

A PARTICIPANT-FOCUSED SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BEEDZ, A GRAHAMSTOWN SKILLS TRAINING PROJECT FOR WOMEN

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Abstract

This research looked at a participant-focused sociological analysis of Beedz, a Grahamstown skills training project for women. Beedz is run by the River of Life Church and aims to equip women with the necessary skills to participate in the economy, either as entrepreneurs or as employees. Using third world feminist theory, this research explored the experiences of women who have participated in the Beedz programme, what they went through, and whether the programme benefited them or not. In particular, this research explored how the participants experienced Beedz as a programme for women without an exclusive focus on traditional feminist issues. This research was qualitative in nature; with in-depth, semi-structured interviews being used as a means of data collection. Data was analysed using key themes emerging from the interviews. The key findings of this research were that it is important to include women in training projects, as by including them you create spaces and enabling environments for women to empower themselves. Secondly, although Beedz does not deliberately work from the third world feminist theory, it could be argued that it fits in this framework as this programme facilitates skills training through looking at women as a whole, taking into account not only their gender, but also their class and race. Recommendations were made on how the Beedz programme may be improved, based on the information gathered from the participants from the interviews conducted during the research, with the key recommendation being that the organisers of the programme need to create a space for the participants' voice to be heard, so that the programme can be relevant and beneficial to them.

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List of acronyms

ABET – Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALSTP – Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DARE – Development and Advancement of Rural Entrepreneurship
DAWN – Development Alternatives for Women for a New Era
ECOSOC – Economic and Social Council
EPAG – Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGPs – Income Generation Projects
LCC – Lawndale Community Church
LCDC – Lawndale Christian Development Corporation
LCOP – Lawndale College Opportunity Programme
MARG – Multiple Action Research Group
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
NDP – National Development Plan
NGO – Non-governmental Organisation
PAR – Participatory Action Research
RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme
RHRLP – Run Home to Read Literacy Programme
SANIL – South African National Literacy Initiative
TESDA – Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN – United Nations
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA – University of South Africa
WID- Women in Development

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1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This research focuses on a programme called Beedz, established in 2006 by the River of Life Church in Grahamstown. It is a skills training project for women, and is headed by the programme director and the programme manager. Through this programme, several groups of unemployed women, who are single parents from disadvantaged areas in and around Grahamstown, are taught different skills, for example Computer Literacy and Business Skills, for a period of 6-8 weeks each year, with the aim of addressing socio-economic factors. Each group consists of 8-10 women, who do not have to be a part of the congregation in order to apply to join the programme. The only requirement is basic literacy and numeracy. At the end of the programme there is a compulsory written assessment, followed by a graduation ceremony. At the graduation ceremony, the women are given certificates outlining the various courses they have completed. It is hoped that after having participated in this programme, women are able to either find work or become entrepreneurs, thus becoming financially independent. In addition, the programme incorporates both psychological and religious dimensions in an attempt to develop the participants' self-esteem and sense of fulfilment (River of Life Church, 2014:1). This project was specifically chosen as it is the only one of its type in Grahamstown, and its aims and objectives can be seen to fit into third world feminist thought on the improvement of women's lives as it looks at broader issues facing women and is located in an impoverished semi-rural town. In addition, the researcher explored the particular Christian nature of the project, and how it shapes the programme.

Grahamstown, a town located in the Eastern Cape, forms part of Makana Local Municipality which is situated on the N2 highway almost in the middle of East London (to the west) and Port Elizabeth (to the east) (Statistics South Africa, 2011). This town was founded by Colonel John Graham in 1812, and started off as a small military outpost (Makana Tourism, 2016). In 2011 Statistics South Africa recorded a total population of 67 264, and of this population 13.2% of people have no income, 5.45% have no schooling, and only 22.4% have a post-matric qualification. The dependency ratio was recorded at 46.85% (this is the total number of

dependents in the population) and a total number of 48.45% of households are female-headed (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

1.2 Context of the study

In drawing on a third world feminist approach, Savane (1982:8) writes that although the oppression of women is experienced world-wide, demands on women in the third world have explicitly revolved around health, work, politics, and education. Indeed, the South African National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality in South Africa by 2030, makes mention of women and development, as well as education (National Planning Commission, 2012:261). According to the National Planning Commission (2012:261) the Department of Higher Education and Training proposes establishing Community Education and Training Centres which incorporate and transform the current public adult learning centres. These current public learning centres are programmes like Beedz, although the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme and Kha Ri Rude are much larger and well known (National Planning Commission, 2012:261). ABET, according to the Department of Basic Education (2014:1), is “the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts”. Kha Ri Rude (which means ‘Let us learn’ in Tshivenda) is a campaign that is run nationally, with the intention of providing millions of South Africans with the opportunity to become literate (Department of Basic Education, 2012:1).

Gender equality and women’s empowerment is the third of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and “it is an intrinsic goal, explicitly valued as an end in itself rather than an instrument for reaching other goals” (Kabeer 2005:13). The ways that one can monitor the progress in achieving this goal are through education, employment, and political participation (Kabeer, 2005:13). In addition, it is important to note that women-focused projects are of great importance, as they facilitate the implementation of skills projects, such as the Beedz programme, and are also traditionally a means for women to increase their power. Since the empowerment of women is a pre-requisite to women’s participation in decision making processes, women-focused projects should be viewed as an important opportunity for participation (Charlton, 1984:175).

Economic activities may be viewed as widening the range of options for people who are marginalised, however they do not necessarily enable them to reach a point where they can take charge of creating options for themselves from which they are able to choose. This involves a combination of confidence and self-esteem, information, analytical skills, ability to identify and tap into available resources, political and social influence, and so on. Education may play a key role in this, meaning that it equips one with a solid foundation for future employability, whether this is in the formal or informal sector. However, many people opt for informal education, as they may not have access to formal education (Rowlands, 1999:146).

UNESCO (1997:41) defines non-formal education as: “Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. It may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes may have differing durations, and may or may not confer certification of the learning achieved.” Community projects are often used as the vehicle for training or communicating information in a special content area for non-formal education activities. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played an important role in providing non-formal education to those who do not have access to formal education (Charlton, 1984:175).

In drawing on a third world feminist approach, this research analyses a programme aimed at the advancement of women’s skills and status. “Third world feminism is not only concerned with understanding the situation of women and their position amidst unequal gender relations, but is also interested in identifying efficient strategies for the improvement of everybody’s livelihood” (Ritzer & Douglas, 2004:15). Unlike more traditional feminist approaches, it recognises that addressing carefully selected community issues, such as education and work skills, (which Beetz focuses on) can create enabling spaces for women to empower themselves and therefore need to be included in the feminist project. Third world feminism recognises women “not as passive intersections of deficits, thus objects of development, but rather as subjects who exercise power upon themselves in order to pursue their own ends as articulated within and shaped by their formative discourses” (Sato, 2004:73).

Adopting this theoretical approach was beneficial for this research, because the Beetz programme, in trying to improve these women’s situations, looks at women holistically without

focusing solely on traditional women's issues; taking into account their cultural backgrounds, including their religion (River of Life, 2014:1). Beedz focuses on education and income generation, and not on traditional narrowly defined women's issues. Third world feminism, unlike other forms of feminism such as radical feminism, liberal feminism, and socialist feminism, pays particular attention to "perceiving the situation of women not only as a result of unequal gender relations, but as the consequence of a wide range of oppressive situations that transcend gender categories and are also related to race, class, and citizenship cleavages" (Saunders, 2002:299). Third world feminists believe that freedom should be attained by women not only from gender related inequalities, but also from those related to race and class, since these categories are mutually intertwined in these women's lives. Race and class are closely intertwined in South Africa, especially in townships such as those in Grahamstown East, where one will find predominantly black individuals (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Recognising this, Beedz purposefully recruits participants that are from Grahamstown East (Authors interview with Zintle Songqwaru, 2015). "For a vast majority of women in the third world, injustice as a result of class and race is closely related to the oppressive situations they experience as women. One cannot therefore partial out gender from the rest of who one is, for one is simultaneously classed, raced, and gendered, therefore, one cannot talk about their experience of being a woman, without talking about their race and class, for how they experience the social world and others' responses are inextricably tied to all these axes of difference" (De La Rey, 1997:6).

1.3 Objective of the study

This research was undertaken in order to analyse the experiences of the women who have participated in the Beedz programme, what they went through, and how they felt it benefited them or not. In particular this research considered how the participants experienced Beedz as a project for women without an exclusive focus on traditional feminist issues, thus questions were exploratory in nature, and were used to explore the respondents' experiences in a general way. The aim was to look at the social process that these women went through, and how this social process was negotiated and manoeuvred by the participants. It was to see what effects Beedz has had on the lives of these women, and not just how they felt about the project. Therefore the goals of this research were to first document and explore the programme, from both the organisers' and participants' perspectives. The main question that this research sought to answer is "Does Beedz subscribe to third world feminist thought; does it acknowledge that women are simultaneously

gendered, raced, and classed, and therefore facilitates skills training that creates enabling environments for women to empower themselves?”

Further research questions that this research sought to answer were:

- Whether there are material changes in the women’s lives, after they have taken part in this programme, in all aspects of their identity;
- What women have learnt from taking part in this programme, and whether and how they feel that it has been beneficial for them;
- How the Beedz programme facilitates skills training, what skills it is imparting and how participants have used these skills after completing the programme.

1.4 A brief overview on research methods

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, using in-depth interviews as a means of data collection. A cross-section of people, seven in total, who have participated in the Beedz programme over the number of years, were interviewed. A total number of seven people who are involved in setting up and running this programme were also interviewed, in order to find out more about the programme, how they have experienced it, difficulties experienced and how the programme has been adjusted accordingly. Information was sought on any assessments of the programme that may have conducted, as well as any other reports that may be available and this information was used in conjunction with the interviews. Convenience sampling was used in this research, as participants were recruited from the Beedz programme. This research adhered to the code of ethics that is stipulated for all sociological research (Abrahamson, 1983:7). These are informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Participation in this research was voluntary. Permission to carry out this research was received, nevertheless this research was completely independent and was not being done on behalf of the church.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of six main chapters, as well as a conclusion chapter. Chapter Two explains in detail the research methods that have been used in this research. Chapter Three puts into context the importance of women’s training projects. In doing so, three things are looked at, which are: women and education and the role of adult basic education, literacy programmes that are designed for women, and women’s training projects.

Chapter Four introduces the theory of third world feminism and argues for its relevance in the South African context. In doing so, it maps its history and looks at how its theories may be applied in some non-governmental organisations. This chapter also looks at the role that churches have to play in the development of the community.

Chapters Five and Six are the analysis chapters. Chapter Five focuses on the actual programme, providing more information on the programme and how the organisers perceive it. Chapter Six focuses on how the participants have experienced the programme and how they feel it has benefited them or not.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by seeking to draw linkages between the contextual and theoretical framing of the study, as well as the empirical evidence arising from the study of the Beedz skills training project. This chapter therefore, besides seeking to merely summarise the main points of the thesis, tries to show the significance of the research in contributing to the sociological understanding of skills training projects for women in South Africa as a whole.

2 Chapter Two: Research Methods

2.1 Introduction to qualitative research

Qualitative research aims to provide answers to questions by looking at a variety of social settings and the individuals who live in these settings (Berg, 2007:8). Qualitative research looks at the opinions and attitudes of respondents, as opposed to scientifically measurable data (Litchman, 2014:9). Qualitative researchers are most interested in human beings, how they arrange themselves in various social settings, and how they make sense of those settings and the roles they play (Berg, 2007:9). These researchers collect data in natural settings, with the data analysis being inductive, establishing themes (Lichtman, 2014:9).

Qualitative researchers are able to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 2007:9). The qualitative researcher is instrumental in all aspects of the research process. It is also important to note that it is through the researcher's perceptions that questions are formulated and data identified, collected, analysed, and interpreted (Litchman, 2014:31). Adopting a qualitative research methodology was appropriate for this research, as the aim was not to generalise findings but instead to explore how participants have experienced the Beedz programme, as well as how it has affected them.

2.2 Interviewing

The interview is probably the most commonly used method in qualitative research. Interviews are more exploratory in nature, rather than fact recording (Bryman, 2012:469). Often the answers that are revealed in the conversation between the researcher and the participant are things that the participant was not aware of initially (Bryman, 2012:469). Interviews may be termed conversations that are used for the purposes of collection data (Berg, 2007:89). An interview involves personal contact, which is direct, with the participant who is asked to answer questions relating to the research question (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105). Interviews are most effective when used to collect certain types of information for research purposes (Berg, 2007:97).

The purpose of conducting an interview is the same, regardless of the interview style that is used (i.e. structured, semi-structured, or unstructured). The researcher's aim is to obtain information on a specific topic, from their participants. The researcher needs to provide an environment in

which the participants feel free to reveal their feelings, intentions, meanings, sub-contexts, or thoughts on a topic, situation, or idea (Litchman, 2014:246).

Researchers need to tailor their questions to their participants, as “the specific ordering, phrasing, level of language, adherence to subject matter, and general style of questions, in an interview” (Berg, 2007:99), depend on their educational and social level including their demographics. The aims and focus of the research also need to be taken into account (Berg, 2007:99). All participants were isiXhosa mother-tongue speakers, therefore all interviews were conducted in isiXhosa.

The researcher must be aware that s/he may play a very influential role during the interview process, therefore s/he must ask questions in a way that does not influence the participants’ answers. Similarly, one should be conscious of any missing information and request it (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105).

There are four question types that need to be included in the interview schedule, for a researcher to get a complete view of the participants or situation that s/he is reaching. These are essential questions, extra questions, throw-away questions, and probing questions (Berg, 2007:100).

Essential questions deal with the main focus of the study. These may either follow each other or appear in different parts of the interview, however with the aim of getting the required information (Berg, 2007:100). The essential questions in this research were questions about the evidence of change and effectiveness of the Beedz programme (participants’ perceived helpfulness of the programme and any personal change the participants have experienced since taking part in the programme).

Extra questions are similar to selected essential questions, however they are worded in a different way. The aim of these questions is to check how reliable the interviewees’ answers are, through checking consistency as well as to check if there is any influence in the changing of the wording (Berg, 2007:100).

Throw-away questions may be used in soliciting demographic information as well as to develop rapport between the participants and researcher. These questions may not be necessary for gathering essential information for the research, however they are valuable in eliciting a story that is complete. Sometimes these questions may be used during difficult and sensitive areas in

the interview (Berg, 2007:101). These questions were used at the beginning of the interview, to get basic personal details of the participants. These were also used to track any change in the participant's economic status since taking part in Beedz (for example a question was asked about the participant's current occupation and their occupation before joining Beedz).

Probing questions (probes) allow the researcher to solicit more information to complete stories from the interviews. Probes are used to get an elaboration from interviewees, and are intended to be neutral. The main aim of a probe is to prompt more information about whatever the interviewee has already said in response to a question (Berg, 2007:101). For example, the researcher would ask the participant to tell them more about something, especially when the participant answered in short sentences. Questions like "what was that like?" or "how did you feel?" and "please tell me more about that" were used as probes.

This research was exploratory in orientation, therefore in-depth interviews were used as a means of data collection, in order to allow interviewees to talk about a broad range of issues related to their lives, pertaining to black, working class women in the third world. The interviews were conducted in isiXhosa, in order to allow participants to be able to fully express themselves. Boyce and Neale (2006:3) define the in-depth interview as "a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents, in order to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation."

All interviews were conducted in Grahamstown, in a venue that was selected by the participant being interviewed. This was important, in order to allow the participant to be as comfortable as possible. Interviews ranged from about 30 to 45 minutes in length and were all conducted by the researcher. Questions asked included basic personal details, in order to provide a rich understanding of the participant; general information about Beedz from the perspective of the participants; and evidence of change and effectiveness (which include the perceived helpfulness of Beedz and any personal change the participants have experienced). Detailed information and questions can be found in the attached interview schedule, in Appendix Four.

2.2.1 Semi-standardised interviews

The type of interview that was used in this research is the semi-standardised interview. The semi-standardised (also called semi-structured) interview is located between the extremes of the completely structured interview and the completely unstructured interviewing style (Berg,

2007:95). Interviewers use this type of interview when they already have some prior information as well as an understanding of the research question, but however need for more specific information (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:105).

This type of interview involves using a set of defined questions and topics or themes. These questions are usually presented to each interviewee in a manner which is systematic and consistent, however giving the interviewers freedom to deviate. This means that the interviewers should probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardised questions (Berg, 2007:95). Interview questions may vary, although the general structure of the interview may be standard across all participants (Litchman, 2014:248). This interview structure is an essential tool in exploratory research (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:107).

A few assumptions underlie this strategy. Firstly, all standardised questions need to be formulated in a vocabulary that is familiar to the interviewees. It is important for the interviewer to approach the world from the interviewee's perspective, as each interviewee views the world in a different way. Therefore, interviewers should not only adjust the language level of the interview questions, but should also make use of probes during the actual interview process. (Berg, 2007:95). Indeed, during the interview process, the researcher discovered that pitching the interview in different levels for different age groups was helpful.

The skill of the interviewer is important, as the wealth and quality of the data gathered are strongly dependent on it as well as the confidence inspired in the interviewees. It is also important to ask the right type of questions and make encouraging comments at the correct time, to elicit more information (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:108). Some interviewees were not as forthcoming with information as others, therefore the researcher had to make use of probes as well as encouraging comments in order to encourage the interviewees to elaborate.

2.3 Sampling

A sample is used to make interpretations about a larger population from the smaller one, i.e. the sample (Berg, 2007:41). Qualitative research usually employs a purposive sampling method. This is done with the goals of the research in mind, in order to make sure that the research questions are answered (Bryman, 2012:418).

2.3.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling. This means that the researcher does not seek to sample research participants randomly, however the goal is to employ a strategic method in order to make sure that the sample is relevant to the research question at hand (Bryman, 2012:418). Participants sampled for this research had to have completed the Beedz programme and had to have been from different years. It is important that the researcher samples a variety of participants, so that they will differ from each other in terms of key characteristics relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2012:418). With this research, participants differed in the roles that they played in the Beedz programme, as well as at what point (when) they were involved in the programme. In purposive sampling, the participants are selected as a result of their relevance to the research questions (Bryman, 2012:418). All participants selected for this research were relevant for the research question, as they all had been involved in the Beedz programme. A total number of seven Beedz organisers were interviewed; 2 directors (both female); 2 managers (both female), and 3 facilitators (1 female and 2 males). The organisers were interviewed in order to provide different perspectives to the programme, pertaining to their specific roles. A total number of seven Beedz participants were also interviewed (see discussion below).

2.3.2 Convenience sampling

The convenience sample is sometimes referred to as an accidental or availability sample (Berg, 2007:43). A convenience sample is one that is easily accessible to the researcher (Bryman, 2012:201). However, it is important to ensure that convenience samples are appropriate for the research question (Berg, 2007:43). This research used convenience sampling, however not successfully. The researcher asked for a database from Beedz, containing contact information of past participants, however the researcher only managed to interview one participant as many participants were either no longer in Grahamstown or their contact numbers had changed. It is at this point that the researcher decided to use snowball sampling.

2.3.3 Snowball sampling

With snowball sampling, initially the researcher samples a small group of participants, who then refer the researcher to other potential research subjects who are relevant to the research questions. They will then suggest other people and so on (Bryman, 2012:424). As it was hard to get hold of participants from previous years that were on the list that the researcher had obtained

from River of Life Church, the researcher largely had to rely on snowball sampling in order to get hold of other participants who were easily accessible in Grahamstown. Six participants were sampled using this method. This was a form of focused snowball sampling where participants helped to locate other interviewees rather than to suggest them in the first place (Bryman, 2012:424). A total number of seven participants, from different years, were sampled. All of the participants were females who had completed the Beedz course, whose ages were between 25 and 53 years.

