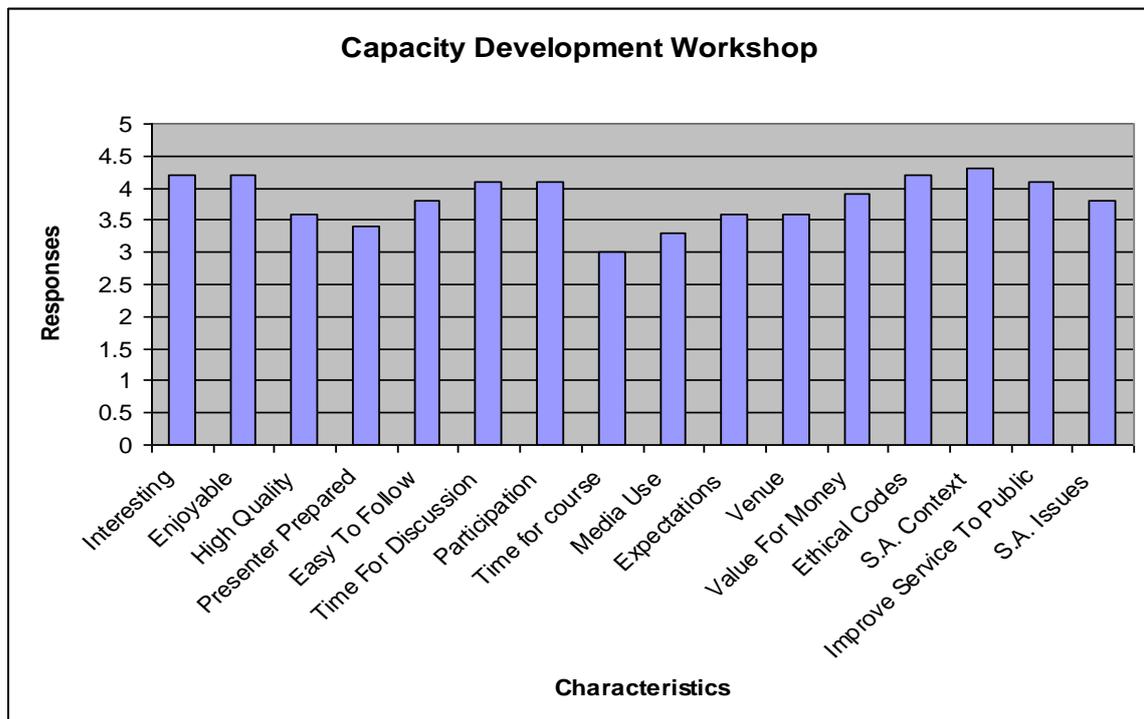
- Recruit and build the capacity of volunteers
- Implement restorative justice programmes

### **4.7. Department of Education**

- Work hand-in-glove with other departments in crime awareness campaigns
- Ensure child protection
- Present learner support programme
- Train staff to competently deal with children who are victims of crime and violence

The mission statement created by the participants was: *To render integrated, effective, efficient and sustainable empowerment and support services to victims and survivors of crime and violence as per the National Crime Prevention Strategy.*

A questionnaire was completed at the end of the workshop. The results of this are tabled in Figure 5.4. The evaluation was based on a scale from 1 to 5 (n = 29).



**Figure 5.4. Evaluation of the three-day introductory capacity development workshop (2006)**

Of the 29 participants, most (97%) found the workshop interesting, of which 31% found it extremely interesting. Three per cent remained neutral. This workshop received a negative rating about the presenters because they were considered ill-prepared. Only 52% of the participants felt that the presenters were well prepared; 31% remained neutral, and 17% felt they were not adequately prepared. Twenty-five (90%) of the respondents agreed that audience participation was encouraged, and 7% remained neutral (3% missing data).

The district co-ordinators really battled with the use of media. This related strongly to the fact that the Limpopo Province is under-resourced. Many of the co-ordinators had never used computers or overhead transparencies before, so this was essentially the first time they had presented a workshop using audiovisual equipment. The majority of the participants (59%) felt that the use of media was clear and effective, while 28% disagreed. Of those who disagreed, 7% disagreed completely. Thirteen per cent remained neutral.

Eighty-nine per cent of the participants stated that they gained immensely from the stakeholder analysis, the problem tree and personal mapping. Small-group sessions were enjoyed, and it was stated that facilitation skills were learnt that would help in the work environment. Other aspects mentioned were the participation of group members, which was actively encouraged, and the focus on care for the caregiver.

Twenty-seven (93%) of the participants identified time management within this workshop as the aspect they liked the least. The facilitators were the main offenders in this area, as they never started a session at the prescribed time and did not manage the time within sessions correctly. Twenty-five participants complained that the facilitators did not give adequate feedback between or after sessions and therefore often failed to link exercises and the aims of the workshop.

In general, 24 (75%) of the participants wrote that the aims of the workshop were to:

- empower them;
- ensure the sustainability of the project;
- teach management of VE centres and assess and monitor VE projects;
- learn how to implement the VEP;
- learn about coaching and mentoring;
- capacitate VE subdistrict co-ordinators;
- care for themselves and avoid burn-out, and
- capacitate the group with regard to facilitation.

Three of the participants were uncertain as to what the aims of the workshop actually were. Two participants thought that the aims listed above were partly achieved. They

stated that it was a process and therefore couldn't be expected to be achieved in three days.

Most significant and important aspects were that the majority (93%) of the participants answered that they were empowered in the workshop and had increased skills training. Twenty-six participants noted that networking and interacting with other districts and sharing experiences were extremely important. Important topics also mentioned were the problem tree, stakeholder analysis, personal mapping and visioning.

Participants also made suggestions about future workshops, and these were handed to the district co-ordinators so that they could incorporate the suggestions into their workshop planning. Some of the suggestions were the difference between mentoring and coaching; mediating between children/youths, family and offenders, and how to sustain VE programmes. Follow-up sessions conducted by Unisa demonstrated to the participants that there was an interest in and concern for their well-being, which was greatly appreciated.

In reading the evaluations of the participants, it must be highlighted that the VE district co-ordinators had never before presented a three-day workshop, therefore this was an experiential learning curve for them. They also had to deal with the comments made about themselves and their skills.

A quotation made by one of the VE co-ordinators demonstrates the effectiveness of modelling behaviour:

*'The information received from the training has answered most of the questions that one has with regard to VEP. VEP was a big concept for me, but through the training it showed that it needed someone who is dedicated to deal with victims and perpetrators. I didn't like talking in front of people, now I am presenting a workshop – it's amazing!'*

Participant 7

The mentors (the researcher and a co-facilitator) then guided and helped to facilitate change in time management and a more structured approach to workshopping for the VE district co-ordinators. Each facilitator (the VE district co-ordinators) received an individual feedback letter (see Appendix 4) from the Unisa mentoring team that commented on areas of improvement and highlighted the facilitator's strengths. The

trainee facilitators took the suggestions made by the mentoring team seriously and a general improvement was noted at future sessions.