2.4 Introduction to analysis

The goal of qualitative analysis is to take a large amount of data that may be cumbersome and without any clear meaning, and interact with it in such a manner as to make sense of it (Litchman, 2014:326). In many research approaches, there appears to be general agreement that the goal of analysing the text and words collected is to arrive at common themes and concepts. Most procedures involve a process in which the researcher chooses to code words, phrases, segments, or other portions of text (Litchman, 2014:323).

Analysing text involves discovering themes and subthemes, and reducing them to a manageable few (i.e. deciding which themes are important in any project) (Ryan & Bernard, 2008:85). Repetition is one of the easiest ways to identify themes. Some of the most obvious themes are those topics that occur and reoccur. The more the same concept occurs in a text, the more likely it is a theme. However, only the researcher can decide how many repetitions are enough to constitute a theme (Ryan & Bernard, 2008:88-89).

One limitation of this type of analysis is that it operated from a reductionist perspective. An alternative approach to an analysis that identifies themes and concepts is the emphasis on finding the narrative or telling stories, the intention is to examine how such stories can be used as structured or formal ways to transmit information (Litchman, 2014:324).

In using both techniques, the researcher identified repetitions across the collected data, as well as identified narratives that were similar across participants. The themes that were analysed were themes that emerged from the interview schedule (as already outlined above). Similar narratives across participants also emerged, when participants shared more information than was asked in the interview (for example how the participants had formed a close bond with each other and

motivated one another). In analysing the text, the researcher read and re-read the data, becoming immersed in the data and making notes. Thereafter the data was broken down into themes, using the language that the participants used in order to label the themes. Coding was also done to break up the data analytically, through highlighting and grouping different themes with different coloured pens. These themes were then built up through elaboration and interpretation (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999:140-144).

2.5 Ethics

Researchers have an ethical obligation to their participants. This is because social scientists immerse themselves in the lives of others, resulting in various laws, policies and practises being put into place. Therefore it is important for researchers to make sure that the rights, privacy and welfare of their participants are not hindered on (Berg, 2007:53).

“Social research has an ethical-moral dimension. Ethics defines what is or what is not legitimate to do or what ‘moral’ research procedure involves. Many ethical issues require you to balance two values: the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied or of others in society” (Neuman, 2011:143). Researchers are responsible for their participants, and thus need to oversee their interests and guide and protect them (Neuman, 2011:144).

Over the past several decades, a change in legislation has led to a creation of professional ethical codes of conduct (Berg, 2007:71). ‘Do not harm’ is the cornerstone of ethical research. Participants should have a reasonable expectation that they will not be harmed during the research process (Litchman, 2014:57).

2.5.1 Consent

No participant should ever be forced to participate in research: one of the biggest ethical principles is that of voluntary consent (Neuman, 2011:149). This is to identify and avoid any potential risks, which may be physical, social, or psychological to participants. Informed consent implies that the participants participate willingly, they are not manipulated or unfairly induced, are under no duress and there is no fraud and deceit (Berg, 2007:78). All participants of this research gave their informed consent, after the researcher explained the nature and the purpose of the research to them. The researcher first contacted participants telephonically, introducing herself and explaining the research. Thereafter participants decided whether they wanted to meet the researcher and picked a location of their choice. The researcher would again explain in detail

the nature of the research when meeting the participants and gave participants a choice to continue with the research. All participants in this research were adults and of consenting age.

Participants have a reasonable expectation that they will be thoroughly informed of the research and may freely choose whether or not to participate, and will not be pressurised into participating (Litchman, 2014:59). Should they choose to participate, the research should not be excessively intrusive. “Intrusiveness can refer to intruding on their time, intruding on their space, and intruding on their personal lives” (Litchman, 2014:61). None of the participants were coerced into taking part in the research, and the research was not intrusive. The researcher also informed participants, before commencing with the interview that the participants could choose to end the interview if they felt it was becoming intrusive.

An informed decision can only be made when participants know why they are being asked to participate. This can be through signing an informed consent agreement that make participants aware of their rights and the nature of the research (Neuman, 2011:149). It is the norm that consent is given in writing when the research is institutionally sponsored research. Usually, this written informed consent outlines any potential risk and benefit and states that this has been explained to participants. This must be dated and signed by both the participant and the researchers. This is done to ensure that participants are aware of the nature of their participation and are doing so in their own free will (Berg, 2007:78).

These signed consent forms need to be carefully kept by the researcher, in order to preserve the privacy of the participants. This is because they contain details of participants (Berg, 2007:78). For the purposes of this research, there were no signed informed consent slips as participants gave their consent verbally and were also informed that they were allowed to stop the interview at any time. These consent slips were also not used, as when interviews are recorded, implied consent can replace a signed consent form (Berg, 2007:78). When this happens, researchers need to inform participants fully about the nature of the research before the interview proceeds, and make sure that the participants are still willing to participate in the research. A positive response and a completed interview implies that informed consent was given in the absence of a signed consent form. The benefit of doing this is the elimination of any record of the participants’ details. To a large extent, this type of implied consent is related to the next topic of confidentiality and anonymity (Berg, 2007:78-79).

2.5.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

With anonymity, the participant will be anonymous. This means that the researcher uses a pseudonym and might change some of the participant's characteristics and give a fictitious location, but provides a social background of the participant (Neuman, 2011:152-153). Participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used for the purposes of this research, and these were used for six of the participants, as one participant wanted her real name to be used. Confidentiality means that names may be attached to information, however this information is not made public. This means that the information is never released in a way that allows the identification of the participants (Neuman, 2011:153).

Although confidentiality and anonymity may be confused as having the same meaning, their meanings are very distinct. With confidentiality, the researcher removes any identifying information, whereas with anonymity the participant remains nameless (Berg, 2007:79). In most qualitative research, however, anonymity is virtually non-existent as researchers know their participants. It is therefore important to ensure participants have a high degree of confidentiality. This means that researchers must use a pseudonym and alter any identifying information. Caution needs to be taken also when discussing participants and their social settings (Berg, 2007:79).

Participants have a right to expect that their privacy will be guaranteed and that no identifying information about them will be made public (Litchman, 2014:57). Participants also have a right to expect that the researcher will treat all information in a confidential manner, and that this information will not be shared with other parties (Litchman, 2014:59). Participants were informed that the research findings would be shared with the Beedz organisers, however they were assured that specifics of individual interviews would not be disclosed to anyone. "One can provide anonymity without confidentiality, or vice-versa, although the two usually go together. Anonymity without confidentiality happens if details about a specific individual are made public, but withholding the individual's name and certain details that would make it possible to identify the individual. Confidentiality without anonymity happens if there is no release of individual data to the public, but privately link individual names to data on specific individuals" (Neuman, 2011:153). Confidentiality without anonymity was used in some instances in this research. This is because whereas most of the participants wanted to remain anonymous, a few of them (including the organisers interviewed) preferred to be referred to by their real names.

2.5.3 Reflexivity

It is crucial for the researcher to take a reflexive stance during the entire research process, as s/he is connected to all parts of the research. “In general, reflexivity is an explicit self-consciousness about the researcher’s social, political, and value positions, in relation to how these might have influenced the design, execution and interpretation of the theory, data, and conclusions” (Litchman, 2014:32-33).

The researcher found that for this particular research she needed to be aware of her value positions. This is not only because like her participants she is a woman living in the third world, but also because she had previously been involved with Beedz. She had also been previously involved with River of Life church and therefore had built relationships with the programme directors, managers, facilitators and some of the trainees. The researcher had to take this into account when interviewing friends (who were current Beedz volunteers), as well as past trainees from Beedz. For this research, the researcher employed two methods of reflexivity. The researcher frequently discussed the research with other people, in order to check her interpretation of the findings. Some of these people knew about the topic, while others did not and this brought different angles and fresh perspectives. Secondly, the researcher kept a private reflexive journal, where she regularly documented the research process and reflected on decisions made regarding the research. This journal also included reflection on the researcher’s values and interests.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has looked in-depth at the research methods that were used in this research, as well as the method that was used for the analysis of the interviews. An argument has been made for the relevance of qualitative research, using in-depth, semi-formal interviews for this particular research. The following chapter will provide a theoretical grounding for the research.

3 Chapter Three: The Importance of Skills Training Projects for Women

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to put into context the importance of women's training projects. In doing so, three things are looked at: the role of adult basic education and women and education, literacy programmes that are designed for women, and women's training projects.

3.2 The role of adult basic education

“Adult basic education refers to all forms of organised education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy and numeracy, as well as the general knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that they require to survive, develop their capacities, live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning” (UNESCO, 1997:7). Basic education is important in opening up avenues of communication that would otherwise not be accessible, expanding personal choice and control over one's environment, as well as being essential for the attainment of many other skills. Basic education gives people access to information through both print and electronic media, enables them to better manage work and family responsibilities, and changes the way people may see themselves. It allows one to gain the self-confidence to participate in community affairs and influence various political issues. “Basic education is the key with which individuals can unlock the full range of their talents and realise their creative potentials” (UNESCO, 1997:17). It allows one to fully participate in their community. Basic education is empowering to everyone, as it gives people valuable skills to contribute to society (UNESCO, 1997:17). Basic education can be seen to be central to the achievement of gender equality, as it underpins much of women's full engagement in the economy (Department of Women, 2015:9).

In 2003, UNESCO estimated that girls and women, worldwide, comprised two-thirds of the one billion people with little or no education (Unterhalter, 2006:93). Typically, women are forced to enter the paid labour market, as a result of a shortfall in household income. This leaves daughters with the responsibility of having to take over the family responsibilities at the expense of their education (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:60). Females are considerably more vulnerable to family commitments (Department of Women, 2015:9).

Female access to quality education remains a concern in South Africa (Department of Women, 2015:34). Many women are disadvantaged as they have been unable to contribute to political debate as a result of persistent social and institutional inequalities, which include but are not limited to the lack of high quality formal education (Mober, 2014:141). Education is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being and societies' economic and social development (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003:1). Enhancing women's contribution to development is as much an economic as a social issue (Hill, 1993:v) In addition, the United Nations has articulated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include goals for improved education, gender equality, and women's empowerment. The MDGs emphasize education's essential role in building democratic societies and creating a foundation for sustained economic growth (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003:2). African leaders have acknowledged that women's roles need to be promoted in order for development to take place. This includes strengthening education and training (Maruatona, 2006:348).

3.3 Women and education

Educated women have the ability to enter the workforce on an equal footing with their male counterparts. The development of policies on education for women should be regarded as an ongoing debate, formulated at world conferences, and potentially adopted by communities and NGOs (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:61). Females that are educated positively benefit their families and communities (Hill, 1993:v). At a broader level education is seen as essential in reducing poverty through the promotion of economic growth, however it also enables women to engage more meaningfully in society (Department of Women, 2015:9).

Women who are educated are valuable to the production process, therefore priority should be given to women's and girls' literacy programmes. It is believed that mothers who are educated positively affect the health and nutrition status of their children and whole families, and this subsequently contributes to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:65-66). Furthermore, education for women positively influences their family health, the environment and sustainable development. This means that women are viewed as mechanisms for passing on the benefits of education to their loved ones. However, the criticism of this approach is that overlooks the fact that education is a basic human right for all, and legitimises access to education for women by only looking at its social and economic benefits (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:66).

Unterhalter (2006:96) argues that this line of thought is consistent with the women in development (WID) approach, that stresses expansion of schooling for girls and women to secure efficient economic growth or good governance. The slogan, 'if you educate a woman, you educate the nation', captures clearly the thinking which underpins this approach, suggesting that the education for women is not for women themselves, but instead for others (Unterhalter, 2006:98).

One of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations (UN) in 2000 was to achieve an equal number of boys and girls in school by 2005. This has not been realized, despite a range of WID-inspired policies and research. This downfall has been used as an opportunity to relook the WID approach and its assumptions (Unterhalter, 2006:105).

Education plays a role in information dissemination, however not much has been written about this. Education should be highly regarded as an integral part of attaining autonomy, as it equips one with political, socio-cultural, and economic knowledge which allows one to be critical about themselves and their circumstances. The empowerment approach to education considers self-esteem and personal fulfilment as being important objectives in the educational process (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:66).

In the international arena education is often put forward as the main strategy for achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. However, Guinee (2014:183) argues that constraining or promoting feelings of empowerment can be influenced by social expectations and family relations. It is argued that "education cannot be isolated from social influences and intimate relationships, even though it is a strong empowering factor, as these aspects are important in women's lives" (Guinee, 2014:184). The answer to the question whether education empowers women depends on how one defines 'empowerment' (Guinee, 2014:184). "Education should be seen as equipping women with skills and self-confidence that lead to empowerment, rather than as a process of turning 'disempowered' women into 'empowered' women" (Guinee, 2014:189).

Drawing on this, Murphy-Graham (2010:320) writes that although research has traditionally focused on the relationship between education and women's empowerment in the public sphere, women's empowerment in the private sphere has been neglected in empirical studies. Drawing on a theoretical model of change in marital relationships, Murphy-Graham (2010:320) examined

how women who participated in an innovative secondary education program in rural Honduran Garifuna communities were able to negotiate more equitable roles in their intimate relationships.

Many adult women who cannot read and write live in poor and remote rural areas, however the South African government has made efforts to provide universal access to education. Segregationist apartheid policies resulted in high rates of illiteracy among adult South Africans. This has further been fueled by a lack of development in rural areas, causing illiteracy in these areas to perpetuate the cycles of poverty due to its socio-economic impact. Illiteracy may translate to a lack of important skills to gain access to formal employment. (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). It is therefore of great importance that one looks at women's literacy programmes.

3.4 Women's literacy programmes

Literacy education in Africa plays an essential task of engaging in learning activities that enable adults to transform their perspective, it also creates an enabling environment for self-empowerment and the ability to make decisions in their communities (Matuatona, 2006:348-349). Women's literacy was recognised, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, as important in the empowerment process for women. This includes women's ability to participate in decision making in society and improving the well-being of their families (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003:1). In particular, black women have encountered barriers to education that have stemmed from national discriminatory policies as well as societal norms and expectations (Department of Women, 2015:33). A South African study done in 2006 showed that adult illiteracy was significantly higher in black communities and among women (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). Statistics South Africa (2011:19) reported that 14% of black African females had no schooling, 53.5% had not passed Grade 12, 22.7% had passed Grade 12, and a mere 8.9% of the black African female population had a post-matric qualification. This pattern could be argued to partly reflect the negative effect of apartheid-era segregationist policies with regards to access to social services, which include education as well as socio-cultural practices which tend to promote the education of male over female children (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). The apartheid government created barriers which prohibited black adults from participation in adult basic education opportunities (Groener, 2011:267). The main reason for advocating women's literacy is that it contributes to the ability to claim power. Literacy is not only a human right, but a societal value as well (Stromquist,

2006:140). Increasingly, adult literacy is being perceived as essential in the development process; personally, in the community, as well as nationally (Maruatona, 2006:349).

Adding to this, Robinson-Pant (2003:2) writes that the majority of people in the world who cannot read and write are women. In 2011 Statistics South Africa (2011:19) reported that of women (all races) who are 25 years and above of age, only 12.3% have a post-matric qualification. 25.2% of these women have Grade 12 as their highest qualification, whereas 50.6% have not passed Grade 12 and 11.9% have no schooling at all. These women are often concentrated in the poorest paid, most vulnerable areas of work, usually in the informal sector. They often lack the opportunity to develop new skills to improve their standard of living, through vocational training programmes or basic education.

When targeting women specifically, adult literacy programmes that have been implemented in most countries of the developing world are often characterised by high drop-out rates and a low attainment and retention of literacy skills. Many women who may have been excluded from primary schooling, due to economic and social factors, may also be excluded from literacy programmes because they fail to reach the poorest groups (Robinson-Pant, 2003:3). Access to these programmes can only be attained if people at grassroots level are involved in the policy making process. This enables them to take ownership of the programmes and ideas, without feeling alienated. Although issues such as inequality, class difference, poverty and unemployment cannot be addressed by these programmes alone, as these are structural problems, one must recognize that participator approaches in planning literacy programmes are crucial (Maruatona, 2006:349).

Several key studies (Ballar, 1991; Lind, 1989 and 1990; and Bown, 1990) were conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s to investigate why women are unable to participate in literacy programmes. Results indicated that factors included distance to class, male teachers, women's lack of time and domestic work-load, a lack of support from loved-ones (particularly husbands) and poor linkages to other development inputs. Understanding what literacy means to different women has assisted in understanding that blanket terms such as 'barriers' and 'motivation' may conceal the real reasons women drop out of literacy programmes (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4).

Participants in literacy programmes often do not see the value in them, as they believe that these literacy programmes do not lead anywhere. These programmes have been contrasted negatively

with school education, as many participants recognise that participating in these programmes does not yield formally recognised qualifications. This is even though many literacy programmes are linked to income generating components or health training. More recently, however, a certificate is provided at the end of certain courses if the participant passes the assessment. This can be seen in more formalised programmes, such as ABET, where the certificates are recognised and carry weight. However, a disadvantage to this formal approach to learning is that it could discourage women from attending as they are put off by less flexible learning approaches which may become dominated by males (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

One needs to research and understand what literacy means to women in each cultural context. This is a crucial first step when setting up literacy programmes aimed at women empowerment (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4). “Traditional approaches decontextualize both literacy and women. Literacy is narrowly and externally defined as a set of technical skills that convey similarly narrowly and externally defined development messages from the literate developers to the ‘illiterate’” (Sato, 2004:74). Literacy programme organisational structures and teaching methodologies are different from each other. There are small scale projects which focus primarily on empowerment, however there are also larger scale projects that aim to teach literacy in a short period of time; these are the well-known campaign approaches (Robinson-Pant, 2003:5). However, Groener (2011:272) cautions that literacy campaigns are usually short-term interventions, and longer-term sustainability and the effectiveness of the campaign should be secured.

Three well-known literacy programmes that use the ‘campaign approach’, in South Africa, are ABET, Kha Ri Gude and the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANIL) (National Planning Commission, 2012:261). Since South Africa became a democratic country in 1994, it has introduced several educational programmes such as ABET and SANIL. SANIL, a mass literacy programme launched in 2000, aims to eradicate high rates of illiteracy among adults, through providing universal access to education (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). These programmes also aim to promote self-reliance to previously socially disadvantaged groups in order to allow them to participate more effectively in national development processes (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). The two programmes that will be discussed in greater detail are ABET and Kha Ri Gude.

ABET, according to the Department of Basic Education (2014:1), is an outcomes based programme that is made available to adults who are interested in improving their literacy levels and furthering their basic education. It includes skills and knowledge, which cut across various contexts. These skills and knowledge are critical for economic, social, and political participation and transformation. ABET is a formally recognised qualification nationally.

Kha Ri Gude is a national campaign intended to provide millions of South Africans with the opportunity to become literate (Department of Basic Education, 2012:1). In February 2008, the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign was launched, with the aim of teaching 4.7 million adults to be able to read, write and calculate in one of the eleven official languages. Achieving this goal would have enabled South Africa to reach its ‘UN: Education for All’ commitment made at Dakar in 2000 – halving the country’s illiteracy rates by 2015. Unfortunately, at this point, no information exists regarding to what extent this target was met. Kha Ri Gude is freely available across all nine provinces in South Africa to adults who have little or no education. Kha Ri Gude teaches numeracy and literacy in mother tongue, as well as spoken English which is in line with ABET level 1 unit standards. Literacy and numeracy are taught in a way which integrates themes and life skills such as civic education, health and gender, and the environment. Kha Ri Gude materials are available in eleven languages, and have been adapted for use in Braille and to be used by the deaf (Department of Basic Education, 2012:1).