#### **5.3.2.5 Stage E: Evaluation of the nine supervision and coaching sessions held in Polokwane, Limpopo, for six VE district co-ordinators, 29 VE subdistrict co-ordinators and the provincial VE co-ordinator (2006)**

The purpose of these nine coaching sessions was to empower the provincial VE team at both district and subdistrict levels and to build a strong provincial VE team in Limpopo. It was considered essential by the Unisa team and the VE district co-ordinators that the project that began at the end of 2004 be sustained in this manner, as it had proven effective in the previous project. These coaching sessions would also ensure that the present participants would cascade the training that had been put in place down to all their fellow colleagues who had not been similarly trained. The coaching sessions also aimed at teaching how to manage VE centres and assess and monitor current VE projects. Through discussion, the participants agreed that there was great value in coaching and mentoring. This was considered essential, as it saved on training costs. The participants themselves became the mentors for others.

Another extremely important focus of these sessions was that the sessions themselves became a forum for self-care, as participants were able to offload stresses and problems that they had encountered monthly in their very traumatic work. This became a safeguard against burn-out, and the participants were able to find solutions to traumatic cases by sharing ideas with their colleagues.

Advocacy campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism for no violence against women and children and International Trauma Day were planned in the sessions. The sharing of information regarding the logistical arrangements and planning for the campaigns meant that programmes reached the remote, outlying districts. Mediation skills were discussed and the process was explored.

#### **Process notes from 20/06/2006: Phase 2 (Summary of discussion agreed by facilitator and co-facilitator)**

Twenty-six participants thought that they gained immensely from the stakeholder analysis, the problem tree and personal mapping. The majority felt they now have a better understanding of VEPs. The improvement of their facilitation skills was

appreciated, as practical tips such as icebreakers and learning how to handle difficult group members were shared. Other aspects mentioned were that the participation of group members was constantly encouraged and that the diverse group characters added to the learning experience. A high level of team unity was experienced and enjoyed. Mediation as a topic was emphasised, as participants were constantly mediating between communities and members as well as between offenders and victims.

#### **5.4 Overall themes that emerged throughout the entire programme**

In the first phase, when I (as researcher) was reflecting on the process notes and journal, I would often incorporate these reflections into my thinking or actions in another phase. I often identified, for example, an issue in the practical presentations that I then reflected on in my journal. An example of this is group process. If the group was being challenging or alliances were being formed, I would read the literature available on this issue and then use my journal writing to critically examine the theory. Durkin's (1981) *Living Groups*, in which he explains systems theory, was particularly helpful in this regard. As a result of this process, I would deal with the group differently the next time we were all together. In this way, critical reflection became a continuous loop throughout the four years.

#### **Process notes from 18/01/2006: Phase 2 (Co-facilitator)**

General

Seating appropriately

#### **Biggest consistent problem throughout workshop**

- Even when the facilitators were constantly reminded, they never remembered to put their books on the seats or to sit opposite each other. If they did make an attempt to space out evenly within the group so as not to unbalance it, they generally moved back to grouping together at the next exercise.
- The facilitators often abandoned the group on first day by turning with their backs away from the audience but amended that well on second day.

#### **Time management**

- Badly managed overall

- No attempt to be punctual or emphasise punctuality although it was part of the group expectations
- Never skipped tea or ate while meeting and discussing workshop
- Attitude of deserving of tea/lunch, etc. even though preparation inadequate for next slot of programme
- Were not role-models for groups by themselves being punctual after tea, etc. and in appropriate venues
- The facilitators did not control how long people spent on discussions and did not generally say, 'You have 10 minutes left' etc. to warn the participants or move them into the next exercise
- Wasted time by allowing members to write same information without intervening and short-cutting the feedback with appropriate directions

### **Contracting**

- Inadequate in Group 2
- Problems the second day as participants felt their needs were not being met
- Was not well managed as did not go back to expectations and rediscuss

### **Practical problems**

- No adequate planning/anticipation or 'thinking on one's feet' when things went wrong
- No planning of most tools/materials such as Prestik or paper
- When flipcharts were finished, no one made an attempt to replace with a new one for following session
- No familiarity with equipment such as overhead projectors. Despite bad experiences on the first day, no one made an attempt to familiarise themselves with the equipment for the following day
- Days 1 and 2 they had to be reminded to sort out the seating
- General lack of initiative and realisation that there was a problem
- Did not seem to discuss with each other as to who would take responsibility for ensuring practical tools were available
- Did not check night before 2nd day whether photocopies and rooms were available. Also did not set time aside in the morning
- Name tags – slow in realising the importance and emphasising the use thereof
- Facilitators did not themselves wear name tags

- No emphasis on attendance register

### **Group management**

- Inadequate most of the time
- Observer did not seem to know her role
- Often left one facilitator alone to do the job and then the co-facilitator would act as a participant
- There were incidents where one facilitator would rescue another facilitator but not often enough
- Did not react to boredom/restlessness of group members
- Managed aggression at the end of the first day fairly well
- Not enough 'energiser exercises'
- Not enough examples to lighten the tedious areas as Kgati did during stakeholder analysis when he gave the example of the child who was raped and how the community was motivated
- No or little direction when asking people to move to groups
- No thought in assigning people to groups, so they often were with the same people all day
- Facilitators (Group 2) had tea and coffee while the group was still working
- It was suggested that they organise a barbeque so that the group can bond, but no effort was made to plan and execute this suggestion.

After thematically coding the process notes, the reflective journal and the data from the open-ended sections of the questionnaires and performing a meta-analysis, some common themes emerged. These themes are now discussed in depth and integrated with similar research findings. Overall impressions of the content and implementation of the programme were very favourable, with participants appearing to have significantly increased their knowledge and extended their facilitation, team-building, identification of group process and problem- and situational analysis skills. The reformative nature of the facilitation process ensured that problems were quickly identified and addressed to the point that no single enduring problem was identified.

#### 5.4.1 Personal growth

The comment heard most often from the participants was that personal self-growth was experienced and a sense of self-confidence fostered. This is extremely important in the field of trauma, as research has amply shown that the quality and nature of the health professional's care of the client and the health professional's self-understanding is directly determined by his or her own exploration of faulty behaviour (Lauterbach & Becker, 1996; Valkin, 2006). Hence an understanding of the self by health professionals may impact on the sustenance of correct responses and the correction of faulty behaviour in clients, and may also inform the degree to which interactions empower or disempower the client (Oosthuizen, 2008).

After 11 months, the six district co-ordinators and 29 subdistrict co-ordinators emerged with positive attitudes, self-motivation, optimism, the willingness to fight for VE rights, the knowledge of how to avoid apathy and fatalism, and a vision of what is possible.

*'I am able to provide more than just a sympathetic ear now – I can add value and provide a real service.'* – VE co-ordinator interviewed for SABC 2's 'Kaelo: Stories of Hope' in 2004. Participant 7

The programme was identified by South African Broadcasting Corporation channel two programme called 'Kaelo: Stories of Hope in 2004 as an example of a programme that made a difference within communities in South Africa. The VE co-ordinators and victims of crime and violence were interviewed by the programme directors. The questions posed to them are attached in Appendix 8. The programme was viewed on national television in 2004. It should be noted that the co-ordinators took control of the production of this programme and along with the television crew went into the victim friendly rooms at police stations and the local victim empowerment centre.