The Kha Ri Gude campaign employs an integrated and multilingual approach to literacy skills training in order to effectively address the particular and diverse needs of different groups of learners. Not only does the programme curriculum focus on basic literacy skills training of learners in their mother tongue, however this is also integrated with life skills training. (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:2). Specific efforts are made, within the Kha Ri Gude Campaign, to target vulnerable and often marginalised social groups such as women, young people, and people living with disabilities (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1).

Many programmes which are presented as ‘women’s literacy’ programmes are used as an ‘entry point’ to other interventions, such as family planning, savings and credit groups or maternal/child health programmes, which means that these programmes aim to teach more than

reading and writing skills, but may also include confidence building, business training, health education or child rearing skills (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4).

One of these programmes was implemented by Operation Upgrade. Operation Upgrade is a South African NGO that was founded in 1966 which recognises that illiteracy is both the cause and the effect of numerous social challenges. Operation Upgrade assists poor people with development projects, and in 2003, in an effort to promote development and social change in socially disadvantaged and marginalised rural communities, initiated the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP). The ALSTP is a multi-faceted literacy and development programme. Unlike the Beedz programme which focuses specifically on women, ALSTP is family based. ALSTP aims to address the practical needs and challenges facing poor, rural-based households. ALSTP runs in socially disadvantaged and remote rural areas such as KwaNibela (a remote rural area in the KwaZulu-Natal province). The primary target is adult women, however men, children, and youth (aged 25 – 50 years) also receive assistance through the programme (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1).

ALSTP offers mother tongue literacy and English as a second language. It uses an integrated approach to literacy skills training and community development, also focusing on numeracy and theme based training in:

- Livelihood development: income generation, food production/security and preservation;
- Health education: HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, childcare, home-based care for the sick, reproductive health, nutrition, and sanitation;
- Civic/life skills education: human rights, gender relations, conflict management and resolution; and
- Sustainable environmental conservation (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1-2).

The ALSTP endeavours to lower illiteracy rates among rural women. This is in order to enhance rural women's skills, so that they may become more productive, which will result in them generating income and alleviating poverty. Like the Beedz programme, the ALSTP also encourages women to be active in improving their standards of living, as well as those of their families and communities (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:2).

A similar programme is the Run Home to Read Literacy Programme (RHRLP), which is also an intergenerational (family-based) early childhood and adult literacy programme that promotes basic literacy skills development in areas that are disadvantaged, with the aims of making education accessible for all (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). Like the Beedz programme, the RHRLP particularly targets women (mothers and caregivers), however it differs to Beedz in that it also is aimed at pre-school children who have been marginalised from existing educational and literacy programmes, while also being an inclusive family-based educational programme (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:1). Literature (Department of Women, 2015:37) shows that it is substantially difficult for young mothers, who have left school while pregnant, to further their education. This has an impact on their future employability, which may in future compromise their children's own chances of success at school.

The RHRLP programme was officially launched by Project Literacy in June 2006 and was inspired by a similar programme that had been implemented by the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of South Africa (UNISA) as a pilot project. The RHRLP is located predominantly in the Limpopo province (in twenty-five rural communities) and in Pretoria (in the semi-urban areas of Soshanguve). RHRLP promotes not just basic literacy skills, but also a culture of intergenerational learning. Women are encouraged to actively participate in their children's education and are equipped with skills that enable them to contribute to socio-economic empowerment and improve their families' living standards (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:2).

Project Literacy realises that women play a critical role in shaping children's psychosocial development and thus their overall lives, as they are the primary caregivers and children's first educators. This has been the reason for targeting women as well as the quest to reduce the high female illiteracy rates in the country. When women's literacy skills are improved, this consistently enhances their capacities to support their children to acquire basic literacy skills necessary for successful long-term learning. Furthermore, as a result of women's positive appreciation of the role of education in their lives, there may be a reduction in high school drop-out rates and general poor performance, as children are influenced to value education by their caregivers (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2015:2). "Adult literacy training in the context of international social and economic development is often understood as instrumental in

women's empowerment and community, as well as, national development. That is, participants, increasingly women, are represented as the best means to achieve ends that are identified by somebody else, including development academics, experts, or practitioners who work through their own discourses, such as adult literacy, community development, and women and development" (Sato, 2004:74).

The status of literacy education has been raised by several NGO programmes through the improvement of training and support facilities for facilitators. This includes implementing programmes which enable facilitators to meet in order to exchange ideas and to receive regular follow-up training. However, these approaches increase the costs of running literacy programmes, and are therefore rarely implemented on larger scale government programmes. However, UNISA has succeeded in recruiting and providing at least a year's training to over 3000 'volunteer educators', many of whom were unemployed women for their ABET programme (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

Planners need to take into account different women's needs and constraints before making decisions about language, literacy curriculum, and forms of organisation and class structure. This is because the women enrolling in a literacy class may have different motivations in doing so, in terms of the ways in which they may want to use the literacy in their everyday lives (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11). Women are not a homogenous group; they differ in terms of social class, ethnicity, religious affiliation and age (De La Rey, 119:6). Similarly, they differ widely in their life experiences, familiarity with different languages, domestic workloads, status and roles in the household. When planners do not take these differences into account, some women may feel marginalised within the programme as they may find the curriculum irrelevant or they might not be able to attend because classes are held at times when they are needed at home (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11). This may lead to women feeling that their specific needs are not being taken into account and then dropping out – often giving the reason that they are too busy or too old, rather than that the course did not cater to their needs (Robinson-Pant, 2003:12).

Multiple Action Research Group (MARG), is a Delhi-based NGO that started a project to educate women about their legal rights, as they believed that literacy alone was not sufficient in bringing about empowerment for women. MARG responded to the Delhi women's needs through developing a series of colour coded manuals on 23 laws which affected women's lives.

Different colours were used in identifying different subject matters, for example, red was around marriage laws, blue about citizens' rights versus the police. In addition, MARG acted as a resource for other community organisations (some implementing non-formal education programmes) and running three-day legal training workshops. These workshops were open to both literate and non-literate women and through role play, video and 'reading' the simple, clear illustrated manuals (non-literate women drew on visual literacy to do this), these women began to gain more awareness of their rights. The experience of using the manuals as tools in the workplace was an inspiration for some older women to learn to read more and they began to attend literacy classes. These manuals provided long term support for women to take legal and social action, for example after the women labourers in Bihar learned about the Equal Remuneration Act, they refused to work in the fields until they were paid equal wages – showing their employers the relevant sections in their manual as evidence. Similarly, in another case, community members stopped a fourteen-year-old girl from being forcibly married, after reading about the Child Marriage Restraint Act (Robinson-Pant, 2003:6).

Providing a more holistic approach to women's education is important, therefore researchers need to look at the interconnections between literacy and vocational skills programmes, and see how these could be strengthened (Robinson-Pant, 2003:2). The following section thus looks at the importance of these vocational skills programmes, and in particular looks at the importance of skills training projects/programmes for women, with a few examples of these being drawn on. For these examples, the researcher relies on the publicity literature that has been published by the organisations involved, as an indication of the kinds of initiatives that are taking place. This is not to say that the researcher accepts that they are necessarily working as effectively stated by the organisations.

3.5 Skills training projects

Although income generation projects (IGPs) for women may bring about changes in their lives, they may also result in further marginalising them, as it might distract one from the goal of women's empowerment and women's overall wellbeing (Rajamma, 1993:53). It is therefore important to also focus on the education and training of women.

When planning training initiatives aimed at promoting the participation of women in public office and positions of influence, planners should also note that low levels and poor quality of

education are relevant (Mober, 2014:143). Terms such as ‘capacity building’, ‘empowerment’, and ‘leadership training’ are often used in referring to the aims and objectives of women’s training programmes (Mober, 2014:143). These terms will be looked at in detail below, drawing on a few examples to illustrate them.

3.5.1 The ‘capacity building’ approach:

ASTHA is a voluntary organisation in Southern Rajasthan, India, which aims to raise awareness among women’s groups. Training programmes are used to make women aware of their resources and to develop organisational skills, as they are seen as an important instrument of change and development (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:70).

The Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) is a pilot project in Liberia that focuses on giving young Liberian women practical training to help them find jobs. This project is similar to Beedz as it encompasses both a theoretical and a practical component. This consists of six months of classroom training, which is followed by six months of placement and support (which the Beedz programme does not have), including micro-enterprise advisory services and internship and job placement assistance. Participants in this project, like those in Beedz, are trained in business development skills, job skills and life skills, with the aim of increasing young women’s wage or self-employment. According to mid-line results from 2012, the program led to a 47% increase in employment among trainees, increased average weekly income by 80%, and significantly increased saving among girls. An end-line survey conducted more than a year after the completion of the program confirmed that the impacts were sustained (The World Bank Group, 2014:2).

The EPAG was the first pilot project within the World Bank’s Adolescent Girls initiative, with the primary objectives of increasing employment and income among young women. The project has been very successful in achieving this. The life skills training is relevant as it is specifically designed for Liberian girls. According to the World Bank Group (2014:2) the evaluation of this project provides strong evidence that skills training can be an effective policy option for increasing employment and promoting empowerment among young women. It also validates the importance of delivering business skills training along with job and life skills training in contexts where wage employment is limited.

Similar to this, Sewing Training for out-of-work women is a community development project that is aimed at empowering women by teaching social skills to unemployed women in an informal settlement in Cape Town, South Africa. Like Beedz, the sewing programme is only one of the courses that are provided, with other programmes including baking, home-management, wood-work, and computer and business skills for unemployed individuals in the informal settlement. These programmes are run by an NGO that has been operating in the area for over 15 years (Botha, van der Merwe, Bester, & Albertyn, 2007:11).

Another training project is called Snowflake Bake for a Profit, which is a training course that is also based in the Western Cape, South Africa. This project, like Beedz, has abstract and concrete goals, which are to empower individuals (the abstract goal) and equipping them with entrepreneurial skills (concrete goal). Empowerment, in this context, is defined as “the process of increasing people’s power or potential at the personal, interpersonal, or political level by allowing them to initiate, be actively involved in and contribute to programmes aimed at improving their environment, their lives and of those around them” (Botha et al., 2007:11). Entrepreneurship, in this context, is defined as “the process of doing something new and something different for the purpose of creating wealth for the individual and adding value to society” (Botha et al., 2007:11) Entrepreneurial skills are essential when one wants to establish a business. The Snowflake Bake for a Profit course consists of six once-a-week daylong classes spread over a period of six weeks. Similar to the Beedz programme, this course includes a theory section with the aim of equipping participants to become professional bakers, and these theoretical classes on business skills are alternated weekly with practical baking classes (Botha et al. 2007:11).

3.5.2 The ‘empowerment’ approach:

Coca-Cola believes that there is a need to create more choices for women as well as create female role models and mentors in places where economic opportunities have historically been limited. Coca-Cola believes that this can be brought about through the empowerment of women. Coca-Cola has implemented a 5by20 initiative through collaborating with NGOs, governments and businesses, where programs are implemented to help break down social and economic barriers. These programs include access to business skills training, financial services, assets, and support networks of peers and mentors (The Coca-Cola Company, 2012:1).

In Brazil, between 30 and 40% of the Coletivo program's graduates go on to get a job, where Coca-Cola is working with local NGOs to teach retail skills to young adults in low-income areas to help them enter the job market. Some go on to share what they have learned by training other women running small businesses (The Coca-Cola Company, 2012:2).

A pilot program providing basic entrepreneurial skills training to 300 women in the province of Palawan, in the Philippines has been a result of Coca-Cola partnering with the Philippines Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). And, in South Africa, through a pilot programme, Coca-Cola is providing women retailers with business skills training specifically focused on engaging women (The Coca-Cola Company, 2012:2).

3.5.3 The 'leadership training' approach:

The 'leadership training' approach primarily seeks to promote women to positions of leadership in order to influence change in an environment of transition from a singularly rigid state to the greater plurality however, the 'feminist leadership model' seeks to transform power structures, with an emphasis on social justice, inclusion, and the realisation of rights, rather than to reproduce structures that reinforce subordination (Mober, 2014:143).

In the rural areas of South Africa poverty and unemployment are urgent problems, and as a result the South African government has encouraged entrepreneurship and training as a means to addressing the problem of unemployment. Social intervention programmes, specifically adult education programmes, are used for the transfer of skills and knowledge, with the emphasis on an outcome of competence in life-skills, rather than one based on pure academic knowledge and technical skills alone (Botha et al., 2007:10).

3.6 Skills training projects in South Africa

It is not only NGOs that are involved in skills training projects for women however, government is also involved. The B'avumile skills development programme is a women's empowerment capacity-building initiative, supported by the South African Department of Trade and Industry, which is aimed at identifying talent in the arts and crafts and textiles and clothing sectors. This formal training programme develops women's expertise in the production of marketable goods and the creation of formal enterprises in the creative industry. Not only is emphasis placed on skills development, the economic empowerment of women is also emphasised (Department of Trade and Industry, 2015:1).

B'avumile's aims include:

- Recruiting women who are involved in the creative, clothing and textile industries, with skills in embroidery, sewing, weaving, and beading;
- Providing specialist skills training and assisting women to establish their own enterprises or co-operatives;
- B'avumile partners with the Small Enterprise Development Agency, in order to provide additional training in packaging, customer service, basic bookkeeping, and registering a business;
- B'avumile also provides training sessions in municipalities, which includes training on business skills. A number of women who have undergone this training run successful businesses and have been further assisted through other products offered by the Department of Trade and Industry (Department of Trade and Industry, 2015:1).

Different provinces are targeted each year and different women enterprises are identified to participate in the process. A selection process is undertaken with the panel of experts in the sector, provincial partners, including the provincial government departments and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Department of Trade and Industry, 2015:1).

One of South Africa's greatest challenges is job creation and the development of people's skills. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was conceptualised to introduce social development by means of people-driven processes. This is what has inspired the emphasis on community development in South Africa today. This process involves that communities must take responsibility for their own development however, communities have to be empowered to take charge of this development, for the development to be sustainable (Botha et al., 2007:10).

The Department of Consumer Science Foods, Clothing and Housing, at the University of Stellenbosch, launched the Development and Advancement of Rural Entrepreneurship (DARE) programme in 1999 – an entrepreneurial skills training programme following the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach helping communities to address their training needs. This approach is believed to be a strategy that not only facilitates empowerment, but also facilitates the development of entrepreneurial skills. The DARE programme components include the training of entrepreneurs, the identification of resources and (where feasible) access to resources and support to entrepreneurs in establishing their own small businesses. The intended outcomes

of the programme are entrepreneurship and empowerment on various levels, namely the micro, interface and macro levels (Botha et al., 2007:10). The DARE programme has been involved in the training of entrepreneurs through a variety of projects in the rural towns of Darling, Stellenbosch, Montagu and Paarl in the Western Cape Province of South Africa (Botha et al., 2007:10).

PAR has become a common approach to social programmes in South Africa. PAR has been described as a process that combines three activities: research, education and action. PAR has a dual objective, not only does this approach hope to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a community, but it also aims to empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge (Botha et al., 2007:10). “PAR is a systematic research method that includes data gathering and constant feedback to the participants. The four stages of PAR are: planning, action, observation, and reflection” (Botha et al., 2007:11).

Many women who participate in women’s leadership training programmes have no prior knowledge of participatory learning and teaching methods. Courses need to be long enough for learning development to occur, as women are supported across a range of educational needs, and need to be elevated into leadership positions whether at local or national levels (Mober, 2014:151).

Monitoring and evaluation strategies are crucial for training programmes to be able to adapt more effectively to the changing needs of women leaders (Mober, 2014:153). Robinson-Pant (2003:11) writes that planners need to look at interventions that are relevant to a specific target group, especially within the field of Adult Education and Community Development. This is not only important for the effectiveness of the intervention, but also for the satisfaction of the participants.

It is important to monitor the effectiveness of programmes, as the empowerment of ‘disempowered’ individuals is often the stated aim of many interventions, and thus monitoring this is imperative and enhances accountability. When the empowerment of the individual is the goal there should follow the act of developing, building and increasing power of individuals through their sharing of ideas and working together during training. It is therefore crucial to provide training so that individuals become less dependent on others for help, which will allow them to lead a better life (Botha et al., 2007:10).

Participants have expectations at the start of intervention programmes, therefore it is important to be accountable. Often these expectations are created by the professional when marketing the specific programme. Not only is it unethical to fail to deliver on promises made, however this could lead to making facilitation more difficult at a later stage as the participants become resistant to change (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

Over the past decades, a wider definition of what counts as 'skills training' has developed with important implications for women. As a result, many NGO and government programmes have increasingly realised that training provision in 'hard' technical skills, whether electronics or weaving, is not enough to ensure that the trainee enters profitable employment, and the courses in complementary 'soft' skill development, such as confidence-building, entrepreneurship, and leadership are crucial. These courses have particularly benefited women trainees who often need to 'catch-up' with male trainees in these areas. Over the years varying technical skills have been provided, with the realisation that trainees need to gain transferable skills in order to be able to respond to the dynamic needs of the employment market. This increasing merger between academic and vocational education means that women are not constrained to skills training programmes that are gender specific, but they are able to attend more generic skills development programmes (Robinson-Pant, 2003:16).

Research done has revealed that it is not clear cut whether women learn more effectively in women-only or mixed groups. Each has its own advantages, for example with women-only classes, women have the opportunity to 'catch up' on skills which male trainees may already have (including literacy). These classes also provide a supportive environment to build up confidence as well as the opportunity to discuss gender-related issues, such as harassment in the workplace. However, many women-only projects have (like women's literacy programmes) had limited funding and resources and have thus been regarded by participants as second best. It is important to note that women's skills training projects can potentially run the risk of limiting women to traditional and less profitable areas of work (Robinson-Pant, 2003:17).

The more innovative planners of programmes specifically targeted at women have aimed to challenge, rather than to reinforce women's existing roles. This means that the main consideration is for women to gain access to work which is better paid and with better conditions, however not neglecting issues that have been traditionally dealt with, such as areas

around women's reproductive role. This could be seen as addressing women's strategic (long term) gender needs (such as enhancing legal status) through providing skills training around a practical (short term more immediate) gender need, such as increasing their income (Robinson-Pant, 2003:16).

It is essential for planners to draw on the wider definition of 'skills' and develop a more holistic approach for skills training programmes for women to be empowering and profitable. The more successful programmes, according to Robinson-Pant (2003:16-17) share the following principles:

- Women can catch up to men, in both 'hard' and 'soft' skills, as the curriculum offered is flexible and broad;
- Training that is provided gives women skills that can be applied in both traditional areas of employment and are responsive to changing market needs;
- Women's existing skills are recognised and built on to provide new opportunities. Planners are also aware of the differences in terms of educational background, ethnicity, and age, in the various women;
- A supportive and conducive environment for learning is created, based on decisions around a variety of factors;
- A holistic approach for skills training is taken.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, women's leadership training should follow a feminist, transformational approach that analyses power imbalances and supports women to lead differently, rather than reproducing unequal structures (Mober, 2014:153). For this research, it is believed that training should be looked at through the third world feminist perspective. This perspective understands that women gain agency on the terms of multiple discourses, many of which fall outside those of adult literacy. It recognises third world women as subjects who exercise power upon themselves to pursue their own ends as articulated within and shaped by formative discourses. Third world feminism is chosen as a framework, as it helps in acknowledging the multiple capacities and perspectives of women in the third worlds who co-participate in global power relations (Sato, 2004:85).

4 Chapter Four: Third world feminism and the role of the church

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces third world feminism and argues for its relevance in the South African context. In doing so, it maps its history and looks at how its theory may be applied in some NGOs. This chapter also looks at the important role that churches have to play in the development of the community.

4.2 The history of third world feminism

Although there are several different versions of feminism, several share a number of features. For traditional western feminist approaches (particularly liberal and radical feminism) society is seen as divided into different social groups, with the major division being between men and women, resulting in women's oppression by men (Sen & Grown, 1987:19). Liberal feminism does not take class and ethnic differences of women into account, and advocates that when women attain equality, all discriminatory practices will be eliminated (Wolpe, 1998:89-90). Marxist feminists, in contrast, believe that classism, and not sexism, is the root cause of women's oppression (Tong, 2009:96). Marxist and socialist feminists share the view that there is a need to investigate the links that exist between women's work and status and their self-image, in order for one to understand the oppression of women's unique character (Tong, 2009:98).

In contrast, some feminist writers, such as third world feminists, disagree that all women are equally oppressed and disadvantaged in contemporary societies. These writers emphasise the different experiences and problems faced by various groups of women. They recognise that differences exist between women according to a range of variables such as age, class background, location, race and ethnicity. Like other feminists, third world feminists recognise the existence of the oppression of women, however they do not see it as affecting all women to the same extent and in the same way. Since different women's problems vary, they require different solutions. For many South African women, problems of nationality, class, and race are intimately linked to their specific oppression as women. Therefore, it is not only necessary, but also legitimate to define feminism to include the struggle against all forms of oppression. In many instances, changes on other fronts should accompany gender equality (Sen & Grown, 1987:19).

Histories of third world women's engagement with feminism are in far shorter supply as they have not been explored in great detail in comparison to the history of traditional western (white, middle-class) feminism. Although a large body of work on 'women in developing countries' exists, it does not necessarily engage feminist questions (Mohanty, 1991:336). In particular, in South Africa, there exists a tendency to draw heavily on theories of feminism from a traditional western perspective, and much work needs to be done on differentiating and conceptualizing the different interests of various women (Steyn, 1998:50). The scholarship on women in liberation movements, or on the role and status of women in individual cultures, also does not necessarily engage questions of feminist historiography (Mohanty, 1991:336). What also lacks in the literature is analytical and theoretical work on women and development issues, which is striking given the high proportion of women who are in rural areas (Wolpe, 1998:91). "In terms of context, the history of traditional white feminism is not very different from the history of the feminism of third world women: all of these varied histories emerge in relation to other struggles" (Mohanty, 1991:344). However, one needs to note that the gender of black women is constructed in a way that is different from white femininity in that it is also subject to racism (Carby, 1999:112).

According to Johnson-Odim (1991:314) while it is true that the oppression of disadvantaged and marginalised Euro-American women is linked to gender and class relations, one should take note that the oppression of third world women is also linked to race relations and often imperialism. These added dimensions thus produce a different context in which it is important that third world women's struggles be understood.

Six different traditional feminist discourses together group third world women as a singular subject. Firstly, third world women are defined as victims of male violence. This is an inaccurate perception that generalises all women into a uniform group where all suffer from male violence, and all men are put into a violent group. The second discourse depicts women as universal dependents. Third world women tend to be represented as both economically and politically dependent. Thirdly, third world women are seen as victims of the colonial process; a lot of traditional western feminist scholarship tends to represent third world women as uniform victims of the colonial process (Mohanty, 1991:341). Fourth, third world women are seen as victims of familial systems (Mohanty, 1991:342). A lot of traditional western feminist scholarship

represents third world women as a wife, mother, sister, or daughter. It is mainly in the family where women are constructed and defined. Women are uniformly represented as attaining a value and a form of status within their families, which are portrayed as uniform structures that make women an oppressed group. However, this would be to totally deny the historical or contextual inconsistency of the power structures that is the family and to again assume that women are nothing but sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the family. Fifth, third world women are seen as victims of the development processes (Mohanty, 1991:344). Third world women are seen as one group with the same problems and needs. However, development policies do not affect differently positioned third world women in the same way – they vary depending on class, culture, religion, other ideological systems, and different social frameworks. Lastly, third world women are portrayed as victims of religious ideologies. Here, third world women are represented as a uniform group, oppressed by religious ideologies and traditions. A lack of specificity denies that third world women are differently positioned within religious communities (Hansson & Henriksson, 2013:12-15).

“The major analytic difference in the writings on the emergence of some traditional white, western, middle-class liberal feminism and the feminist politics of black women in the United States of America, is the contrast between a singular focus on gender as a basis for equal rights, and a focus on gender in relation to race and/or class as part of a broader liberation struggle” (Mohanty, 1991:343). However, having said this, one needs to be wary of the danger of grouping all schools of feminism from the first world into one ‘first world feminist category’, as some of schools of feminism, such as Marxist feminism and socialist feminism also take into account class and other variables.

Hansson & Henriksson (2013:7) argue that western feminists need to change their way of portraying third world women as a homogenous group, as there exist connections between race, class, and gender in the lives of third world women (Johnson-Odim, 1991:316). African women’s struggles are not only located at the ‘household level’ i.e. within the family including between men and women, but are also located at the national and international levels, where many of the same things which oppress women (i.e. racism, imperialism, economic exploitation) also oppress men, although not always precisely in the same way (Johnson-Odim, 1991:318).

It is important to note that gender discrimination is not the primary oppression of third world women, even though it is clear that sexual equality is a major goal on which all feminists can agree. Therefore, a feminism that is narrowly defined, focusing only on the eradication of gender discrimination as the answer to ending women's oppression, is inadequate in redressing the oppression of third world women. Some third world women have chosen to omit the word 'feminist' from their vocabulary, which emphasises the common feelings among third world women, that their struggle as feminists is connected to the struggle of their communities against racism, economic exploitation, etc. (Johnson-Odim, 1991:315). As Mohanty (1991:339) notes, "The word 'feminism' is itself questioned by many third world women. Feminist movements have been challenged on the grounds of cultural colonialism, and of short-sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences, and in terms of internal racism, classism, and homophobia". Therefore, the crucial issue for third world women is what the definition and agenda of that feminism will be, rather than whether there is a need for feminism, i.e. a general movement which seeks to redress women's oppression. The need for feminism arises from the desire to create a world in which women are not oppressed (Johnson-Odim, 1991:319).

Third world women have recognised that the source of their oppression cannot be primarily attributed to gender alone (Johnson-Odim, 1991:319). Rather a 'triple' oppression of gender, race, and class exists (Carby, 1999:111). In the third world, women's demands have been explicitly political, with work, education, and health as major issues and not so linked to their specific impact on women. In 'underdeveloped' societies it is not just a question of internal redistribution of resources, but of their generation and control; not just equal opportunity between men and women, but the creation of opportunity itself; not only the position of women in society, but the position of the societies in which third world women find themselves (Johnson-Odim, 1991:319-320).

An example is that, for African women, problems such as nutrition, infant mortality, illiteracy, health-care delivery and skills training have been of central concern in their lives, and many African women have articulated that they wish these issues had the same kind of exposure within the feminist movement in the west. Many third world women feel that their self-defined needs are not addressed as priority items in the international feminist agenda, which does not address

colonialism. Feminism is about the diverse political expressions of a variety of women from vast backgrounds. Feminism needs to be diverse, in order to be able to respond to the different needs and concerns that different women have. This diverse feminism builds on the first step of opposing gender oppression and hierarchy (Johnson-Odim, 1991:322).

Discussion on the political and intellectual construction on third world feminism is two-fold. It critiques hegemonic 'western' feminisms, which is a process of deconstructing, while simultaneously formulates "autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded feminist concerns", which is a process of constructing (Mohanty, 1991:334).

Mohanty (1991:336) argues that: "if such concepts are assumed to be universally applicable, and daily material practices of homogenisation of class, race, religious, then daily material practices of women in the third world can create a false sense of the commonality of oppressions, interests, and struggles between and among women globally. Beyond the notion of sisterhood there may still be racism, colonialism, and imperialism" (Mohanty, 1991:333). In other words, western feminist discourse, by assuming women as a coherent, already established group which is placed in kinship, legal, and other structures, defines third world women as subjects outside social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted through these very structures (Mohanty, 1991:331).

"To define feminism purely in gendered terms assumes that the consciousness of being 'women' has nothing to do with race, class, nation, or sexuality, just with gender. But no one 'becomes a woman' purely because she is female. Ideologies of womanhood have as much to do with class and race as they have to do with gender" (Mohanty, 1991:342-343). De le Rey (1997:7) writes that gender cannot be separated from the rest of the person, for one is not only 'gendered' but also classed and raced. Therefore, the experience of being a woman is tied to aspects of race and class. This acknowledgement of difference of experience contributed to a significant theoretical shift not only in feminism, but in the social sciences in general. Within feminist theory, it led to a rejection of the essentialism of gender – the idea that women and men are different (not necessarily biologically but socially and culturally) and all women have a shared experience of patriarchy. And this has had consequences for political organisation, research, and theory.

Third world women are not a part of a singular group, however there are links that exist in their histories and struggles against issues of imperialism, colonialism, sexism, racism, and monopoly

(Mohanty, 1991:336). “Alliances and divisions of class, religion, sexuality, and history, for instance, are necessarily internal” (Mohanty, 1991:339). And although the problems or needs that third world women have in common include education, work, access to health services, political participation and legal rights, differently positioned third world women are not affected by development policies in the same way – they vary depending on class, culture, religion, other ideological institutions and different social frameworks (Hansson & Henriksson, 2013:14).

Women have strongly demanded that their voices be heard, that their gender-based interests be included and mainstreamed in the new South African democratic agenda, and that they equally participate with men in the democratisation process. A massive campaign of political mobilisation and sensitisation of other women (and men) on the linkage between gender equity, democracy, and development has been embarked by women activists and scholars in response to this. In other words, the struggle against gender subordination is being linked with struggles against oppression based on national, class, and other identities (Nzomo, 1995:132).

Although third world feminism places emphasis on women in different regions, it does not make the same argument as postmodernists. Postmodernist discourse argues that women are not a standardised category, but however belong to diverse socio-economic groupings based on their class, ethnic or racial identities. Therefore, gender subordination is not experienced with the same intensity and in the same way at all times. “Thus, while postmodernist discourse would emphasise difference and diversity among women, African feminists are emphasising unity in diversity as a necessary strategy for strengthening the women’s movement, their solidarity, and their empowerment. Third world women have had a long history of attempting to empower themselves through women’s organisations” (Nzomo, 1995:136).

The manner in which western and third world feminisms differ is found in how they conceptualise women as the subject of struggles. For some western feminist, equality between men and women is at the core of their struggles, however for third world feminism basic material needs are crucial, in the context of an unequal international economic order. This means that women’s situations are perceived not only as the result of unequal gender relations, but as the consequences of a wide range of oppressive situations that transcend gender categories and are also related to race, class, and citizenship cleavages (Saunders, 2002:6). It follows that dealing

with a wide array of issues will have the effect of improving women's lives, even if the issues are not always narrowly defined as exclusively women's issues.

The perspective of third world feminism can be reflected in the agenda and desires articulated by a well-known network of activists, researchers, and policy makers spread across different countries referred to as DAWN – Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era. DAWN consists of feminist scholars, researchers and activists that together work towards sustainable democratic development, gender justice and economic justice. (DAWN, 2015:1).

Accordingly, the principal struggle of third world women should be centred on the satisfaction of basic needs, which are understood as basic rights. DAWN believes women should attain freedom from the categories that are mutually intertwined in their real lives, those being gender related inequalities, but also from those related to race, class and national asymmetries. For a vast majority of women in the third world, injustice as a result of class, race, and nationality divisions is closely related to the oppressive situations that they experience as women (Sen and Grown, 1987:19).

Consequently, many third world women activists – such as those in DAWN – tend to reject the notion of a single and uniform feminist movement, acknowledging the heterogeneity that derives from diverse sources of oppression. In their view, feminism is more widely defined as a struggle against all forms of injustice, also requiring changes across the different fronts in order to attain advancements in women's rights. However, differences on the ground should not cloud the battle to alter gender subordination which remains – among others – a relevant form of oppression (Sen and Grown, 1987:19)

4.3 Third world feminist perspective and NGOs

NGOs play a crucial role in influencing policy and in international development efforts. This then leads to the importance of investigating how these NGOs represent third world women. If they rely on inaccurate and generalized information on third world women, their proposed 'solutions' may be problematic for the women these NGOs seek to assist, as well as distorted and inadequate (Hansson and Henriksson, 2013:4-5).

The information on the organisations presented below is taken from the literature that is publicly available from each organisation. Once again, the aims here are to illustrate and to give an

indication of the kind of initiatives taking place globally and in South Africa, with regards to the third world feminist perspective and NGOs. This is not an indication of face value acceptance of what the organisations claim.

Third world feminism plays a critical role in NGOs. One could argue that ABANTU for Development, a registered NGO established in 1991 by African women based in Europe, works within the framework of third world feminism. ABANTU for Development is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. ABANTU for Development believes and teaches that women's political participation from the grassroots up creates self-empowerment for women. NGOs play a critical role as they work to train women for leadership, and in doing so develop their leadership skills. Women use these skills not only in professions, but in politics and business as well. ABANTU for Development, like the Beedz project, does not subscribe to the traditional role of leadership and recognises that a leader can be a woman in a market selling food to pay for her daughter's education (Skaine, 2010:348).

ABANTU's vision is of empowered women and men collaborating to address gender inequalities and promote transformational leadership and development for a just society. ABANTU exists to build the capacity of women to participate in decision-making at all levels so that they may influence policies from a gender perspective and address inequalities and injustices in social relations. It is a network of people who believe that gender disparity is not only an injustice, but contributes to poverty and is a major hindrance to development. Although ABANTU is an independent network, it strategically collaborates with others in order to advance its cause. The organisation seeks to achieve its vision through advocacy, training, research, institutional development and networking. ABANTU was established to enhance the capacity of African people, in particular women, to participate in development and to increase the participation of African women in the political and economic structures of their countries (Abantu for Development, 2015:1).

Similarly, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, which is a Swedish grassroots organisation, collaborates with women's organisations, thus strengthening the organisation of women in conflict regions and supporting their work to promote women's rights and peace. Kvinna till

Kvinna means 'Woman to Woman'. The central aim is to increase women's power and influence (Kvinna till Kvinna, 2015:1).

Kvinna till Kvinna conducts projects in regions of war and armed conflict, as one of its established purposes, with the aims of promoting women's self-reliance and self-esteem, women's psychosocial and/or physical health; and to contribute to promoting women's participation in the building of a democratic society (Kvinna till Kvinna, 2015:1). Their work is based on United Nations (UN) conventions on equal rights for men and women; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. This organisation pays special attention to, and works towards, the implementation of the global agenda initiated in 2000 by the UN Security Council with the adoption of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Women are important in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction, and not only does this resolution reaffirm this, it also stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (Kvinna till Kvinna, 2015:1).

Kvinna till Kvinna promotes women's participation, rights and security, using women's own organisations as a starting point and changing discriminatory structures. This is a prerequisite for increasing women's participation in all social processes, such as peace negotiations, and economic and political influence (Kvinna till Kvinna, 2015:1).

Another NGO worth noting is Women for Women International. Women for Women International operates on the basis of the motto that strong women build strong nations. Nearly 420 000 marginalised women in countries affected by war and conflict have been assisted by Women for Women International since 1993. The organisation works in eight different countries, directly with women, offering support, tools, and access to life-changing skills to move from crisis and poverty, to stability and economic self-sufficiency (Women for Women International, 2015:1).

Like Beedz, Women for Women International brings women together in a safe space to learn life, business, and vocational skills. Women are supported through receiving a monthly stipend. Women not only increase their ability to earn an income with new skills that are in demand,

however they also learn about their legal rights, and they become well-informed about health and nutrition (Women for Women International, 2015:1).

Both Kvinna till Kvinna and Women for International are grassroots organisations, which focus on assisting women in conflict zone areas in the third world and work to increase women's representation in peace processes (Hansson & Henriksson, 2013:16).

4.4 The role of the church

As this research is based on a skills training project for women that is run by a local church it is important to look at the role that the church has to play in development. Churches have made substantial progress, particularly in remote rural areas, where they have been able to provide health, social and spiritual services, as well as education (including non-formal education) (Scheyvens, 2003:29). It would be easy for an outsider searching for examples of innovative feminist development initiatives to overlook and dismiss the important role that church groups play, particularly those that consist of women only. These groups offer a wide range of opportunities, which include solidarity building, networking, and non-formal education (Scheyvens, 2003:24).

It was the missionaries who first established women's church groups in Melanesia, and traditionally these groups adopted a welfare approach which meant that women were only recognized as women or wives. This approach has been criticized as portraying women as passive beneficiaries, rather than active change agents. Common programmes in this approach looked at women's traditional roles, such as cooking and nutrition, maternal-child health, and sewing and handicrafts (Scheyvens, 2003:26). An exclusive focus on traditional roles, also referred to as 'domestic topics' fails to equip women with skills that will enable them to play a dynamic role in the development process (Scheyvens, 2003:29). Arguably, there may be a strong local demand for these skills, however concentrating on them solely diverts attention from many other issues that concern women (Scheyvens, 2003:26).

By contrast, working from the empowerment approach to women's development challenges the status quo, as it aims to work towards more equitable societies (Moser, 1989:1814-1817). This approach can be particularly useful when working with women who have a poor sense of self-worth (such as those described by the organisers of Beedz). The empowerment approach

emerged mainly from the writing of third world feminism as well as from grassroots organizational experiences of non-western women (Sen and Grown, 1987:20).

Sen and Grown (1987:21) write that the empowerment approach does not just demand more resources for women, as it seeks to transform relationships not just between men and women but also among classes and races, so that they are no longer characterized by oppression. Women need skills, confidence and knowledge to determine the development path that they wish to follow and to challenge the entrenched structures that are a hindrance to them.

A strict division does not exist between the welfare and empowerment approaches in practice, in fact what is of importance is the process of women coming together to share ideas, taking time out of their ordinary daily activities and responsibilities, and networking to start identifying their strategic interests (Scheyvens, 2003:39). Through encouraging collective action, these groups not only assist women in achieving power through identifying their concerns; however, these groups also provide women with opportunities for developing networks and growing women's management and leadership skills. Through collective problem solving, these groups may benefit women by broadening their awareness and increasing their confidence (Himmelstrand, 1992:112).

In addition to involving women in the administration and teaching them skills which may build self-confidence and contribute to psychological empowerment, women's groups can also contribute to political or social empowerment by providing an environment where women can articulate their concerns and collectively solve problems. However, it should not be automatically assumed that women's organisations are necessarily avenues for women's empowerment and vehicles for women's emancipation. In contrast, some of these organisations might be committed to reinforcing the status quo (Sen & Grown, 1987:89-96).