One of the examples of optimism created by the programme occurred during an exercise in which the participants had to create a metaphor for their team in the first session. The initial metaphor was: 'VEP is a sleeping giant.' When questioned on what they meant by this, the participants stated that the VEP giant was not making any impact on victims' lives and they wished for the giant to come alive. This

demonstrated to me (as the researcher) just how the VEP was viewed as a state-sponsored provincial programme. It was seemingly such a cumbersome and enormous concept that it was likened to a giant, but it was also considered a powerful programme.

At the close of the programme, when this exercise was revisited, the metaphor became: ‘The giant has reawakened to make all dreams come true.’

*‘I now understand the concept’ trauma’ and the background to the victim empowerment programme and feel that this training has given us a stronger front in fighting crime and violence in South Africa.’* – VE co-ordinator, Limpopo, 2006. Participant 19

#### **5.4.2 Networking**

Across the probe questions there were several themes that surfaced quite frequently, regardless of the particular topic being discussed. The most important of these themes concerned the administration of the VEP and the role of the VE management team. The VEP was described by one participant as an octopus with many tentacles. The different government department members and community members were the tentacles and primarily concerned with their well-defined roles, but were not able to see the overall possibilities of the VEP.

There are problems of achieving vertical alignment and co-ordination of VE policy and initiatives between government at the local, provincial and national levels (Maccelli, Allie, Rauch & Lomofsky, 2005). Also, horizontal co-ordination between departments is difficult to achieve (at all levels) and the VE ‘forums’ or ‘programme management teams’, which are supposed to have been established at national and provincial levels, operate with varying levels of success.

An important comment noted by several participants was the ability of the short-course approach to bring together a group of providers that traditionally did not collaborate with one another. This was accomplished in the short course, and the networking could be built upon to initiate future efforts. This may help to address the problems with horizontal and vertical co-ordination within the VEP.

*'The VEP is mushrooming and we are even thinking of creating an NGO forum.'* – A VE co-ordinator, Limpopo, 2005. Participant 5

*I am sad that we aren't going to meet regularly anymore. My regret is that I never had this information timeously so that I could really have helped the victims that have come to me for help before'*-A VE co-ordinator Limpopo, 2006. Participant 23

### **5.4.3 Collaboration with communities**

In addition, collaboration between communities and service providers was noted as a challenge that was omnipresent across the years of the project. Nearly all of the participants acknowledged the importance of presence and time in the community to gain the trust necessary for a successful initiative such as the VEP. The previous 'top-down' mentality had not fostered trust within communities. Participation and democracy are fundamental aspects of social development practice, and the participants realised the value of this approach.

### **5.4.4 The institutional structure of government departments**

The institutional structure of local authorities, which is bound by tight cycles of planning, consultation and contracting, could also threaten the effective implementation of PAR projects (Aimers, 1999). This was a recurring theme that was raised on numerous occasions by the participants. The participants would often leave after a workshop with great enthusiasm about changes that they were going to make in their departments and communities, only to have their enthusiasm thwarted by bureaucracy.

The 'top-down' approach of many government departments is not conducive to PLA methodology. An example of how this type of functioning affected the VE co-ordinators was that even after they had personally sent out invitations to other departmental heads involved in VE to attend a one-day VE conference in Limpopo entitled 'Challenges in the VE sector', management did not attend. Officials were sent who were 'not busy', and these delegates had no prior experience of VE services. This took place in 2004, but by 2006, a greater awareness of VE programmes by all departments had been established by the VE co-ordinators in the Limpopo Province. This was evidenced by the number of Limpopo delegates who attended the

celebrations of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the VEP on 18 to 20 August, 2008, in KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **5.4.5 Critical reflection as a learning tool**

According to Le Roux and Steyn (2007:345), critical reflection appears to create an ‘aha’ moment and comes at the end of an experiential learning process when knowledge becomes the participants’ own and is filed away for easy future recollection. In this study, the ‘aha’ moments were frequent both for the participants and the researcher. Change did not merely occur at the end of the study, but throughout the process as questions were raised such as ‘What was being done?’, ‘Why was it being done?’ and then, the important question, ‘What next?’ In this way we created change that was responsive and relevant in ever-increasing spirals of action-reflection-change.

The responses to open-ended questions that were used at the end of each workshop revealed that numerous different knowledge elements had been transferred to the participants. Not only was there a knowledge transfer, but the majority of the participants cited that they had learnt various skills for managing and implementing VE practices, coaching and mentoring, as well as how to take action, particularly in teams. The participants stated that they would approach their projects differently in future, with considerably more emphasis on participatory methods and collective teamwork. Ultimately, the changing of behaviour is the crux of learning (Le Roux & Steyn, 2007). For each individual, the transfer of the type of knowledge as well as the amount of knowledge transferred were based on the individual requirements of the participants.

#### **5.4.6 Mediation and conflict resolution**

Mediation is practised in different disciplines and settings, such as law, family mediation, juvenile justice and labour relations in South Africa (Patel, 2007). It became very clear during the short course that mediation skills were required on a daily basis for VE co-ordinators. African tradition has its own form of conflict resolution that is based on traditional methods. According to Nina (1995), mediation in South Africa is different to the normal practice of mediation practised in labour disputes. Although labour mediation is practised in South Africa, there is a distinctly African form of mediation. Nina (1995) defines mediation as a form of popular justice, community justice and African customary law. An assessment of these

methods and a sharing of knowledge by the participants revealed that both formal and informal methods of mediation were required in the communities.

Sully (2000, cited in Patel, 2007) identifies five components relevant to understanding the causes of conflict, namely resources, identity, power, social and economic change, and gender and social status. The VE co-ordinators used mediation skills to solve problems in human relationships such as divorce, or going to court with a victim/offender.

The history of South Africa demonstrates much social and economic change, which in turn changes value systems – and this can contribute to conflict. One of the lessons learnt by the participants was that mediation requires delicate skills of impartiality, building trust, understanding human relationships, active listening, interviewing, and facilitation.

*It is difficult for me to listen to the elders in the community but at the same time I understand the conflict of the young people who seek to live outside of the small communities because they want to have a new life in town- I have to try and understand both sides—* A sub district VE co-ordinator, Limpopo, 2006. Participant 24.

## **5.5 Findings relating to possible changes in the tertiary education healthcare system and the benefits of short courses**

### **5.5.1 Alignment with government policy**

Today, all training interventions ought to be directly aligned with national priorities and to subscribe to outcomes-based education, training and development, with the focus on knowledge, skills and attitudes as required by the National Qualifications Framework and the South African Qualifications Authority (Nel, 2007). However, progress in the implementation of the principles, guidelines and proposed policies and programmes for developmental social welfare stipulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) has been hampered by a lack of financial resources to fund developmental welfare services. If training of healthcare workers is to be aligned with the integrated and generalist developmental services that address the needs of people living with HIV/Aids and victims of crime, domestic violence and poverty, then resources are desperately required. Patel (2007:195) considers the integration of social

development theory and practice, including gender, into professional education and curricula a priority.