According to Gibbs & Ajulu (1999:5) churches in many developing countries are crucial in offering assistance to poor and marginalised people, both as short-term aid and in the form of long-term programmes for social development. In Africa, in particular, churches have been crucial in the provision of basic social services. This is a long-withstanding tradition which can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when most missionary organisations started setting up mission schools, hospitals and dispensaries. These education and health programmes run by the missionaries were generally far more far-reaching than those run by the colonial

governments. The missions, it has been reported, were often the sole provider of primary schools and dispensaries in rural areas, while the colonial governments generally concentrated on secondary schools and urban health provision. In addition to their role in service provision, churches have been reported to have played a key role in speaking out against abuses of human rights, social injustice, and poverty. Advocacy on behalf of poor, marginalised and oppressed people remains a major contribution of churches to civil society (Gibbs & Ajulu, 1999:5).

The role of the church in community development has received renewed interest, with a growing recognition that churches can play a leading role in motivating the residents of lower class areas (such as Grahamstown East) to better themselves and their communities. Historically, the church in the black community has been a source of stability, motivation and spiritual leadership to many families (Williams & Bakama, 1992:3).

Lawndale Community Church (LCC), in the United States, was founded and run by Pastor Wayne Gordon, who believed, like Pastor Debbie Sloane from River of Life Church, that the church should attempt to reach and serve the community, and that churches in poverty stricken areas should provide the sense of community that has been lost (Williams & Bakama, 1992:2). In response to this, the LCC developed a college opportunity programme, a housing program, and an economic development project (Williams & Bakama, 1992:5).

The Lawndale College Opportunity Program (LCOP) established a higher education trust fund to provide scholarships for neighbourhood students, and works with students to develop academic and social skills they need in order to prepare for college. Through its Housing Program, the LCC purchases and rehabilitates abandoned apartment buildings in the North Lawndale neighbourhood for resale to community residents. Its goals include uniting community members, encouraging ownership and responsibility, and developing job skills among community members. The LCC's Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC) administers an economic development program (similar to Beedz) that develops and attracts small businesses into the community, and provides employment and basic skills training for residents (Williams & Bakama, 1992:5).

Like Pastor Wayne Gordon, Pastor Debbie Sloane of River of Life Church in Grahamstown shared the vision that the church should reach and serve the community, and in doing so, initiated a skills training project for women in 2006 called Beedz. Beedz is a training skills

project within River of Life Church in Grahamstown. The programme was launched in 2006 as part of SIYATHEMBA, which is the social development programme of the church. River of Life Church recognises the socio-economic needs in the Grahamstown community, and their passion is to fulfil some of these needs and in so doing, try to make a difference in the lives of those who are disadvantaged. The Beedz target is single parents who are affected by HIV/AIDS who are unemployed women (River of Life Church, 2015:1).

Beedz is unique to Grahamstown in that it is a project that is run by the church, for members of the broader community who are infected and/or are affected by HIV/AIDS. Chadibe (2006:209-210) writes that HIV/AIDS has been with us now for more than two decades. Among others, church facilities were the first to respond to the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Christian churches in Africa have begun to embark on various projects geared toward combating HIV/AIDS. The church has an important role to play in combating HIV/AIDS, as an educational institution of religion and a social support network.

The church structure is ideally suited to a long-term community-based support for tens of thousands of people. It is sustainable and thus unlikely to go out of business, and interventions started in churches tend to grow over a period of time rather than diminish. The church has moral authority and shares the values of care and youth outreach. Church leaders generally are from the same communities as their church members; consequently they speak or understand the language, culture, and background of their members. Therefore, church leaders are generally accepted by their communities. The religious leaders of the church are generally trusted with confidential information from their congregations and are a potential resource for people affected or infected by the disease (Chadibe, 2006:2010).

According to Chadibe (2006:21) it is common practice for people troubled by HIV and/or AIDS to turn to God and tend to use the church as a resource. The church has many volunteers, local leadership, existing groups, and youth activities, and as such it is ready-made for interventions. Many African countries already have strong ecumenical movements and effective links to international organisations. Most governments recognise the role of churches in the fighting against HIV/AIDS and approve of their interventions. Many government bureaucracies move much more slowly than most churches in responding. Churches reach farther and faster than any other institution in Africa (Chadibe, 2006:21).

Although religion may be deeply rooted in many communities and makes it easy for religious NGOs to operate in these communities, it is important to note, that there has been some criticism of their work. Christian NGOs may be “a remnant of western colonialism and imperialism, as the primary goals of economic and political exploitation are pursued through manipulating attempts of conversion of faith” (Rulong, 2016:1). This is due to the fact that Christian religion in the 1650s in South Africa is to be understood as being used to psychologically drive slaves into their masters’ world. Similarly, in 1676 churches were the first to suggest segregation in schooling, which further led to class division between slaves and colonialists, and religious instruction was used to assist in perpetuating a set of beliefs which everyone adhered to (Moletso, 1984:46-47).

Having said that, within religious NGOs there might also exist “an undeniable pressure to persuade vulnerable people to convert” (Rulong, 2016:1). One could argue this may potentially be true of Beedz, according to some of the participants’ point of view, which will be discussed further in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

4.5 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has highlighted the importance of using the lens of the third world feminist perspective when working with women in the third world. Third world feminism is not only concerned with understanding the situation of women and their position amidst unequal gender relations, but is also interested in identifying efficient strategies for the improvement of everybody’s livelihood (Ritzer, 2004:15). It is in the applicability of third world feminism in a South African context where vital literature is lacking, and in which this thesis hopes to make a contribution. It is also in the field of skills-based projects, as well as the role of the church in society where vital literature is lacking, and in which this thesis hopes to make a contribution.

5 Chapter Five: Findings and analysis - A view of Beedz from the perspective of the organisers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background to the Beedz programme and explores the programme from the perspective of the directors, managers, and facilitators. Literature on skills training programmes and third world feminism is drawn on, in order to understand the programme fully. Conclusions are drawn regarding the programme, based on information received from these interviews.

5.2 Details and background of the Beedz programme

This background is given in order to understand how Beedz started and the changes it has gone through over the years. This skills training project started with a Grahamstown woman – Betty (not her real name) – and one of her neighbours in 2006. Betty had gone to the church to ask for monetary assistance. Initially only bead work was introduced as a skill, however it was soon discovered that Betty could not see very well. She was then provided with a free eye test and free spectacles and a project facilitator provided her son with extra lessons as he was in Grade 12, which he subsequently passed. The project director discovered that Betty's house was in a terrible state of disrepair, therefore a team of volunteers repaired her home; painting it and helping her plant a vegetable garden. Betty completed Beedz and graduated at a special ceremony. Betty is currently employed in the community along with over 60 other women who, along with her, completed Beedz (Sloane, 2012:2-3).

The Beedz target group is single women infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS who are unemployed parents. These women come from the disadvantaged areas in and around Grahamstown (Sloane, 2012:5). This is the target group, because most families in Grahamstown are run by single, unemployed women with limited education and little or no skills. Lack of employment is often a result of a lack of skills. Many of these women lack not only the necessary skills, but also the confidence to enter the employment market (Sloane, 2012:2).

The training is designed in such a way that course participants learn basic skills (such as Computer Literacy, Baking, Beadwork, etc.) at the beginning of the course and they progress to more complicated skills. The training sessions take place on weekdays for a period of eight weeks. Participants are taught to work with precision so as to equip them with the basic skills

that are needed for the market place. During the course of the year, four eight-week training programmes are run; each programme trains ten women (Sloane, 2012:6).

5.3 Interviews with the programme directors, programme managers, and facilitators

Two female programme directors and two female programme managers were interviewed. The function of the programme director is to serve in an advisory capacity and cast a vision for Beedz. The programme manager does the everyday running of the programme. Duties include liaison between the programme director, the facilitators and the trainees (the women participants).

Of the programme directors interviewed, one is a previous programme director (Debbie Sloane), who started the Beedz programme (and has also started a similar programme in Cape Town in 2015), and the other is the current programme director (Zintle Songqwaru). Of the programme managers interviewed, one is a previous programme manager (Thandi Mayana), and the other is the current programme manager (Nombeko Mbane). Both programme directors and programme managers are females and were interviewed in order to track any changes that might have occurred in the programme and how they have experienced the programme.

Three facilitators were also interviewed; one female (Hafeni Mthoko) and two males (Ndyebo Nomatye and Charlie Mzimande). Both Hafeni Mthoko and Ndyebo Nomatye volunteered as the computer facilitators, Charlie Mzimande volunteered as the communications facilitator. The researcher was particularly interested in looking at the possible dynamic that may have been caused by the difference in sex amongst the facilitators as well as whether it had any effect in the teaching methods. It was also interesting to note how the women who participated in the programme responded to the male facilitators.

5.3.1 The programme's historical roots and its aims

The Beedz programme, Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explained, was specifically designed for women, as Beedz recognises that women need to be in positions of financial independence in order to support their families:

I think that the fact is that, women are the main people who actually look after families and bring up new generations basically so if we impact women, we are basically saying

we are impacting the nation and the future generation because they are the caregivers. And even with women, it's single women, unemployed so that through the skills that we give them, they are in a position to be financially independent. If they want to look for work based on what they have done here and the skills that they have acquired, fine. But if they actually want to start their own business based on the skills they get, that's also good and also so that they are able to support their families. For instance in South Africa, we know that if you are a single woman, you probably get a state grant which is not sufficient to cover all the needs.

Zintle explains that Beedz focuses on women in particular as they are in a position to make a positive impact in their families' circumstances. In focusing on women as the primary caregivers who play an influential role in raising the future generation Beedz's approach is consistent with Jongepier & Appel (1995:65) assertion that "educating girls and women promotes both individual and national prosperity and wellbeing. They will also consequently contribute to economic development and poverty alleviation." Beedz believes that women play an important role in the family, including financial support.

Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) adds that it is of importance to train single women specifically, as they do not receive support from their male partners:

It is often the women who are the single parents. We live in a culture of absent fathers. Hence my focus on empowering women.

Debbie acknowledges that many of these women do not have the support of their children's fathers, and therefore may struggle in various aspects of their children's upbringing – including financially.

Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) also adds that women play an integral part in the community. She started the programme as a result of:

Seeing women as the core of the community in the single parent family structure suffering under the burden of poverty.

This is again consistent with the literature in that women are mainly viewed as not only benefiting personally from skills training and literacy, but through them their families also

benefit. Jongepier & Appel (1995:66) state that it is believed that educated women positively influence their family's health, the environment, as well as sustainable development. This means that women are therefore seen as mechanisms for passing on the benefits of education to their loved ones.

Both programme managers understand the aim of the Beedz programme as giving skills to unemployed women. Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) says:

The aim of the Beedz programme is to give skills to, ladies in the community, the ladies who are single and the single mothers particularly. Just to give them skills so that they can be able to sustain themselves maybe start a business after they have gone through the course.

Nombeko speaks about the importance of skills training for women, so that they can start businesses after having completed Beedz and can be financially independent.

Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) adds:

I would say the aim of the Beedz programme is to teach people, skills and these people see that since they have received these skills they are not just sitting at home, there is something that they are trying. I would say it is a project that helps people, in particular those who live in the township.

Thandi believes that the importance of skills training is so that one can use these skills to improve their current living conditions. Instead of being unemployed and not having much to do during the day, the women can use these skills to generate income for themselves.

The facilitators shared an understanding of what the Beedz programme is with the programme directors and the programme managers. Whereas for Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015), the focus was for the women to get skills to better their lives and those of others, the two male facilitators, Ndyebo Nomatye (Interview 2015) and Charlie Mzimande (Interview 2015), focused on the women bettering themselves.

Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) stated that:

Basically, it's to equip unemployed single mothers from the Grahamstown community with just skills to be able to be independent and look after their families. Because since it's targeted toward unemployed people or unemployed women specifically, we are sort of empowering them to be able to get a job or start their own business. That's what Beedz is trying to do, that's what we are trying to do.

Again, women are viewed as gaining knowledge not just for themselves, but to be agents of change within their families and communities (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:66).

Ndyebo Nomatye's (Interview 2015) thoughts on what the Beedz programme aimed to achieve were centred on the women bettering their own lives:

The aim of the Beedz programme is to empower women particularly unemployed women and the Grahamstown community with skills that they can use to basically better their lives.

Ndyebo places a strong emphasis on women bettering themselves, with the skills that they would be learning from the programme. Charlie Mzimande (Interview 2015) elaborated further on this point, noting that it was important for the women to be able to be active participants in society as a whole, and not just within their family structures:

Once again, we are walking on tentative ground because you've mentioned the 'loadedness' of the word 'empowerment'. But ultimately, if I had to give you what I would consider a simplistic understanding of what Beedz is about, I'd say Beedz is about giving opportunity to women particularly, who have lacked to equip themselves with certain skills that will enable them to participate in the economy, to participate in the things that are happening in the country and to be involved as citizens. Essentially, it's the biggest thing, that they get to be citizens of the country, you know, they get to be involved in what's going on in the country. Whether it be political or economic or social, whatever the case may be. Because they've gained something that enables them to be involved there.

Consistent with the literature on third world feminism (Johnson-Odim, 1991:318), Charlie Mzimande (Interview 2015) sees Beedz playing a role in not focusing on traditional feminist issues, but rather encouraging women to be engaged and involved citizens in what happens in their communities, and in the country.

5.3.2 How the Beedz programme is implemented

As Beedz is run from a local church, it is important to look at the role of the church in development and how this might influence the way that the Beedz programme is conceptualized and implemented.

Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) notes that one of Beedz's core values is placing Christ at the centre:

To place Christ at the centre of all, to love God, to love others.

This is consistent with what Williams & Bakama (1992:1) noted, that historically the church in the black community has been a source of stability, motivation, and spiritual leadership to many families.

Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains that this programme is important because it impacts the community as a whole. She explains this by sharing her observations on how there are many broken families in Grahamstown and how there is a lot of poverty. She explains how the Beedz programme uplifts the standard of the community, which Gibbs & Ajulu (1999:5) write about when explaining that churches in many developing countries are crucial in offering assistance to poor and marginalised people, both in the form of short term aid and long-term programmes (such as Beedz) for social development. Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) elaborates on this by explaining that preaching is not enough, but one must take action, which is what River of Life church is doing through the Beedz programme. This role that Beedz plays is also consistent with what Williams & Bakama (1992:1) say about the role that Christian churches play in making amends in different ways – such as encouraging the mending of broken relationships. Williams & Bakama (1992:1) state that churches can play a leading role in motivating the residents of lower class areas to better themselves and their communities.

Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) also speaks of the commitment that the Grahamstown community has shown to the programme:

In Grahamstown the community were supportive. For example, a deli ran a course for the trainees where they were exposed to the different departments in the deli. A coffee shop offered trainees who had completed the programme employment as waitrons and in the kitchens.

As a result of the good progress that the programme has made in various women's lives, it has received recognition by many in the broader Grahamstown community, who have gone as far as supporting it financially. Businesses have come on board, to offer experiential training to the trainees, and this has strengthened the programme.

Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) believes that this programme has been well received by the community, as people have shown interest in the programme:

I would say it has responded well because we never struggled to get participants. People are always coming to collect forms, they come to class because the classes go well. It was always busy, it was never quiet and we say that people are scarce. So I would say maybe they were very interested in this programme.

Many participants, while still enrolled on the programme and after completion advertise the programme and advise other women to join Beedz. Thus, as Thandi indicates, during every intake there are always women who want to sign up and there is never a shortage of participants.

Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) also adds to this by talking about how the commitment that the women have in the programme is shown through how they try to generate money for it to keep it going. She explains that there is not much funding, except for money that comes from donations for the programme, therefore participants try to generate money through selling items that they make. Beedz therefore not only focuses on training and educating the participants, but also incorporates income generating projects within the programme. This is important, as Rajamma (1993:53) argues this focuses on the overall wellbeing and empowerment of the women, as consistent with the third world feminist approach (Johnson-Odim, 1991:318).

Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) states:

It's not a lot but fortunately, we have ladies who are keen, after they've baked their stuff then they go and sell so that we don't have, we don't have to go to the Beedz account and buy stuff for them to bake every week so they generate cash with what they have baked.

Through selling the items that the women have baked, not only do they generate funds for the programme to continue (which shows that they are invested in seeing the programme succeed) they are also learning 'outside of the classroom' and get to practice the business skills that they are taught. This is an important learning opportunity for them to see whether they can apply the new knowledge and skills they have learnt.

Both programme managers explain that previous participants come back to help on the programme, by volunteering their services. Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) says:

There are those who volunteer there because when I left, Thumeka and Rose stayed as they were working, they were also trained there, and then they also volunteered.

She also adds (Interview 2015):

There is also another one that volunteers there, Nomfusi, Nomfusi studied there.

These trainees that come back and volunteer as facilitators on the Beedz programme show a commitment to the programme and want to see the programme progress. As this role is voluntary, these facilitators do not get paid rather they get incentives such as running their own businesses from the church premises.

Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) adds to this by saying:

I have not been involved with Beedz that intensively to know more on that. But currently I have managed to secure the sewing lady. She's one of the graduates of Beedz and I think last year as well, there were ladies, early last year because I joined Beedz towards the end of last year. I think the ones who, the facilitators of baking, baking and sewing they are Beedz graduates as well.

One could argue that this shows that the participants are committed to the programme, because of the difference that it has made in their lives. Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) also adds that past participants also encourage others to join the programme:

The ones that go off the programme they will tell the other ladies that you should come and join.

Again, participants are seen to recognize the value of participating in the programme and therefore encourage others to also participate.

5.3.3 Functions of the programme and outcomes

One of the challenges that the programme faces, which Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) mentions in the interview, is that no external funding exists, as Beedz is not a formally registered non-profit organisation (NPO):

Although we are not registered as a non-profit organisation, because we would like to do that by God's grace we can, we will be in a better position to get more funding and sponsorship through that. But we're still in negotiations to see how best we can do that. Because we'd initially started when Debbie Sloane was here but it was unsuccessful at the time when we applied. And they had a sense of, ah let's just leave it. But I think we should think seriously think about actually trying to see how and what avenues we can follow so that we can get there so that we can get funding. Even from state funding and all these other private sectors because they normally want to know that you are registered before they can start saying we can actually offer you money.

As one can note, it is important for the sustainability of Beedz to access funding from various agencies. This is so that the programme can keep running, however also so that it could possibly expand (offer more skills or train more women).

Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains that because of the impact that the programme has had on the community of Grahamstown, people want to be involved and want to help, however because they are not formally registered it is difficult for them to get funding:

There are people in the community who actually want to get involved to see what we're doing and want to support us. And some departments as well, department of agriculture,

because I think, what can you do to support the programme? Can we start a garden for the group and all of that to generate funds? So there's interest coming.

Although Beedz is not formally registered and therefore cannot access many funding opportunities, it seems people in the broader Grahamstown community are still willing to assist using alternative ways – such as looking for opportunities where Beedz can generate some income so that the programme can continue.

One challenge that both programme managers note is that very few women start their own businesses, and of those not many are resilient. Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) says:

No I do not know of those who start their own businesses, they are scarce; I always see here in town those who work.

Even though Thandi worked at Beedz for two and a half years, she is not aware of any trainees who started their own businesses after having completed the course. This is something that the Beedz organizers need to consider when doing the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, as one of the aims is for women to successfully start and manage their own businesses.

Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) adds:

I would say some of them are still hesitant, I still run through them in town and I actually ask them how they are doing. Some of them will say they started and then it wasn't that successful and then they gave up you know.

It seems although a few women do manage to start their own businesses, they are quick to give up when they do not receive the results that they have been expecting. Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) attributes this to the lack of support that the women get once they have left the programme, and proposes that Beedz starts an extended course to support the women:

I think if Beedz could have more resources then we would be able to, financially, we would be able to start some kind of an extended course for them so that, so that they can make money for themselves. After the course then they can come back and have like, sewing kind of a company that they would, kind of a co-operative so that they can work

together. And when they get discouraged then there's someone who can, you know when ladies are working together then they can encourage each other.