Policy implementation in South Africa is often limited due to a lack of skills and knowledge, and what appears to be a lack of thorough financial criteria for the financing of the services that are required. The Children's Act is a good example of this. In 2005, Conrad Barberton was tasked with costing the implementation of the Children's Act. At the time, the report stated that there was a shortage of 35 000 social workers in the country. In 2010, the Act is still not in place and the costing will surely be considerably higher given inflationary costs such as petrol, food and remuneration.

### **5.5.2 Alignment with theories from the fields of psychology, community development and social work**

Project management, teamwork and facilitation were often cited by both the six district co-ordinators and the 29 subdistrict co-ordinators as what was lacking in previous training. This demonstrated to me (as the researcher) that some principal theories from the fields of psychology, community development and social work are essential in healthcare training. These theories include, but are not limited to, systems theory, developmental theory, empowerment theory and experiential/adult learning theory. Even if some of the theories are included in professional degree programmes, it should be recognised that it is equally important to include these theories in 'in-service' training for continued learning.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis it was stated that capacity development goes beyond the conventional form of training. The management of change, resolution of conflict, management of institutional pluralism, enhancement of co-ordination, fostering communication and ensuring that data and information are shared require a broad and holistic view of capacity development (Allen, 2007). Personal time management, programme and financial management skills, combined with more intangible characteristics such as creativity, initiative, compassion, enthusiasm, benevolence, honesty and the consistent personal exposition of 'professional' values and ethics are all considered crucial for working within communities (Clark, 2005).

With descriptive statistical evidence that knowledge transfer did occur and supporting evidence that critical reflection and thought on newly learnt knowledge created deeper understanding, the implications would be that, as an experiential

learning tool, educators should consider using key principles of empowerment from each of the three disciplines (psychology, community development and social work).

According to Nel (2007), few professionals with qualifications in the medico-psychosocial sciences (including psychologists) are adequately equipped in the (psychological) theories, understandings, methods, approaches, skills, techniques and attitudes required to appropriately and effectively respond to needs, problems and concerns such as the country's HIV/Aids pandemic, endemic crime and violence, unacceptably high levels of trauma, widespread meaninglessness and despair, interpersonal skills deficit, and insufficient process and group skills. Other than psychologists, psychology professionals, social workers, psychiatric nurses, medical practitioners and educators, among others, who are interested in increasing the quality of their own professional lives and the lives of others, ought to gain access to postgraduate psychological training interventions (Nel, 2007). Simulation, experiential learning and critical reflection within experiential learning in combination create a formidable training and teaching tool (Le Roux & Steyn, 2007).

There is much value to be gained from short courses for professionals who wish to maintain their skill base. For some of the disciplines it is a requirement to complete short courses annually in order to retain registration at the Health Professions Council of South Africa. This is called continuing professional development (CPD). Grant and Stanton (1998) advocate setting the right conditions for effective CPD and the establishment of a process and culture for CPD. The planning and performing of CPD should be seen as relevant to the needs and interests of the individual, the service, the clinical team and the institution, be it a hospital, university or provincial authority.

### **5.5.3 Language and socio-economic background**

Earle (2007b) notes with concern that many tertiary institutions do not take into account in the training of social workers that mastery of indigenous languages (including Afrikaans) is critical in order to communicate effectively with the recipients of social work services. Earle (2007b) also mentions the international textbooks used by tertiary institutions, which are in English, and not a home language for the majority. Social work curricula do not yet acknowledge the importance of both aspects (Earle, 2007b). I (as researcher) found that in discussion groups there were times that a 'psychological concept' had to be translated into the nearest indigenous

meaning by members of the group to enable other members to follow the thread of conversation.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

There are many problems that are encountered in the training of healthcare workers. It should be noted that the majority of future healthcare professionals come from disadvantaged backgrounds very similar to the communities in which they will render services. The question therefore becomes one of how to harness experiential learning and how to empower these students. Chapter 6 makes recommendations for the way forward if the challenges of theory, practice and research in the applied interfaces that are shared by the fields of psychology, social work and community development are to be addressed.

## Chapter 6

### Ubuntu at work: The reconstruction and development of the soul

*South Africa needs ubuntu – the RDP of the soul.*

– Nelson Mandela

*South African society needs to infuse itself with a measure of discipline, a work ethic and responsibility for the actions we undertake ... related to this is the reconstruction of the soul of the nation, the 'RDP of the soul': by this we mean first and foremost respect for life; pride and self-respect as South Africans ... It means asserting our collective and individual identity as Africans, committed to the rebirth of the continent; being respectful of other citizens and honouring women and children of our country who are exposed to all kinds of domestic violence and abuse. It means building our schools into communities of learning and improvement of character. It means mobilising one another, and not merely waiting for government to clean our streets; or for funding allocations to plant trees and tend schoolyards. These are things we need to embrace as a nation that is nurturing its New Patriotism. They constitute an important environment for bringing up future generations. – Nelson Mandela in his opening of Parliament address in February 1999 (Mandela, 1999).*

#### 6.1 Introduction

In order to offer both psychological and physical services of high quality that meet the needs of victims of HIV/Aids, crime and violence, and poverty and domestic violence, tertiary institutions in South Africa will in future be called upon to adopt a multidisciplinary approach in the training of social workers, psychologists and community development workers. Changing times and a more diverse student population have heightened the need for a broader range of teaching and learning approaches at tertiary level (Malan, 2008). As social problems are becoming more and more complicated in modern times, conventional social work training seems to be inadequate for social work practitioners in daily practice. State-employed social work

practitioners need to receive advanced social work training within the services they deliver in order to be able to effectively deal with highly complicated social problems within changing cultural and sociopolitical contexts (Bun Ku *et al.*, 2005). This thesis has explored what type of content and method of presentation of ‘in-service’ training for continued learning of state-employed social workers working in the field of VE is relevant in South Africa today.

In this final chapter, key considerations, recommendations and conclusions regarding ‘in-service’ training programmes/short courses for social workers involved in VE services are presented under the following headings:

- Participatory learning and action and the principles of ubuntu
  - The principles of ubuntu
- Limitations of the study
  - The influence of the facilitators
  - The sample
  - Trustworthiness
- Recommendations
  - Project management
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - Experiential problem-based learning
  - Contracting
  - Mixed design
  - Critical reflection
  - Empowerment theory
  - Self-care and supervision
  - Future programmes
  - Tertiary institutions and the Department of Social Development
- Summary and conclusion

## **6.2 Participatory learning and action and the principles of ubuntu**

According to Jennings (2000), participatory methodologies are no panacea. However, they appear to address much of the primary tenets of mainstream applied social research approaches with the addition of a participative level of engagement. Conventionalism will be turned on its head when participation is no longer a curious addition to the community development toolkit, but a precondition for activities

ranging from emergency relief and debt restructuring to technical assistance (Jennings, 2000). PLA has been criticised for lacking the methodological rigour and technical validity that is the gold standard of much academic research (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Thomas (2000) believes that by challenging traditional models of research and legitimate knowledge, we are forced to consider whose interests knowledge and research serve. PAR provides new understandings of and insights into social problems in the local community context and can be used very effectively to understand why participation among certain groups is low and to develop strategies to overcome these barriers. It can be regarded as more scientific in that it takes into account a much wider range of views and experiences and makes sense of these in ways that positivist evaluation methods avoid (Thomas, 2000). The outcomes of an effective PLA project are both a theoretical advance and a practical application (Whyte, 1995). Whyte (1995) argues for the value of involving practitioners in PLA, even if they have no formal training in social research.

Joseph (2003) believes that social work is one of the oldest development professions that place importance on people's participation in its practice with individuals, groups and communities. This is clear from often cited sayings in social work, such as 'Give a man a fish, and his problem for the day is solved; teach a man to fish, and his problem for his life is solved'; 'Help people to help themselves', and 'Working *with* the people, and not *for* the people'. Funding agencies and government departments, and even NGOs, do not always recognise that they themselves need institutional changes – of cultures, procedures and rewards – if they are to promote and sustain good participation and good PLA (Chambers, 2007).

During the course of this short course it became clear that what Chambers (2007) was saying had more than an element of truth. Although the course constantly advocated participatory methods and taught PLA tools, the challenge of sustainability is real, since the participants are still mostly exposed to conventional thinking and methods in government departments. It is no good preaching participation at the grass roots while maintaining an authoritarian hierarchy 'above', with funding agency or department-driven targets, punitive management, control-orientated managers and the like (Chambers, 2007).

For an integrated service to function properly there must be clear communication and co-operation between all stakeholders (Higson-Smith, Bedell & Mudau, 2005). Mathekga and Buccus (2007) point out that the method of

implementing new social services has not effectively catered for the dormant participatory culture held by citizens. They further proclaim that in order for local government systems to be rid of the burden of an angry populace, they must be operated and managed in a manner that encourages citizens' participation. When this is a reality, people are able to feel ownership and a sense of affinity for the system beyond merely viewing local government as an engine for service delivery. Participatory democracy is not about being at the receiving end of democracy, but about being an active participant in the process (Mathekga & Buccus, 2007).

This thesis opened with a discussion of the post-1994 transformation within South African governance, as well as a discussion of the DSD's mission statement, namely:

*[t]o serve and build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders through an integrated social welfare system which maximises its potential, and which is equitable, sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental (Mvubelo, 2000:1).*

It appears that very often in South Africa, policy is ambiguous in practice. A programme that has its roots in PLA could therefore help to convey to all involved that democracy is meant to be participatory. The new beginning should also be about 'community empowerment' by way of the restoration of community pride and involvement in local governance via guaranteed participation (Mathekga & Buccus, 2007).

### **6.2.1 The principles of ubuntu**

Over the two years of my involvement with the capacity development course it became clear that by using the principles of an ubuntu-orientated mindset and Batho Pele ('People First') we could transform service delivery to the most vulnerable members of South African society. Du Toit (2004:33) writes the following about ubuntu, which demonstrates a clear linkage with PLA:

*In Africa, a person is identified by his or her interrelationships and not primarily by individualistic properties. The community identifies the person and not the person the community. The identity of the person is his*

*or her place in the community. In Africa it is a matter of 'I participate, therefore I am' ... Ubuntu is the principle of 'I am only because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'. Ubuntu is African humanism.*

The National Heritage Council (NHC), as part of the National Campaign on Ubuntu in Nation-building, regards the integration of ubuntu as part of national programmes and policy frameworks for socio-economic development. This process recognises the strides of several initiatives that entrench ubuntu that have been made by government in the form of programmes, such as the Moral Regeneration Movement, Imbizo, Pitso, Letsema and Batho Pele principles, which underline the government's commitment to putting people first in the drive to improve service delivery, among other things (NHC, 2009). It is hoped that with campaigns like the drive towards an ubuntu approach to social problem-solving, the importance of collaboration and participation of communities will be further strengthened.

The notion of personhood and identity is achieved in the interaction between the individual and the community, and the content and values of this interaction (as well as the description of the harmony of such interaction) are found and expressed in the ethics of ubuntu (Forster, 2006). Du Toit (2004) explains that to be human is to participate in life and to respect the conditions that make life possible, and that to participate in life means ultimately to participate in the fellowship of the community. This all echoes the tenets of good PLA. In this study, the VE co-ordinators participated in their respective communities within the Limpopo Province by servicing victim needs, and in this way realised a sense of ubuntu.

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

#### **6.3.1 The influence of the facilitators**

It is impossible to determine in this study what effect I (as the researcher/facilitator/participant) had on the transfer of knowledge in the course. Despite my critical self-reflection and the acknowledgement that I am of a different cultural group, I may have influenced the course in varying degrees. It is also impossible to tell what influence the co-facilitator, Juan Nel, had on the delivery of the course, as he has been involved on a national level in the field of VE since its inception in 1996, and therefore came with prior knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses encountered in VE service delivery.

*Experience is the basis of critical thinking ... Without experience in the field it is hard to produce critically thinking practitioners* (Jones, Cooper & McMillan, 2006:125).

Nel's experience should be considered an advantage. Le Roux and Steyn (2007) noted that the role and effect of the training facilitators and their knowledge and experience may significantly alter the outcome of an intervention.

### **6.3.2 The sample**

A further limitation of the study concerns the applicability of the course to other groups, as the group in this study consisted mostly of black, female social workers based in the Limpopo Province. The composition of the group also limits the extent to which the themes generated by the participants can be viewed as universal (Le Roux & Steyn, 2007). In addition, as stated by Blevins, Morton and McGovern (2008), as with many implementation projects, issues of local history and culture mandate very unique applications to the execution of a programme. This limits, in addition to the qualitative nature of the assessments, the ability to extrapolate the results of the present study to other collaborative partnerships.

Partnerships with other stakeholders in the VEP should have been included in the study. In a follow-up study in 2007/2008 in the North-West Province, other stakeholders such as the SAPS, Child Welfare and the DoJ were brought on board at the start-up of the course. This proved very fruitful, as these partnerships are essential to VE services. The ownership of roles in the delivery of VE services was acknowledged. Successful partnerships also depend on mutual trust, personal credibility, the sharing of power and influence, and ensuring high-quality outcomes (Lansing & Kolasa, 1996, cited in Green, 2005). This would also have strengthened the establishment of more extensively participative ubuntu approaches among stakeholders in the capacity development course.

The number of participants in Phase 1 of the course was seven, which proved to be ideal, as the group quickly became a team and gained in-depth knowledge of each other. The number of participants in Phase 2 of the course can be considered a limitation in the study. Twenty-nine is a big group in any course, and it became particularly difficult when allowing enough time for reflection and feedback. I (as

researcher) often thought that more time was necessary for me to hear all voices equally. Recommendations for future programmes would include to limit the number of participants to a maximum of 20.

### **6.3.3 Trustworthiness**

Participation lies at the heart of the research methodology of this course. An applicable instrument that can be devised in order to measure the various levels of participation that is taking place in interventions could help to explain the success and failure of interventions (Green, 2005). Replications of this study in any other context of capacity development would require that the researchers have a working knowledge of group dynamics, enabling them to understand and measure (at least on a descriptive level) the nature and quality of the participation taking place.