By doing this, Beedz would be similar to some of the more successful programmes that run for a longer term and are able to give more support to their participants, even after they have completed the course. These are programmes like the EPAG pilot programme, which provide placement assistance and support to their participants (The World Bank Group, 2014:2). This has been reported to leading to participants becoming more successful (The World Bank Group, 2014:2).

Although there is no formal contact maintained with the participants once they leave the programme, Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) explains that she does try to keep in touch with a few on an informal basis:

Not all of them, but some of them they keep in contact, and as I said, most of them I run into them in town and I make sure that I greet and ask them how they are and what they have been up to. So it's not like, ok they are done and then we forget about them we do try and find out what they are doing after the course. Because we're interested in knowing if a course has made any difference in their lives.

Perhaps, if more formal contact with the women after completing the course existed, more participants would be encouraged to start and continue with their own businesses.

One challenge of the programme, that Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) highlights, is that it might not always be tailored to every person's needs. This is because, often times there is a mixed age group with some very young women and some older women. This does not always seem to work, as not everyone will learn at the same pace. Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) explains:

Sometimes if you are a very young like this current group, we had someone, the ladies were all, I think, I'm just estimating, all above 35. And there was one particular lady, I suspect she was about 21 or 22; I think after the first two sessions she just left the programme. I think maybe, in my experience with computers usually the younger people

feel like the clock is going at such a slow pace and they feel bored and they usually tend to just leave altogether. But I think that only happened twice so far.

Although this is not something that occurs often, perhaps it is something that the organisers of the programme need to look into, so as to not discourage people from taking part in the programme and encouraging others to take part as well. Indeed, Robinson-Pant (2003:1) discusses how women drop out of courses they do not find relevant in their lives.

5.3.4 Functions of the Beedz programme and its outcomes

One of the things that have significantly changed in the programme is that over the years, males were allowed to volunteer to be facilitators on the programme. Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains:

Because now we are also getting male facilitators because initially when it started it was all females because we are dealing with females. So also that awkwardness of young males and young women you know those dynamics. So we're trying to run away from that and only taking female facilitators. Now we have male facilitators but it is working fine I think.

Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains that initially only females were allowed to volunteer to be facilitators, as Beedz was trying to avoid any tensions between male facilitators who are in a position of power, and female students. This is consistent with what Robinson-Pant (2003:1) writes on literacy in that a high drop-out rate has been recorded in programmes for women that have male 'teachers', where the women do not feel comfortable. Robinson-Pant (2003:1) writes that women learners may get discouraged from attending, by formal and less flexible approaches which become more male dominated. However, it is important to note that this is not that case for the Beedz programme, as Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains that this has been working well for them. When the two male facilitators were asked about this in the interview, they echoed the same sentiments as Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015). The participants also expressed that the kind of relationship that they had with all the facilitators was one which was conducive for a healthy learning environment. This is elaborated on further in the section and chapter below.

When Charlie Mzimande (Interview 2015) is asked about what he thinks the impact of his gender might be in the class, he responds:

Something that's actually also quite interesting is, we very often have somewhat older ladies not old but sort of you know motherly. You know, they've always taken me you know, as a son. So when they see me, especially the group that we have now it's so crazy it's so crazy. Sometimes I have to remind myself that hold on, I'm actually the facilitator here and not the young son you know.

Charlie Mzimande (Interview 2015) expresses that he has identified a motherly figure in the women (on a collective level), and it seems the women have also identified him as a son. One could then argue that there clearly has been a 'special' bond that has been created between Charlie Mzimande and the women. This is something interesting, as it is contrary to what Robinson-Pant (2003:1) says. Robinson-Pant (2003:1) outlines that in some cases, a high dropout rate may be recorded in programmes for women where there are male facilitators, as some women may not be comfortable with this. However, in Beedz, it is clear that the women actually appreciate having Charlie Mzimande, who is a male facilitator. Examples of this appreciation are shown when Charlie Mzimande notes:

Plus they make me tea and coffee every once and again.

This simple gesture might seem like nothing at face value, however it does speak to the nature of relationship that Charlie has with the women. Again, it speaks to the parent-child role that seems to have been created between Charlie and the trainees.

5.3.5 Applying the third world feminist perspective to the Beedz programme

Interestingly, both programme managers, unlike the programme directors, only make reference to the actual people who participate in the programme and do not take into account others who might benefit from the knowledge that the women get from the programme. Instead, both programme managers see the programme as being directly beneficial for the participants, making reference to how the participants will be able to sustain themselves after completing the programme and how they will possess the skills necessary to get employment or become entrepreneurs. This is consistent with what Sato (2004:73) says about third world feminist

literature, with the focus on the women themselves, and assisting the women with getting skills to better themselves.

Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) also talks about the women's self-worth and self-confidence:

So basically, and also trying to motivate them in terms of the, they actually have self-worth even if they are unemployed. And some of them, they are single women and they are not getting any support from the father. So also to actually boost their self-confidence to know that 'we are worth something, we can actually have skills and make do with what we have'.

Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) also speaks about restoring dignity:

Trainees attended a graduation service with an audience to receive their certificates. The aim of this public graduation was to restore the dignity of the trainees.

This, Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) explains, is one of the main and ancillary objectives for Beedz:

To encourage and to restore self-worth and dignity.

Zintle and Debbie both recognize that the programme is not specifically just skills training, however it is about people development. Recognising the women's self-worth, self-confidence, and dignity is important, as Jongepier & Appel (1995:55) state, that one should not ignore the impact of education on the personal lives of women. Beedz can therefore be seen to fit in with a third world feminist approach considering women holistically and not simply focusing on traditional feminist issues. Unlike more traditional feminist approaches, the third world feminist approach recognises that addressing carefully selected community issues (such as education and work skills) can empower women and therefore need to be included in the feminist project (Sato, 2004:73).

Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) also touches on what the programme directors speak about, when she explains that the programme not only focuses on skills, but also looks at uplifting the women:

It's for them to be able to stand and do things in their power like to empower them.

Again, Nombeko realizes the importance for the women not just to learn the skills but to learn how to apply them in their lives and how to challenge and change their current circumstances. Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) adds that although most women initially join the programme because they want to get the skills, they leave having had some kind of change in their lives in general.

Thandi Mayana (Interview 2015) narrates a story about one of the past participants:

Those things happen, because some of the people who attend there are HIV positive, so others maybe were able to tell you that I am HIV positive as a result of getting knowledge. And they tell you that by me coming here, I received other things, so I would say that.

Women leave the programme having a different outlook on life, realizing that they are not their circumstances and that they have the ability to change their situations for the better. Nombeko Mbane (Interview 2015) alludes to this when she says:

It's been positive, they say that they've learnt things that they say that they didn't know they would attain in their life time.

Women start the programme not knowing what to expect and thinking that they will learn a certain skill. However, they leave the programme having learnt about themselves and having learnt to be reflective. Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains this when she talks that the initial aim of the Beedz programme was:

A course that looked at positively positive course to build people's self-esteem. That you might be positive but it does not mean that is the end of your life.

Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) explains that initially the programme was primarily aimed at people who were infected with HIV. The aim was to give them hope and encouragement, and build their self-esteem. Again, this is something that traditional feminist theories do not take into account as it is not an issue traditionally dealt with by western feminist approaches (Johnson-Odim, 1991:318).

This comes up again in the interview with Zintle Songqwaru (Interview 2015) when she re-tells a story about one of the past participants:

And we get testimonies, in terms of, for an example since we also run a bible literacy course, people actually say I've learnt a lot through that course. Because I remember we also have a sermon that talks about forgiveness. One of the ladies actually came to me and told me, 'you know when I attended the course I remember I had told you about my issue with my dad, I was estranged from him and after the course we talked about forgiveness, then I made the first move to contact him, we actually now have a relationship.' So those kinds of testimonies show that we are actually making an impact.

It is encouraging to see that the women implement what they learn in class to their own contexts, as can be seen in the example above. It can only be through acting on their new knowledge that they can bring about change in their lives. Certainly, it is clear that Beedz focuses on issues that are not traditionally focused on, such as in this instance – mending broken relationships and seeking forgiveness. This is not something typically dealt with by traditional feminist perspectives which have a great focus on patriarchy and encourages women to oppose it (Sen & Grown, 1987:19).

Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) also recognises that it is not just the skills that the women are taught that they gain from the programme. She shares the same sentiments as the programme directors and the programme managers in that the women leave having changed, not just in their skill set:

I feel like, for me personally I feel like the thing that the women gain out of the project is not necessarily the actual skill of baking or sewing or computers. But it's more of just like confidence. Because sometimes when they come in, from what I've seen they feel like they come in like, ok I'm not able to do anything or maybe they might be able to know how to sew a little bit. And they come in expecting to learn skills so that they can get a certificate and get a job. But I notice as they gain, not just the skill but being encouraged or being empowered in general. Even though the word empowerment is a very, it's a different definition but anyways, so they feel more confident in themselves to do something about their lives. And that's why you get some women who, for example

the one from the last group who started a day care centre at the coloured location and then it's people like Ma Rose who start sewing. So it's more about being encouraged, being motivated to do something and not feeling discouraged and feeling like, ok, there's nothing I can do because I'm unemployed and my mother, you know I have to look after my family and I don't have a job or I'm not married and no husband to help me. So it's more just confidence building and boosting their confidence. They get very excited when they learn new stuff so it's quite nice. And they build a little family unit among the ladies themselves they get to really know each other and they really, it's almost like a little family, it's quite nice.

Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) explains how the women initially come in expecting to just learn skills in order to get a job, however they leave the programme having gained so much more, which is linked to third world feminist theory. She talks about how the women, over the period of the programme, not only gain self-confidence but start making progress in their lives (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:55). These changes may start off on as small changes, but gradually become more significant (such as the woman who started a day care centre and the woman who started a sewing business). Hafeni Mthoko (Interview 2015) explains that the women also build relationships amongst each other, and make strong ties as if they are family. These women start to exercise their agency, as according to third world feminist theory, not only in their homes but also in their broader communities.

5.4 Conclusion

Based on the interviews conducted with the programme directors, managers, and facilitators it seems that Beedz has been successful in achieving its aims, although there is room for improvement. This is looked at further in the next chapter where one looks at whether the participants share the same sentiments that the programme has been successful in achieving its aims. It has been evident from the data collected from the interviews conducted that the people involved in the programme recognise the importance of not only equipping the participants with skills to participate in the economy, but also influencing and changing the way they see themselves and those around them. This can be linked to third world feminist theory, as the skills training that the Beedz programme facilitates is not only beneficial for the women but it also

provides enabling spaces for them to empower themselves. This, the participants echo in the next chapter.

6 Chapter Six: Findings and analysis - A view of Beedz from the perspective of the participants

Seven participants who enrolled at Beedz across several years were interviewed. This was in order to analyse the experiences of the women who have participated in the Beedz programme, what they went through, and the extent to which they felt it benefited them or not. Therefore, questions were used to explore the respondents' experiences in a general way. The aim was to look at the social process that these women went through, and how this was negotiated and manoeuvred by the participants. It was also to see what effects this programme has had on the lives of these women, and not just how they felt about the programme.

6.1 Background information on the participants

Babalwa is a 33-year-old woman who is currently in the process of starting a sewing project. She became interested in starting this project after having participated in the Beedz programme in 2010. Babalwa joined Beedz as she grew tired of sitting in the township without having anything to do. She explains that all she did everyday was watch the television as she thought she had no purpose in life. She decided to join Beedz as she realised that there was something that she could gain from the programme.

Lutho is a 48-year-old woman who runs her own sewing business from home. Lutho joined Beedz in 2011, and before joining Beedz worked at a fabric shop where they also made and sold dresses for weddings and matric farewells. Unfortunately, the business closed down as it was not making money, then Lutho decided to join Beedz as she did not want to sit idly at home. Lutho heard about Beedz over the radio and was aware that there were different classes on offer. However she thought that she could choose which classes she wanted to attend and thought there was a fee to pay. Lutho was interested in the computer class, however to her surprise, this was the class she struggled the most in. Lutho excelled in her other classes and was the top student, and as a result was asked to join the Beedz team as the sewing facilitator.

Zimkhita is a 25-year-old woman, currently working at a local franchise in Grahamstown as a cashier. Zimkhita joined Beedz in 2012 as she wanted to do a computer course. Before joining Beedz, Zimkhita was unemployed. She was unemployed about 2 to 3 months after completing

the Beedz programme. However she believes that she got her job at this franchise because her curriculum vitae reflected that she had completed the Beedz programme. She also believes that the computer literacy class that she took at Beedz equipped her with the knowledge and skills needed for her job.

Anelisa is a self-employed woman who makes and sells pure organic aloe soaps. Before joining Beedz in 2012, Anelisa worked part-time as a cleaner. One of the reasons that lead to Anelisa joining Beedz was that she had previously started a computer course at a local college, but had not completed it. Anelisa then saw this as an opportunity not only to complete the course and get a certificate, but to also learn other skills. Anelisa heard about the programme through someone who had also participated in it and encouraged her to attend.

Zintombi is a street trader who makes and sells beanies and headbands, amongst other items. Zintombi joined Beedz in 2013 as she wanted to learn more about using a computer. Zintombi was a street trader even before joining Beedz, however she believes that Beedz has equipped her with knowledge and skills that she has implemented in her business to ensure that it is more successful.

Phumla is a 27-year-old woman who is currently working part-time. Phumla joined Beedz in 2014 and has also started her own informal business, doing beadwork, making beaded head scarfs, and making beaded shoes, in order to generate income for herself. Before joining Beedz, Phumla was unemployed. When she first heard about Beedz, Phumla did not take it seriously and wondered where it would take her. Phumla however feels that she has gained a lot from the programme and she would like to enrol for an advanced sewing course, to add on to the knowledge that she received at Beedz, so that she is able to apply for other job opportunities.

Nomakhazi is a 53 year old unemployed woman who participated in the Beedz programme in 2015. Nomakhazi joined Beedz as she had taken a new interest in sewing and wanted to learn about it. When she first heard about Beedz, she thought that the programme only offered sewing classes.

6.2 Common themes on views held about Beedz

Six themes, which are discussed in detail below, were highlighted throughout the interviews with the various participants. These six themes map the experiences of the participants, detailing what

they went through, and the extent to which they felt that Beedz benefited them or not. All unreferenced quotes with people are from interviews conducted in 2015.

6.2.1 Capacity building

The participants had different motivations for joining the programme, however they all viewed Beedz as a programme that is important in providing skills for women to improve their lives and the lives of others.

In the rural areas of South Africa poverty and unemployment are urgent problems, and as a result the South African government has encouraged entrepreneurship and training as a means to addressing the problem of unemployment. Social intervention programmes, specifically adult education programmes, are used for the transfer of skills and knowledge, with the emphasis on an outcome of competence in life-skills, rather than one based on pure academic knowledge and technical skills alone (Botha et al., 2007:10).

When asked what she thought the aim of Beedz was, Babalwa spoke about uplifting women who might feel hopeless:

I think that it is a programme to uplift people who are mothers who think that there is no life, like a person who is always thinking about the fact that they are not working and then when they do not work there is nothing that they can do, they will just sit in the township. It teaches them because there are a lot of things that you can do, even baking and selling or sewing, there is a lot that they can do.

Babalwa recognizes the importance of skills training in order to change her personal circumstances, particularly as a person who came to the course while unemployed and being unable to generate income for herself for a long time. This is consistent with the vision statement of Beedz: “to provide training and skills development so as to facilitate financial independence for socially and financially disadvantaged single, unemployed women who are parents living in and around Grahamstown in the East Cape” (Sloane, 2012:4).

Babalwa heard about the programme from a woman who had also enrolled for and completed it, and is now selling beaded necklaces:

She told me about skills, like that she got, 'cause she does, these things you wear on your neck, beads, those things that you wear on your neck, she sells them, these Xhosa beads.

This shows that the woman who recommended the programme gained a lot from it and consequently not only started her own business but also encouraged others to attend the programme. This has been empowering for the person who referred Babalwa, as it has given her valuable skills to contribute to society (UNESCO, 1997:17). Babalwa also recognized the importance of starting her own business after having completed the course, seeing opportunities to start selling baked food in her local church which is something she had never considered before.

When Lutho was asked what she thought the aim of the Beedz programme was, she spoke about getting skills in order to create opportunities for yourself, as there is a lack of available jobs:

I think Beedz tries to encourage people, in the sense that because there are not many employment opportunities, they have skills so that they can work for themselves because there is no employment. For me it seems like it is trying to help people, because there is no money that is given. You are taught those skills, and you get an attendance certificate, you are then able to start your own business, you understand. So it is a big help in that case.

Lutho realizes that a lack of employment opportunities means that she needs to turn to entrepreneurship in order to generate an income for herself. She also recognizes that for this to be successful, she needs to be equipped with certain skills, such as those that are taught at Beedz.

Zimkitha shared the same opinion as Babalwa speaking about how Beedz is focused on encouraging and equipping people to be entrepreneurs:

What could I say, that it is to encourage people not just to sit in the township and they are able to, 'cause there we were taught how to cook and how to make necklaces and stuff. So at least at least when you have that experience to make those things, you could even sell things for yourself in your home.

Attending Beedz gave Zimkitha an opportunity to learn skills that she could use in order to generate income for herself. Before completing the course, Zimkitha did not realize that she too could successfully run a business by making and selling beadwork.

Anelisa's opinion of the aim of Beedz was about being empowered with skills and knowledge in order to better one's life:

The aim of Beedz is to empower us with skills and knowledge that will help us, because you get computer literacy there, skills that will always be there and you can use again, sewing, you see now I also make shoes even though I do not yet have a machine so in my spare time this is what I do. Things that you can do that will make you money.

Anelisa learnt at Beedz the importance of learning lifelong skills and using these, in order to generate income for herself. Before joining Beedz Anelisa only focused on finding employment, instead of creating employment opportunities for herself. Beedz helped her realize that she could generate income with combining the skills she had learnt to make things (such as soap and shoes) to sell.

In the international arena education is often put forward as the main strategy for achieving women's empowerment (Guinee, 2014:183). However, Guinee (2014:189) argues that "perhaps education should not be envisioned as a process aimed at turning 'disempowered' women into 'empowered' women, but as a means to better equip them with the confidence and skills to negotiate this path". Anelisa and other participants elaborate on this in the following section.

Anelisa speaks of herself as the primary beneficiary of the programme, which is the main reason that led her to enrolling in the programme:

Wanting to give myself skills and to get more knowledge, I thought that instead of sitting and get maybe, a month could pass by without me getting a job. So in that month what am I doing, there is nothing that I am doing I am sitting, so I must do something that will also better me and expand my knowledge.

Anelisa recognized the importance of doing something for herself, as opposed to always waiting for handouts. She learnt the importance of constantly acquiring new knowledge and skills, and using these purposefully to sustain herself and her family financially. What Anelisa learnt from

Beedz inspired her to seek other people and organisations who could teach her more skills, and this assisted her in starting and managing her own business.

Zintombi, however, while recognising that she personally gains from the programme, also believes that the programme aims to help women on a larger scale:

Beedz wants to assist mothers who do not work, that have children, in the sense that you are able to have a husband, and the husband leaves you with the children and you have that responsibility. I saw that Beedz wants to uplift people who are mothers and give them skills so that the mother does not have to be dependent they become independent that is how I saw Beedz.