*Participants in interventions can neither be manipulated nor can the environment be controlled in a natural setting to conform to an experimental paradigm designed to eliminate extraneous variables (Hubley, 1988:136).*

PLA presents unique opportunities and challenges for the implementation of a process of dialogue, action analysis and social change (Green, 2005). The measurement of how much participation and empowerment was achieved remains a subjective assessment (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

The various sources of information used in the study, such as observations and field notes, interviews, the researcher's reflective journal and questionnaires, were triangulated and yielded corroborative results, which strengthened the trustworthiness of the study. My prolonged engagement in the field also added to the trustworthiness.

The principles used to define collaboration at the outset of the course and through its development, in addition to those used for the evaluation, are consistent with those in the literature on PLA. Collaboration is at the essence of PLA. Shen, Wu, Archpiliya, Bierbert and Hiltz (2004) proclaim that their PLA study at the New Jersey Institute of Technology demonstrated that active participation and collaboration resulted in deeper learning and expanded awareness, which they believed would enhance productivity in the workplace.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

### **6.4.1 Project management**

Project management should be considered an essential subject of any future ‘in-service’ training course for state-appointed community social workers. Green (2005) identifies two essential elements of project management, namely technical structure and human processes. The technical structure should include aspects of financial planning, and the human processes should include all aspects of communication.

Good management is critical for sustained success in any intervention or research study (Allen & Gillespie, 2001). Patel (2007) emphasises that education and prevention programmes such as life-skills education, parenting, communication and sexuality programmes are generally provided by social service agencies. She goes further by quoting Nutbeam and Harris (2004, cited in Patel, 2007:255):

*[T]he success of educational and prevention programmes requires the rigorous application of a planning programme development and evaluation cycle.*

If social workers are not equipped with project management or planning skills, courses or programmes such as these will not be rendering a service to the community. The programme development and evaluation cycle provides a useful framework for designing health and social well-being programmes that are relevant in effecting individual and community behavioural and social change at organisational and policy levels (McGuire, 1989).

### **6.4.2 Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation should be included in all development and training programmes within the field of VE if health workers in the field are to be capacitated. To augment their understanding of the contexts they work in, it is also important that they have systematic information on relevant social indicators of victimisation. Basic statistical principles that produce data not only of the crime statistics, but also of, among other things, who accesses the services, what type of services are being accessed, and the areas in which the services are being accessed, could help to develop new policies on and practices in crime prevention.

The South African government defines ‘monitoring’ as an integral part of day-to-day management, and ‘evaluation’ as an assessment of the design, implementation and results of completed or ongoing projects, programmes or systems of working at specified points in time, to help to improve them in future (Hirschowitz & Orkin, 2009). Monitoring and evaluation methods must not only consider the inputs and outputs of programmes, but also be able to determine the outcomes and the impacts of programmes.

During the capacity development course, the participants arranged for a monitoring and evaluation practitioner from the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the DSD to address their concerns and explain the procedures for data-capturing. Although this lecture was generally well received, the implementation of the procedures explained remained a problem due to a lack of resources. Many of the implementation methods require computers and data-capturing programmes. The methods of registering and counting systematisation used in the capacity development course to frequently monitor and revise the development of the course proved to be useful in situations where no access to resources was available.

#### **6.4.3 Experiential problem-based learning**

As CPD by implication involves adults, it is only fitting that experiential problem-based learning should be the stance that CPD development courses embrace. In recent years, social work educators have referred to experiential learning theories as a source of knowledge for developing models for social work education (Goldstein, 1993; Gould, 1996; Yelloly & Henkel, 1995, all cited in Sung-Chan & Yuen-Tsang, 2008). Experiential problem-based learning in this course enabled the participants to reflect critically on their practice and to share experiences with each other, which became a scaffold for their learning.

#### **6.4.4 Contracting**

As was evident at the start of the course, clear expectations are important. Clear contracting is vital in order for all participants to be engendered with similar and realistic expectations, as well as to ensure that there is collaboration and that the roles are clearly established. Roberts and Dick (2003) have also found that unless special attention is given to the aspect of rank, especially in corporate settings, the exercise of rank within the groups can undo the benefits they were trying to achieve.

#### **6.4.5 Mixed design**

Future replications of this course could consider using more refined levels of measurement, as the measurements in this study mostly took place on nominal and ordinal levels. One could, for example, make use of the ‘repertory grid measurement’ approach that is an outflow of Kelly’s Personal Construct theory, and/or structured Likert scales. Repertory grid methods are a flexible set of tools for assessing systems of personal meanings. By providing visual and semantic ‘maps’ of an individual’s construct system and the way in which it applies to important facets of one’s life (e.g. relationships with friends, partners and family members), grids have proven useful in both applied and research settings (The Internet Encyclopaedia of Personal Construct Theory, 2004). In this course, repertory grids could be used to establish the degree of commonality between the participants in their construing of common themes. This would involve incorporating inferential statistical components in the research design. Therefore, the next step in assessing the efficacy of the capacity development short course would entail a mixed design containing qualitative, descriptive as well as inferential levels of analysis.

A mixed design could be useful in a longitudinal follow-up study with the state-appointed VE co-ordinators of the Limpopo Province. One of the benefits of conducting such longitudinal research could be significant insights into using different theoretical approaches and addressing different skills to assist in the design and implementation of an advanced second module of the capacity development short course.

#### **6.4.6 Critical reflection**

The fact that critical reflection and evaluation was done as a matter of course at each new session meant that the evaluation activity dovetailed with an opportunity to act immediately to solve some of the problems raised by the evaluation. This resulted in the timely identification of the participants’ requirements in skills training and ensured that action could be taken to address the identified issues. The participants became committed to the processes contained in the capacity development course, since their concerns were addressed and resolved. In future applications of the capacity development course that was developed for this study it should be noted that planning with regard to timing for reflections is critical to the success of the course.

On many occasions during the course, the time reserved for reflections was not sufficient, resulting in not all participants realising the opportunity to be heard.

In their capacity development project for social workers in Beijing, Sung-Chan and Yuen-Tsang (2008) found the reciprocal reflection theory extremely useful in developing their students' competence in bridging the theory-practice gap, and in enhancing the indigenisation of social work practice in a local sociocultural milieu. In mainland China, a capacity development programme entitled 'Scholarship in Practice' described its essence as being the development of reflective social workers who are able to think, articulate, be self-critical, constantly evaluate their use of theories and knowledge in different contexts and evolve their own personal perspectives and approaches through professional practice (Yuen-Tsang, 1999).

#### **6.4.7 Empowerment theory**

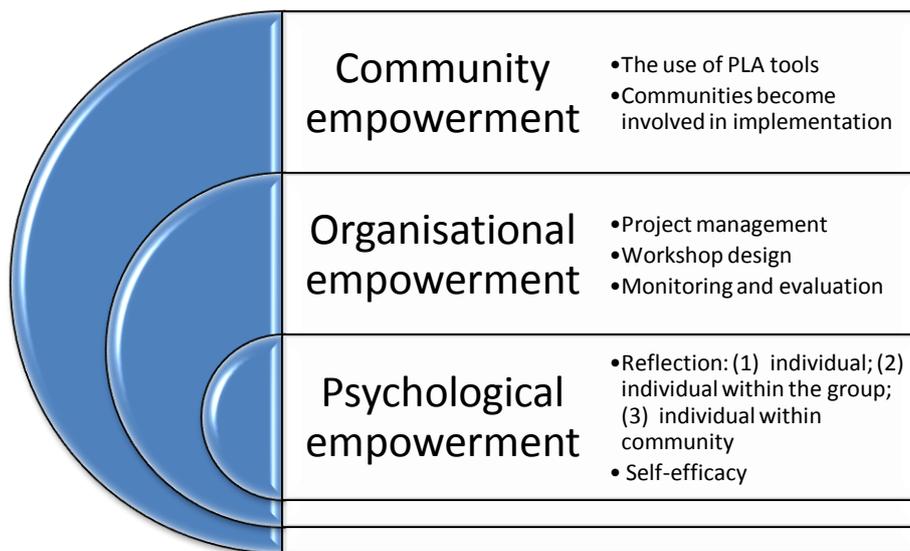
The underlying tenets of participation and empowerment as the threads that bind the capacity development course remain essential if the participants are to achieve 'self-efficacy'. Empowerment that is gained through people gaining mastery over their lives as well as learning to take advantage of opportunities that arise must be at the core of any programme that claims to be offering CPD. The capacity development course attempted to embrace all three levels of empowerment, namely psychological, organisational and community empowerment, as discussed by Zimmerman (1990).

On a meta-level, the capacity development course addressed the component of community empowerment. The PLA tools, such as ordering the participatory programme development process or problem and situational analysis, encouraged the involvement of the community in the development and involvement of projects. These tools require that communities become equal partners in any project. The VE coordinators, through their individual processes of empowerment, should be able to empower their communities in the future planning of community projects.

On a mesa-level, the capacity development course addressed organisational empowerment (OE). According to Peterson and Zimmerman (2004), OE firstly includes characteristics that represent the internal structure and functioning of organisations; secondly provides the infrastructure for members to engage in proactive behaviours necessary for goal achievement, and thirdly includes the linkages between organisations and the relationships and collaboration across organisations. Technical knowledge and skills – such as project management,

workshop design and monitoring and evaluation tools – in the capacity development course all addressed the organisational level of empowerment.

Psychological empowerment took place on a micro-level. The state-appointed VE co-ordinators gained different psychosocial skills and tools. These skills and tools then modified their behaviours, beliefs and competencies. This modification came about through the emancipatory category of knowledge via reflection. Reflection took place on three levels. Initially there was individual self-reflection on previous experiences and the way in which these related to present experiences. On the next level, reflection took place on the relationship between themselves as individuals and the group. Finally, there was reflection on what their relationship would be in the community equipped with PLA tools. This deeper and broader dimension of reflection was actively encouraged in the capacity development course. Figure 6.1 demonstrates the three levels of empowerment addressed in the short course.



**Figure 6.1. The meta-, mesa- and micro-levels of empowerment created in the capacity development course**

If social development rather than social welfare is what the government of South Africa is hoping to achieve as a country, then opportunities need to be created and encouraged for professionals to enhance their own ‘self-efficacy’ so that they, in turn, could encourage communities to develop their own skills and well-being.

#### **6.4.8 Self-care and supervision**

The participants expressed a constant experience of stress due to a lack of resources, vicarious trauma and a lack of management support, as well as a lack of 'in-service' debriefing and supervision. In the design of the capacity development course, careful attention was paid to this need. The initial slot of each workshop was called 'Reflections', and on occasion, visualisation techniques, psychodrama, music and games were used for self-care. Relaxation exercises were also learnt over the months of training. Any programme that is designed for the CPD of social workers in VE services should include activities and knowledge that offer support for self-care. These activities should be based on an exploration of the self, as in 'knowing the self', an individual will identify his or her own way of coping and dealing with stress (Burnard, 1992:105).

In a community-based programme in Sweden, Häggström and Bruhn (2009) established that both the caregivers' well-being and the care received by those accessing services improve when the caregivers receive support in the form of continued supervision and education. Supervision is a means of transferring knowledge, skills and attitudes and is a joint venture between supervisor and caregiver, leading to the empowerment of both the individual caregiver and the community (Dunbar-Krige & Fritz, 2006).

There was not enough time built into the capacity development course for extensive individual supervision of the VE co-ordinators; any supervision that was offered was generalised to the larger group of participants. Individual supervision should be addressed in future capacity development courses for state-appointed social workers working in the field of VE.

#### **6.4.9 Future programmes**

The Limpopo Province was purposely chosen because of its lack of resources and relative geographical isolation. In many cases, rural facilities are staffed by young and inexperienced professionals (see, for example, the Community Service Programme currently operating in South Africa for many categories of health professionals, as discussed by Higson-Smith *et al.* (2005)). Many of the subdistricts of Limpopo are rural, and it is possible that the previous training and experience of the VE co-ordinators who completed the capacity development course may have differed in standard and quality. It is recommended that the capacity development course for

social workers working in the field of VE be implemented in a province in South Africa that is less under-resourced than the Limpopo Province in order to broaden its research base and further inform its theoretical underpinnings.

#### **6.4.10 Tertiary institutions and the Department of Social Development**

Earle (2007a) states that personal links between the DSD and the various university departments of social work need to be encouraged and that this could possibly be initiated through encouraging DSD representative attendance at the annual conferences of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions. If this link could be forged, it would allow for an alignment of the design of CPD programmes with government policy. Earle (2007a) further recommends that academia be allowed to contribute to policy-making. Academic institutions have a responsibility to meet the challenges that are faced in social work practice by offering quality programmes that are responsive and relevant.

#### **6.5 Summary and conclusion**

The first assumption made about the methodology (PLA), empowerment theory and experiential problem-based learning in which the capacity development course is grounded, was that the course had to be useful in practice. PLA appeared to address this assumption, because the learning cycles of enquiry allowed not only for synergy with the project management cycle as part of the subject matter of the course, but also for responsive adaptation. Figure 6.2 illustrates the meta-action cycle taken in the capacity development course.