Zintombi realizes that generally many women have to take on the responsibility of running a household, without the assistance of a male partner. She realized, when joining Beedz that it is important for these women to learn to be independent and to be able to take care of their children. She realizes that it might be hard to do this, if you do not possess any skills that you can use to generate income.

This is consistent with the vision of Beedz outlined above, in that the aim is to uplift women who are single mothers, helping them to become independent. For Zintombi, the aim of getting the skills is so that one is able to assist others, but most importantly look after one's family. This is something that Jongepier & Appel (1995:65) write about when they claim that "a strong link between women's education and their role in the production process has been identified. Educating girls and women promotes both individual and national prosperity and wellbeing. Therefore, priority should be given to literacy programmes for women and girls, because educated mothers will positively affect the health and nutrition status of all household members, especially children. They will also consequently contribute to economic development and poverty alleviation." This has been seen in Zintombi's case where she has been able to use the skills that she has learnt to generate income for her household. This money has gone towards providing food for her children, as well as towards their higher education.

In validation of this sentiment Zintombi states:

Imagine now a mother who does not have skills, the father loses their job, the children also want to continue studying.

She talks about a scenario when the father is present, however cannot contribute to the running of the household financially, as he is unemployed. Zintombi then implies that it is the duty of the woman to step up in that scenario, finding employment or a way to generate income in order to continue supporting the family.

Zintombi then applies this to herself saying:

If at all I had not gone to Beedz and get these skills that I have, how was my son going to survive? How was I, myself, even going to survive?

Zintombi found it important to use these skills she learnt from Beedz in order to run her business. The money that she received, she used to support her son's education (who is currently in university) and to buy groceries for the household.

Certainly, Jongepier and Appel (1995:65-66) believe that mothers who are educated positively affect the health and nutrition status of their children and whole families, and this subsequently contributes to poverty alleviation and socio-economic development.

Phumla, like Babalwa and Zimkitha, found that Beedz placed emphasis on people becoming entrepreneurs, because of the lack of available jobs. Phumla also emphasised the importance of perseverance and making your business work:

You see with us people who do not eventually get jobs I think that Beedz is good, but it wants someone who will treasure it and someone who loves it and then a person, because you can go far with Beedz. For example when I make head scarfs they make for me for example, if I make 4 of them, I know I will make those big ones so I know at least a day I am able to make R400. So beadwork has money and it wants you to focus on it a lot, and tell yourself that there is nothing that you are going to do, you will focus on it because it is a business it is the start of a business.

After joining Beedz Phumla started to notice people from out of town who would come and sell beadwork that they had made. Mostly, she would notice them when they came to sell during the National Arts Festival. Phumla then realized that she too could make and sell beadwork and start a business, and that there was an opportunity in the market for her because as a local she would be able to sell all year long. She then started making and selling beadwork, headscarves and beaded shoes in order to generate an income for herself and to support her family.

For Nomakhazi, the focus was not on entrepreneurship, but rather on getting employment:

I'm sure it is to develop skills for the unemployed so that they can get employment afterwards.

Nomakhazi realizes the need for certain skills (like computer literacy) in order to be considered for employment opportunities. She focuses on herself as being the primary beneficiary of the skills gained from the Beedz programme, focusing on the fact that the programme would enhance her chances of securing employment.

But what I have learnt is that, people can have some jobs you know. Because if you are doing baking, you can go and there are some shops that have a bakery departments.

This thought is consistent with what Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam (2003:1) write about in saying that education is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being and societies' economic and social development.

Nomakhazi goes on to say:

I thought it was just sewing I didn't know there were other things

Nomakhazi was however pleasantly surprised when she found out that Beedz did not only offer classes on sewing, but on other things too. Nomakhazi was even more pleasantly surprised when she discovered that participating in Beedz was entirely free.

So I was happy to see that, there are many skills which I'm going to learn here. But moreover, this was all free there was no money I'm going to pay to learn these skills.

Beedz not only recognizes the importance of offering these skills, as there is a need for them, however they also realize that it is important that they offer them at no cost, as the people they target (unemployed) have no or very little income and therefore might not be able to access the course. The women interviewed echoed that Beedz equipped them with important skills to improve their overall quality of life, which links to third world feminist theory. The theme below looks at how these skills have had a positive impact on the women's lives.

6.2.2 Positive impact

All the participants interviewed believed that Beedz has made a positive contribution to their lives, and that they have gained valuable skills through the programme. There is strong evidence that skills training can be an effective policy option for increasing employment and promoting empowerment among young women (The World Group, 2014:2). It also validates the importance of delivering business skills training along with job and life skills training in contexts where wage employment is limited.

Babalwa believes that the courses that she took at Beedz were of personal relevance to her. She talks about how the Communications course equipped her with much needed skills:

I liked it a lot, I liked it and it teaches us a lot of things. Like for example when you do when you write your CV, and when you are going to go for an interview like things that you must know. I did not know them, I learnt them in communications.

Babalwa recognizes the importance of having the right 'tools' for the job search process, as it is competitive. This is things like curriculum vitae writing and interview skills, which she learnt from the course. She also started to teach other women the importance of having a strong curriculum vitae and good interview skills.

These skills that Babalwa has gained, have also made her confident enough to help others who might not have the same skills:

I am interested in hand work, for example if I arrive and you have maybe your button, like if I am chatting I like to say come here I can do it and I do it for you or mend a hem on your pants and I do. I think a person would say things like that for example if maybe

we go to the library for whatever or you tell me that you don't have a CV, I will say let's go to the library I will type it for you, I will do it for you.

Babalwa has felt pride in being able to assist others, using the skills that she has learnt from the course. Females that are educated positively benefit their families and communities (Hill, 1993:v). Babalwa believes that the skills that she has gained also help those in her community. Jongepier & Appel (1995:66) state that it is believed that educated women positively influence their family's health, the environment, as well as sustainable development. This means that women are therefore seen as mechanisms for passing on the benefits of education to their loved ones. This can be seen in Babalwa's case.

For Lutho, Beedz equipped her with important skills that she could use in her business, particularly communication, she said that she learnt:

Communication as a business person, communication is important, being able to communicate with people. It is what really helped me in those courses there, even my knowledge expanded in sewing because I was teaching people, I was gaining experience all of that you see.

This skill was particularly important for Lutho, because she realized the need to be able to communicate effectively, not just with her customers but also with her co-workers which she later recruited in order to grow her business. Lutho also shared:

There was also a communication course there it is the one that I say helped me because I work with people, I am able to communicate with people you see in a proper way like a person in a business. And it also makes me happy, I am happy that I am also able to do things for people because there are a lot of people who say they were helped by that woman she taught me sewing. There are a lot of people who say that, I am happy that I am also able to do something for someone, you understand.

For Lutho, effective communication skills were also important for her in her teaching. As a Beedz graduate herself, she understood how important effective communication in her teaching was, in order to ensure that her trainees all understand what they are being taught.

Zimkhita believes that taking part in the programme helped her, as she is now able to help her grandmother with sewing:

Now I can even help my grandmother, my grandmother is someone who sews but she is now old. I am able to help her sometimes, when she needs help in sewing.

Like Babalwa, Zimkhita believes that although she is the one who completed the course, other people in her life are now benefiting from the skills that she learnt. This is again consistent with what Jongepier & Appel (1995:66) write about with regards to participants passing on the skills and knowledge learnt to their families and immediate communities.

Zimkhita not only gained important skills in sewing, she expresses that the computer course was also of personal relevance to her:

I went there, I could say because now I can when I am in front of a computer I can start it when maybe I want to write that message or I want to send whatever thing I can do that now, at first it was plain and I could not do anything.

Being able to perform basic functions on the computer, such as sending a message, has been something that has been important for Zimkhita. However, she believes that learning how to use a computer has set her apart in her current job, as she was able to easily navigate the computerized system in her workplace.

Anelisa also believes that participating in the programme has been beneficial to her. She believes that she has changed, not just in gaining more skills, however her mind-set has also changed:

A lot, it is something that I think because sewing, I could sew and mend whatever. I never thought that no with this cloth and this cloth I could produce something. I last did it when we were taught to make dolls. Even with beads what you could make, even my communications skills were improved through this programme. So, it was something good for me and it gave me insight on things that I could do.

Beedz sparked an interest in Anelisa to be creative and think of ways she could use readily available material to create something that she could sell in order to generate income for herself. This is what inspired her handmade aloe soap business.

She speaks about how she has changed since the programme:

I have changed a lot, that's definitely sure because I've started a business, I manage my own books, and I saw that my hands could produce something and not just sitting idly not doing anything. So, it worked a lot for me, it has changed me as a person and given me a different perspective that I am young and I got a child while I was young. I am saying like, it gave me that I can do something without having to say, no I am not working so there is nothing that I can do.

Anelisa felt that Beedz uplifted her spirits and gave her a hope for the future. She realized that she was neither defined by her circumstances nor her past, and that she could do something for herself and work towards where she desires to be in the future.

Anelisa explains that because of the business course that she took at Beedz, she now even has a different approach to business:

I don't mix business with family especially at home. As I am selling, they say no man you know that we get paid the government grant, give it to us, I say business and family don't mix. So, they would say she has completely changed she is not the person who would give you something when you want it, she asks you a lot of questions and wants to understand properly.

Before attending Beedz, Anelisa approached her business differently in that she was not strict with her family members. She would allow them to buy on credit, and sometimes they would not pay. Taking the Business course through Beedz taught Anelisa to always be professional when it comes to her business, and not always give people credit when she knows they will be unable to repay her. NGOs play a critical role as they work to train women for leadership, and in doing so develop their leadership skills. Women use these skills not only in professions, but in politics and business as well (Skaine, 2010:348).

Zintombi believes that Beedz has equipped her with skills that have been relevant to her, and have helped her improve her business:

Going to the Beedz programme helped me, it helped me. In any case I was looking after myself. I would sit in the street and sell, I was not concerned about doing crocheting, as I

am doing now no I was not concerned about it. When I went to Beedz I then started to crochet, it helped me to also get other, when you crochet man, but like now, this boy that came to get this beanie from me paid for it a long time ago, I got his payment. So it helps me I am able to, when I don't have potatoes, someone arrives to buy a beanie and I have potatoes it really helps me.

Before joining Beedz, Zintombi only sold fish and sweets and she did not think that she could expand her business by selling other things, such as beanies. With the skills she learnt on the programme (sewing and crochet) she was able to use these in order to produce goods she could sell in her business in order to get more customers and generate more income.

Zintombi has managed to run a successful business, which has grown over the years, as a result of joining Beedz. She also adds that she gained not just skills, but knowledge as well that has helped her business:

And then there what we were told is that, arriving early is important instead of arriving exactly in time for what you are there for also arriving late is unacceptable I saw that as something that was correct for even when someone is self-employed and they know that arriving early is important even when they are not self-employed and they are employed by another company that will help them.

This new knowledge, such as time management, has assisted Zintombi in being able to treat her business professionally as well as her customers. She realizes the importance of finishing orders that customers request timeously, so that she can build trust with them and they are able to use her services again (while also referring their friends to her as well). This caused Zintombi's business to grow, as she had more happy customers.

Phumla shares how the skills that she has learnt from Beedz have enabled her to start her own business, and she has been successful in it. Phumla reflects that at first, she was not serious about the programme, however, after taking the programme seriously, she was able to gain a lot:

At that time when I first heard about it I don't want to lie, I took it lightly as in the sense that I would wonder where it would lead, you see. Perhaps how will I be in the programme you see, I did not take it seriously I did not take it seriously. As the time

progressed, perhaps when I completed the first week I saw that oh my goodness we are not playing here so I learnt a lot of things.

Coming into the programme Phumla was sceptical, which led her to not take the classes seriously at first. She then realized the value of the programme as the weeks progressed, seeing her own progress and what she had produced with her own hands. This sparked an interest in her to be invested in the programme and she realized that this would yield positive results.

She continues:

I would sometimes realise that oh my goodness here I have learnt a lot of things. It is nice man there it is nice we did not want the programme to come to an end. Like things like we work in a team you see the results of what you are doing you really see the results.

Through Beedz, Phumla learnt the importance of being able to work in a team with a diverse group of people. She ended up forming bonds with the other women and took a personal interest in them. Phumla decided to start her business while still at Beedz, and when she realised that she could be successful she continued:

After class I would, I would make things and then bring my own beads and say I would like to be taught a certain thing. I would ask for orders in the township so I would see that no man this is not child's play so I saw that I could not let it go.

Phumla took a keen interest in learning more about beadwork, and not being confined to what was being taught in class. She realized that she could make a living through making and selling beadwork and found it important to learn more about different designs and ways of making the beadwork. She challenged herself by taking orders of beadwork with designs she had not yet learnt to make, and she would seek assistance from the Beadwork course facilitator in order to produce the requested product.

Beedz has enabled Phumla to start her own successful business, which has helped her take care of her family:

Even in my family they know, they even say, others, they say no man, this is just a part time job for a few days. They say 'it is like you are not working but we are able to get

something when we ask from you'. They even ask there at home whether there is anything that I have, anything that I can sell and I say no man I have something that I can make. They ask 'what are you going to make', I say no I was going to check with shoes or anything else they say 'oh ok'.

It has been important for Phumla to be able to assist financially in her family. Her family realizes that even though she only gets part-time jobs, she is able to put food on the table using the profits that she gets from selling her beadwork and shoes that she makes. Her family supports her business venture and they encourage her to continue making and selling beadwork in order to support the family financially.

This is consistent with Hill's (1993:v) claim that "educating females yields far-reaching benefits for girls and women themselves, their families, and the societies in which they live", in that the skills that Phumla has learnt have become beneficial to her family.

People in Nomakhazi's life believe that Nomakhazi's skills and knowledge will also help them:

You know I have a friend from church, I told them that there's this project, and then there's that woman's organisation on Thursday I'm the secretary there. So, I told them, I'm not going to come there because there is this programme. She said go on because you are going to learn more skills and come and help us here at the church you know. And then even the family they do like it because I'm going to sew for them.

The women in Nomkhazi's ministry as well as family realize that the skills that Nomakhazi gains will be beneficial for them as well. This is because Nomakhazi can then implement what she has learnt at church and at home, as well as teach others what she has learnt.

Again, women are seen as gaining knowledge not just for themselves, but to be agents of change within their families and communities (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:66). It is believed that women who gain skills then go back and 'plough' back in their families and communities, such as in Nomakhazi's case.

Nomakhazi also draws on the fact that one can become an entrepreneur, using the skills that one has gained from the Beedz programme:

You know, first of all, let me start with sewing because I said in my resolution this year I wanted to do some sewing. Because you know, you do want to, to sew something but you don't have those skills then you have to take to dressmakers and then you pay that a lot you know. But when you have that skill and you know what you are doing, you do those little things by yourself. And then, you start a little and then eventually, you become a dressmaker on your own and then you can sell and then do that, you understand.

Nomkhazi identified the need to have certain skills as important, not just to save money (in the case of asking someone else to perform a service for you) but also to make money (in the case of performing the service not just for yourself, but for others as well). Coming to the course for Nomakhazi also rose from the frustration of having to spend money to get someone else to do things for you, however throughout the course she also learnt the importance of being equipped with a variety of other skills.

Clearly, Nomakhazi believes that Beedz can equip her with skills needed in the workplace, as well as with skills that she can use to start her own business (in this instance, dressmaking). Nomakhazi has also been able to identify specific lessons that have been of personal relevance to her. She narrates a story about what happened in one of her classes:

So, I thought, and then I said last week, I'm going to do that one because before, I didn't know what is happening in all that you understand. But when he taught us how to save and different categories of saving, I thought oh I'm going to do that and I was just pointing at the board.

Beedz taught Nomakhazi skills that she could apply in her daily life, such as saving, which she had not considered and was not aware of before. Nomakhazi also mentions how her skill level in baking, particularly, has changed since starting the programme:

I do like baking but since I said I was using my own skill of baking not doing it according to the book. But now, I'm doing the baking according to the book. And then my family saw the change now that what I'm baking now is different from the one I was baking before.

Nomakhazi has realized that even though she could do certain things before (like baking) she is now able to do those better and could possibly do them professionally, because she has been taught more about them. For example, in her baking before Nomakhazi did not know the importance of measuring properly, but having done the Baking course she now uses the correct quantity of ingredients which improves the taste and appearance of what she bakes.

This positive impact in these women's lives can be linked to third world feminist theory, in that in facilitating skills development Beedz looked at every aspect of these women's lives. This is linked to the next theme of holistic development.

6.2.3 Holistic development

Many programmes which are presented as women's skills training programmes are used as an 'entry point' to other interventions. This means that these programmes like Beedz aim to teach more than computer literacy and beadwork, for example, but may also include confidence building, and business training (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4). Aspects of self-esteem and personal fulfilment are considered by the empowerment approach to education to being important objectives in the education process (Jongepier & Appel, 1995:66).

Babalwa talks about how the Bible course has led to a personal change in her life:

I have changed, firstly, I also go to church; but there are things that I learnt at Beedz like the pastor's wife, like things like, how you listen to God, how you hear God when He speaks to you. Like I was going to church all the time but I didn't know how you can say this is God speaking, so I learnt things like that.

Babalwa describes having grown also in her spiritual life, which has had positive impacts in other aspects of her life. This has led to her having a positive outlook on life, and having healthier and positive relationships.

Babalwa believes that the programme really assisted her, and thus, she has implemented some of the things that she has learnt from the programme (not just by starting the sewing project, but also starting to bake and sell her baked goods):

Because after Beedz I would go to church when there is a big service, I would bake muffins here at home and go and sell them there, as well as cupcakes. Those are things

that I did not think about before, you see. So, it changed in that way, at least people's mind-sets are changed.

Babalwa recognized that there existed entrepreneurship opportunities in her own community, where she could use the skills that she had learnt in order to make goods that she could sell and generate income for herself.

Lutho explains how being asked to volunteer as a facilitator on the Beedz programme was a great opportunity for her not only to gain more skills, but also to access her customers in town easily.

She draws on Christianity when she explains that it felt like God had heard and answered her prayers:

They said I must join sewing and teach, no I liked that, I like teaching people. And I realised that on the other side, we are allowed to sew our own things. On the other side, it was like my prayers had been answered because I had wanted to be here in town but did not know how I would pay rent. God said here is a place, and Pastor let us sell our things during our own time, and do the Beedz work as well.

Beedz provided an opportunity for Lutho not only to gain experience in teaching people (and through this mastering her craft as well) but also provided her with rent-free space that she could use to run her business from. This was important for Lutho, as she had longed to run her business in town to be accessible to her customers, however she did not have the finances to rent office space.

Beedz has not only equipped Zintombi with skills that have helped her in her business, but has also provided her with hope and perseverance. Zintombi feels that she has personally changed since having attended Beedz:

Oh, no I have changed, man, I have changed because participating in Beedz helped me this way; there was our teacher there who taught us about the Bible. They said I must create a profile, they said after doing that I will have to choose. I chose a woman with long hair as I also have long hair, who has a beautiful car, who has a house who has two children. I told myself that in 2016 I will be living in my own house with my son and my cousin's child and they would have graduated from Rhodes. But my son, this is his first

year so talking about the Bible gave me hope in that even now I have not lost hope, I still have hope.

Zintombi had been discouraged for a long time and did not dare to dream about the future. Beedz instilled hope in her, and through the course she realized that she could dream about a better future and she could use the resources around her to realise these dreams. Zintombi also believes that having the Bible course was important, as it taught her valuable life skills.

Even that thing of being taught about the Bible, and be shown that the things of this world will not always be right for you, instead of being right for you the world will be cruel to you. If you stay praying God will be by your side at all time, that is what we were taught at Beedz.