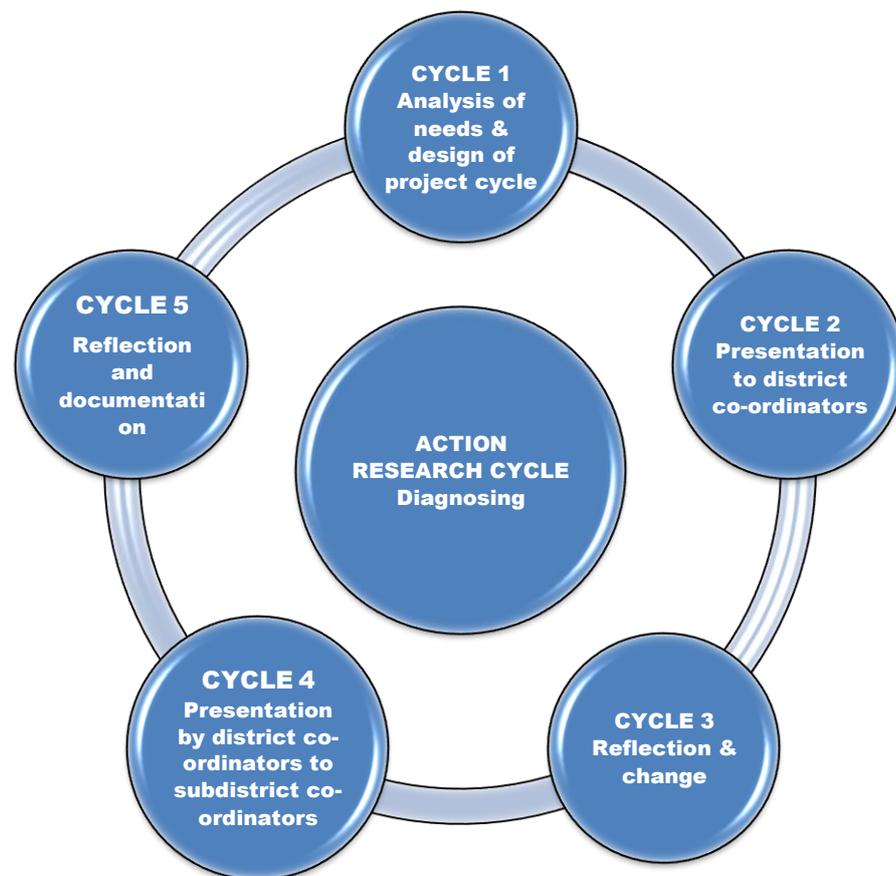
**Figure 6.2: The meta-cycle of enquiry**

According to Perry and Zuber-Skerrit (1992), the meta-cycle of enquiry is the ‘core’ action research cycle. These authors, however, identify another action research cycle embedded within this cycle: The use of critical reflection within the capacity development course can be considered another action research cycle about the ‘core’ research cycle – the ‘core’ research cycle being whether the use of PLA for an ‘in-service’ course for state-appointed social workers was an appropriate methodology.

Mezirow (1991) recognised three forms of reflection, namely reflection on content, process and premise. Content reflection entails thinking about what is happening; process reflection refers to the strategies and procedures regarding how things are being done, and premise reflection is the critique underlying assumptions and perspectives.

The capacity development course as a model contained the ‘core’ action research cycle. Initially, in the first cycle of the course, previous research was consulted, problems were diagnosed and discussed with the participants, and planning of the course took place. The second cycle of the model was when the course was presented to the VE district co-ordinators and the provincial VE co-ordinator, while all the time following the ‘action’ research cycle of action, reflection and action. The third cycle entailed reflection and the changing of ineffective methods. The fourth

cycle involved the presentation of the course to the VE subdistrict co-ordinators by the VE district co-ordinators and provincial VE co-ordinator, again following the ‘action’ research cycle. Lastly, the fifth cycle was the reflection research cycle in which the ‘core’ research cycle was reflected upon, for example, in the writing up of this thesis. Figure 6.3 depicts the cycles within cycles of the capacity development course.



**Figure 6.3: The model of the capacity development course**

The capacity development course developed and applied in this study provides a set of guidelines for future interventions in CPD for social workers within the field of VE. It is not a static course and should not be considered the ultimate recipe for action – it will evolve and change with each new application. Although the fundamental elements remain, some of the exercises in the course have already been modified, as this course was replicated in 2007 and 2008 in the North-West Province. The

grounded theoretical components of the capacity development course, namely PLA, empowerment theory and experiential problem-based learning, again proved useful in the application of the course in the North-West Province.

Ahmed Bawa (2006:4), former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, stated the following at the 5 WISER address at the University of the Witwatersrand:

*South African higher education began as and remains highly elitist. It seems critical therefore to consider the construction of higher education as the developer of a broad-based intellectual culture in the societies that they serve rather than of certain very small elites.*

This transformation in intellectual gaze is essential if the psychosocial fabric of South African society is to be enhanced. The personal and social support that South Africans require on grass-roots level has to be identified and addressed, and the first step in this direction is to equip healthcare professionals with the necessary skills. Berman (2007) states that for transformation to occur in higher education, we must provide the space for a re-imagination of the South African university to reclaim itself as a truly integrated South African institution. The capacity building approach subscribes to a critical pedagogy that calls for a re-invention of the self by challenging tradition and culture, and by developing academic knowledge, the habit of inquiry and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality and social change (Bun Ku *et al.*, 2005). We need to challenge the traditional conceptualisation of CPD education and delivery. From the outcomes of this study, it is clear that PLA has the potential to encourage empowerment in our country among people who have for so long been marginalised.

Gray and Mazibuko (2002) stress that social work within the developmental welfare system takes on a developmental face that requires multidisciplinary interventions focusing on whole communities and social policies. This is a challenge that will call on social workers to make a greater impact on the problem of mass poverty, unemployment and social deprivation through greater use of diverse social work methods, such as advocacy, community development, empowerment, consultation, networking, action research and policy analysis (Gray & Mazibuko, 2002). The capacity development course addressed many aspects discussed by Gray and Mazibuko (2002), such as action research, empowerment, networking, advocacy

and consultation, and Chapter 3 addressed the importance of the tenets of community psychology if we are to restore South African society from the past.

*Plainly there is a need for further development of models integrating the capacity building approach with practice knowledge and practice requirements. Such integration further empowers social work practitioners as they in turn facilitate the empowerment of collectives (Bun Ku et al., 2005:231).*

Ensuring a 'better life for all' guaranteed by the South African Constitution can be brought about by, among other things, a realisation of the Batho Pele principles in service delivery by the civil service, in general, and the monitoring of the adherence by the CJS to the minimum standards for service delivery outlined in the South African Services Charter for Victims of Crime and Violence (Nel, 2007).

In an address delivered by the former Deputy President of South Africa, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the National Imbizo on Ubuntu and Nation-building in South Africa at the Steve Tshwete Municipality in the Botshabelo area in Mpumalanga Province in 2006, she spoke of ubuntu being the need for us to have a sense of community spirit as a people. Ubuntu says community members must play a constructive role towards the development of their communities.

Ubuntu is a liberal translation of collective personhood and collective morality (Msengana, 2006). In Pedi, ubuntu is expressed as 'Motho ke motho ka motho yo mongoe' – 'a man is a man through others' (Teff, 1996, cited in Corder, 2001:48). In Zulu, ubuntu is expressed as 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' – 'a person is a person through others' (Msengana, 2006). Ubuntu also speaks of the need to give back to our communities what they have given us, and it tells us that its most important value lies in giving. Making sacrifices for the common good is what keeps our society together.

I experienced a great sense of ubuntu (a strong sense of community and caring) during the two years that I was part of this course. I gained tremendous knowledge, motivation and encouragement from each and every participant. The relationship can be seen as iterative, as it was mutually reinforcing and enriched both my practice and those of the participants. We definitely tried to create change together for better services to the victims of crime, poverty and HIV/Aids within South Africa.

*We must build a society based on the noble precept that –  
Motho ke motho ka motho yo mongoe: Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu! –*  
Former President Thabo Mbeki in his address at the Fourth Nelson  
Mandela Annual Lecture on July 29, 2006 (Mbeki, 2006).

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