Beedz taught Zintombi to not lose hope when things do not go her way. She realized that she had to preserve through the bad times and that these times are only seasonal. Taking the Bible course helped Zintombi to remember to have faith always and to constantly pray. This has positively impacted on her spiritual wellbeing.

Phumla speaks a lot about her business and about how Beedz has not only equipped her with skills, but has opened her mind and changed her view on life. This, she speaks of when she is asked what she would tell others about the Beedz programme:

I would tell them that they will get help there this is something like, it is something like 'vuk'uzenzele' (wake up and do it for yourself) and not be dependent on someone. Because we are too dependent on people or we want things to come to us but we have fingers but we do not realise that. If we have fingers we can do a lot. And people who come from Johannesburg get here and sell beads, and you see a person oh my goodness, they travel all the way from Johannesburg to sell beads, which could be done by someone who is here in Grahamstown you see that. You even see those big hats and you realise that oh my goodness we are the only people who do not want to do things.

Phumla realized that she did not need to be dependent on others, and that she could make a living for herself by generating her own income. She realized that she too could make a business out of

the skills that she had learnt at Beedz. What has changed the most for Phumla is her mind-set and realising what she is capable of. She says:

There is a difference because there right, at that time when I was not working and did not think that I can make money for myself I wanted money to come to me. I did not know that there was something that I could do to make money besides working. But I then realised that, oh my goodness this thing, even if I stay in the township and do not find work for the rest of my life, there is something that can assist me. So, it really helps me, I see the difference, I see that the month does not end. Even if I do not eventually get a job, I realise that this is what makes me money.

For a long time, Phumla believed that her only source of income would be through being employed, and she did not realise that she could employ herself by starting her own business. Coming to this realization was important for her, as it meant that not only could she make money for herself but she could also provide for her family.

As with Babalwa, Phumla emphasizes that one of the important lessons from Beedz was being independent and changing your mind-set:

Something that we, that I remember, there we were taught that we must not be dependent, learn to do things for ourselves. And not tell yourself that no I am living with my parents, and be dependent on your parents or your sisters. There is something that you are able to do, even if you tell yourself that you are not educated but there is something that can make you successful in life.

Phumla realised that she needed to change her attitude to be successful. Through Beedz, she learnt that if she had a positive outlook in life and persevered through the hard times, she could be successful. She realised that it did not matter that she had no university qualification, she could still participate in the economy by using the skills that she had learnt. She no longer had to be dependent financially on her family, instead she could contribute financially to help run the household.

Not only has Nomakhazi's skill level changed, she believes that she has also changed personally:

When I was at home, I was lazy to read, I was not a, I don't have time to read or do something else. I was always just, wake up, watch TV. Now my mind is always busy because I have to learn. Tomorrow we are going to do baking so I have to page the book and see that ok, what steps am I going to do today and then I'm always ahead.

Nomakhazi took an interest in reading and learning further, since having joined Beedz. This meant that she could constantly learn something new every day, and keep abreast with what is happening with her coursework.

Over and above this personal change for Nomakhazi, she has established new relationships. She speaks about the bond that has been created between her and the other participants:

And when I came here on that first day, the ladies I met here, they, I do have that connection with them.

For Nomakhazi, like with other participants, forming a bond with the other women was important. They shared a sense of solidarity and were able to uplift each other when times were tough. This relationship extended beyond the classroom.

She continues:

What I can say is, I enjoyed being here, a lot. I enjoyed because we had that relationship with the other ladies up to the point that we made, what is it 'umbutho' (savings group) some groups, and then we are giving each other some presents you know. So, I'm very glad I came here, I'm very glad.

As one can tell, Nomakhazi values the relationships that she has built with the other participants. Nomakhazi's view agrees with what Hafeni Mthoko highlighted about women gaining more from Beedz than just the skills – they also go on to form very strong bonds.

Beedz has clearly made a positive contribution in Nomakhazi's life, and she recognises this as she has encouraged others to join the programme:

I've got a lady next door, a young girl; I took some form here and gave her to fill in and then I urged her to fill it in and then I came back and I gave it to Nombeko.

Nomakhazi recognized the importance of informing other women like her in her community of the programme, so that they could also access the skills training and be able to compete in the economy.

A wider definition of what counts as ‘skills training’ that has developed over the past decades has important implications for women. Thus, many NGO and government programmes have increasingly realised that training provision in ‘hard’ technical skills, whether electronics or weaving, is not enough to ensure that the trainee enters profitable employment, and the courses in complementary ‘soft’ skill development, such as confidence-building, entrepreneurship, and leadership are crucial. These courses have particularly benefited women trainees who often need to ‘catch-up’ with male trainees in these areas. Over the years varying technical skills have been provided, with the realisation that trainees need to gain transferable skills to be able to respond to the dynamic needs of the employment market. “The growing convergence between academic and vocational education (in terms of provision of ‘core competencies’) has meant that women who might have ended up in ‘female’ skill training programmes now have access to more generic skills development” (including literacy and basic education) (Robinson-Pant, 2003:16).

In trying to improve these women’s lives, by taking a holistic approach, Beedz has also indirectly influenced change in the broader Grahamstown community. Women who have gone through the course have not only implemented what they have learnt, however they have also encouraged other women to take part in Beedz, thus creating a positive movement. This is linked to third world feminist theory in that these women have recognised their agency and have started to act on it. This is linked to the following theme.

6.2.4 Beedz and the wider Grahamstown community

Most of the participants believed that Beedz has not only made a difference in their lives, but in the Grahamstown community at large. Education does not only play a role in improving the individual’s well-being, but in the societies’ economic and social development too (Roudi-Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003:1).

Lutho said that she would recommend this programme to other people, as she learnt sewing through a skills training project similar to Beedz in 1984, and she believes that it is programmes like these that add value:

It will really help them a lot because other times you do not know what your talent is when you are sitting at home. There we were baking, there is sewing, there is crocheting, there is beadwork. It is there where you will discover what you are good at.

Lutho acknowledges that when one does not learn new skills and make use of them, it might be a wasted opportunity. For example, she only realized that she was talented with sewing after having taken part in a similar programme and she might have not become a seamstress had she not taken part in that programme.

Although Zimkhita feels she has benefitted from the programme, she is unlikely to recommend it to others, as she believes that they might not think that it is worth it. She explains:

Most of the people from the township do not want things that do not pay, so no it does not matter, I cannot say no go and do a certain course, the person asks whether it pays.

Zimkhita has realized that many people in her community are interested in immediate gratification and thus only want to be involved in programmes that will give them an immediate benefit (such as a monetary benefit). Many participants are put off when they realise that they do not get this, and on top of that they must pay taxi fare to access the programme as it is based in town.

This could also be attributed to the fact that participants in programmes like Beedz often do not see the value in them, as they believe that they do not lead anywhere. These programmes have been compared negatively to school education. Many participants recognise that participating in these programmes, though many are linked to income generating components or health training, does not have any formally recognised qualification (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

Thus, Zimkhita feels that the community of Grahamstown has not changed since the programme has started, as people are not receptive to it:

It's because people do not want to go to these places because if they went at least they would have jobs now and not be sitting in the township but they are not interested.

Zimkhita believes the programme has not made much impact, as not as many people have been engaging with Beedz. She believes that the lack of employment opportunities is related to the

lack of skills (which translates to employability) and thus people who do not access programmes like Beedz are less likely to be employed.

Zintombi believes that Beedz plays an important role in the community, such as lowering the crime levels:

As you see prisons are full of people who do not ask, it is because when a person falls hungry, they decide to go steal. But Beedz ends things like that.

Zintombi believes that Beedz equips people with skills, which then they can use to generate income. This then discourages people to be thieves and to commit crimes, because they need money and food – as they can generate income for themselves through the skills that they have learnt.

She believes that if this programme was not useful, there would be no participants:

As a result, there are still people from Grahamstown who still attend Beedz. If Beedz did not change a person's life, it would close down and there would be no people. What makes it continue is that it changes people's lives, in this high level of unemployment in South Africa.

Zintombi acknowledges that the programme has been in existence for several years, and the only reason it is continuing is because of the human capital. She acknowledges that if the skills training was not accessible, relevant, or needed, then participants would not bother to join the programme or encourage others to join.

She has encouraged others to attend the programme, who have now also gained skills that they have been able to use to start their own businesses and to help the family at large:

I started a long time ago I sent people, I started with my cousins, they went there and came back having gained something. As a result another one can now braid hair as a result of Beedz, another one bakes. If there is a death in the family she will just bake and take those scones to the family because she also studied here at Beedz.

Zintombi recognized the value of Beedz and strategically identified women like her, in her family as well as in her community whom she felt would benefit from the programme. Indeed,

they have, as she speaks of how they are currently using the skills they have learnt not only to generate income (e.g. braiding other people's hair) but also as a means to generally support the family (e.g. baking of food for large family ceremonies).

Zintombi concludes by saying that even though people will discourage participation in Beedz, one should not always listen to the comments, but instead see the programme through:

At all times, there are people who criticise, however it depends on the person ask yourself, you yourself, 'what do I want?'

Zintombi again speaks to the hardships that one faces in life, such as a lack of support or criticism from loved ones, but realises that sometimes it is important to stay focused on your goal. This, I believe, is something that she has learnt from the programme, as earlier on she also alluded to persevering through hardships. This leads to the following theme below.

6.2.5 Group solidarity and unsupportive family members and friends

Studies have been done investigating the reasons women wanting to participate in literacy programmes drop out. One of the reasons was the lack of support received from other family members (particularly husbands) (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4). Indeed, some of the participants on the Beedz programme felt unsupported by their families and friends.

Lutho expressed that she received criticism for being involved in the programme, however she persevered as she knew that she was gaining a lot from being involved in the programme:

There were people and people would say gosh, gosh you do not get paid, you teach people while not getting paid. Those are things that I do not even take to heart because I know that I am helping people, you understand. And I am sitting in the township, I am helped in the sense that, people now, my customers are here in town that know me because I am here. So, they have easy access to me here. There were really people who criticise that, you cannot work and not get paid.

After having completed the course, Lutho was recruited (as the top student in her class) to teach the sewing class. Lutho was not paid for rendering this service, however in return she was provided a space to run her sewing business from as well as time during the day to run her own business. Lutho here explains how many people who found out that she was volunteering and not

being paid criticized her. However, for Lutho this was not an issue because she valued the benefits she was receiving because of having been involved in Beedz.

Zimkhita also expresses that even her own family and friends discouraged her from joining the programme and continually criticised her while she was on the programme. Zimkhita re-tells the type of comments that she would receive:

‘Argh you are going to go to this thing but you are not even going to get paid, you keep wasting the taxi fare’. Others would maybe, when I am asking for a taxi fare ‘cause sometimes it would rain and there would be no money for taxi fare. They would say ‘Argh, how will you return this money you do not get paid, you do not work’ things like that.

As previously noted, Zimkhita expressed that many people were not interested in Beedz because they did not see any immediate benefits of completing the course. Zimkhita explains how many people in her life did not see the value of the Beedz course, and thus discouraged Zimkhita from taking part.

For Zimkhita, this criticism came from both friends and family, however she was determined not to quit the programme:

I realised that no man, in any case when I want something I don’t care what people say I just go for it.

Zimkhita’s perseverance and the fruits of her labour and dedication to the programme showed when she received employment after having completed the course. Had she decided to quit however, she might have not been offered the job. In order to manage this kind of criticism, the organisers of Beedz need to provide support for women who may face constant criticism for taking part in the programme, as not all women may have the courage to persevere and see the programme through, as Zimkhita did.

Anelisa explains that she did not receive any support from her family while taking part in the programme, instead they kept waiting to see when she would drop out:

There were those who were negative that 'no even this, give her three weeks mom she will not last even in this, she will not last because what Anelisa wants is to get a job, she wants to get paid, she wants this. So, she won't last in this thing, staying a whole two months not getting a job and just focusing on this programme'. So, I was like I will show them now, I will do this thing.

Anelisa explains that her family saw her as someone who has not patient and wanted results (in monetary value) immediately. Therefore, they were all sure that Anelisa would not complete the course, as being in class meant that she could not be at work earning money. However, to everyone's surprise, Anelisa managed to complete the course and graduate.

As Robinson-Pant (2003:4) writes, some women receive a lack of support and a lot of criticism, and end up dropping out. Anelisa was determined to prove them wrong, and she explains that this lead to her forming a close relationship with the other participants, who would encourage her to continue and not give up:

Most of the support I got from my peers that I met there. Because I could say I was the youngest of them all, there were two of us who were very young. So, they would encourage me that, I would have my problems at home, I would arrive at class and say I have such and such a problem. But they would say, they want you to quit, do not quit, it is becoming harder, the more you must press on.

Forming this kind of network with the other women in the group helped Anelisa to stay strong, and made her determined to prove her family wrong. She was determined not to meet her family's expectations.

Phumla says that it was her cousin who told her about the programme, however the cousin discouraged her, telling her that she did not trust the information she was giving her:

I met with another cousin of mine they said that they have heard that there is another place here at River of Life that does this sort of course, and they explained. I said no, I will go and find out for myself, and they responded saying that they do not trust this. I decided that, I am the type of person who does not lose hope I want to see the result personally. I decided that I should go, I don't know luck, and I should really go.

Had Phumla not been determined to go and see for herself, she might not have discovered the talent that she has for beadwork and might have not realised that she could use this talent in order to generate income for herself.

However, it is not only Phumla's cousin that discouraged her, even her family was against Phumla completing the programme:

They would say that at home, they would say 'no man you are wasting taxi fare, we do not even see what it is that you are doing'. But the day of my graduation they were all shocked, they said 'oh my goodness we did not know this'.

Phumla, just like Zimkhita and Zintombi, took a personal decision to continue with the programme as she saw that she was gaining a lot from it. Phumla's family ended up being proud and even envying Phumla for having completed the course, because not only had she gained new skills she was now able to contribute financially for the whole family and the family started to depend on her financial support. Had it not been for this course, perhaps Phumla would have not been in that position.

6.2.6 Change participants would like to see being implemented at Beedz

It is important to consider what participants would like to see being implemented or changed in Beedz, because one needs to research and understand what skills training means to women in each cultural context. This is a crucial first step when setting up skills training programmes aiming to empower women (Robinson-Pant, 2003:4).

Planners need to consider different women's needs and constraints before decisions are made around language, literacy curriculum, forms of organisation and class structure. This is because the women enrolling in a skills training course may have different motivations in doing so (in terms of the ways in which they may want to use the skills in their everyday lives). Similarly, they differ widely in their life experiences, familiarity with different languages, domestic workloads, status and roles in the household. When planners do not take these differences into account, some women may feel marginalised within the programme as they may find the curriculum irrelevant. Reasons may also include not being able to attend because classes are held at times when they are needed at home. This may lead to the group of women who feel that their specific needs are not being considered dropping out – often giving the reason that they are too

busy or too old, rather than that the course did not cater to their needs (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11-12).

One thing that Babalwa did not like about the programme was how the sewing course was taught. Although, she does highlight that this changed over time:

We had a facilitator that was female right, she did things herself. She taught us right, but she would do things herself like she wouldn't give it to you and say here do it, you do it this way yes. Until another male arrived, Teddy, at least we started learning something concrete.

Babalwa talks about how important it is for facilitators to give the participants a chance to do the work themselves, so that they can see whether they fully understand what is being taught. Secondly, interestingly, Babalwa highlights that it was the teaching methods that she did not like, and she did not mind the gender of the facilitator much. Certainly, Babalwa's point of view contradicts Robinson-Pant's (2003:1) claim that courses have a high drop-out rate when programmes for women have male 'teachers', where the women do not feel comfortable. It is clear from this statement that the women (certainly Babalwa) were not really concerned about having male facilitators.

In addition to this, Lutho mentioned several things that she would like to see being implemented in the programme. She spoke about the challenge of transport for both the participants and facilitators:

This programme, people like it, and it is wanted by people who live in the township. A lot of people are at a disadvantage because it is far, taking a taxi, there is no money even us facilitators, it was very difficult for me. Even for me a lot, it is not having taxi fare you see. I wish maybe, a plan would be made to transport people or move the programme to the township because it is people from the township who come here you understand. Even the facilitators, get taxi fare even if there is no money, I understand that it is a church and there is no money. At least for people to be transported and then they come and do that.

Lutho realizes the importance of creating access to the programme for those that the programme targets. Beedz targets women who are unemployed, most of which live in the township. It is often difficult for these women to gain access to the programme, because they must walk long distances as often they cannot afford taxi fare. This then discourages a lot of women from taking part in the programme.

She also believes that food for the participants should be provided:

Even if there is no payment but at least you know that food is provided. Because other people they realise that at least, others some of the time don't even have money for lunch but at least you know that you will at least eat there.

Speaking to access again, Lutho raises an important point of providing food for participants as they are there for a full day. Many of these women are unable to go home for lunch during the lunch hour and often are unable to make packed lunches to take with them. This may also discourage participants from completing the course.

Some of the issues did come up briefly with some of the participants, for example earlier in this chapter Zimkhita stated that people are not interested in taking part in the Beedz programme because they do not gain anything financially, and also a number of participants were discouraged from attending because they could not afford the taxi fare.

Babalwa suggests that Beedz provides seed funding for those who want to start a business, and then monitor the growth of the business.

Give them something really, even if they try to help them maybe the person will bake when they leave and go back to the township, and be given something to start with that capital that they get for starting their business. Because really a person will have the knowledge but get back to the township and just sit there is nothing to start this business because they are not working you see. And then people are given the things to start the business, and they are checked on what is happening because another person will not be serious they will take the money and sit. And they come and do this you understand, monitor where they are now, where are you stuck, what challenges you have, you see, I wish it was done that way.

Babalwa notes that many participants might leave the programme being eager to start their business, but because they lack the financial resources to do so, they get discouraged. She suggests not just financial support from Beedz, but that they are also mentored after having completed the programme in growing their business.

Lutho also suggests including more practical components to the programme:

You see know if we could start all over again, I would try that we make things, and know that on certain dates we set up our stalls with these people that I have taught. These things that I have taught them we know that on a certain date we are selling you see. Because we would make things and they would just sit there. We never went out and said we are giving ourselves a date to go out.

During the course, participants learn to make various items however Lutho notes that as participants they are never given an opportunity to market and sell the goods that they have produced. She suggests adding this component, not only to learn practically how to market and sell their stock but also add this component to generate income for themselves. This money could either be invested back in the programme or go towards each participants' business venture. This is related to third world feminist ideas that feminism is not narrowly defined, focusing only on the eradication of gender discrimination as ending women's oppression (Johnson-Odim, 1991:315).

Lutho explains that one change that was implemented in the programme that she really liked, was the introducing of gowns for the graduates. She explains that this was of great joy to her, as many people have a dream of one day wearing a graduation gown, and this was made a reality through Beedz.

What really worked well right, ok that idea right, I liked that idea that Pastor said we must make gowns, you understand. People wear gowns like graduates, at least everyone would like to one day wear a graduation gown so I really enjoyed making those graduation gowns, and the people look lovely with their certificates, wearing their gowns I like it a lot.

This is consistent with what Debbie Sloane (Interview 2015) alluded to when she explains that the gowns are symbolic of restoring dignity for the women.

The one thing that Zimkhita would like to change about the programme is the Bible course. This, she believes, is not necessary:

I don't think that we need to be taught about the bible 'cause we go to church, we do read the bible at church, we do not have to even attend Bible School.

One could argue that Zimkhita only focuses on the concrete skills and not the abstract things that one gains from the Beedz programme, hence her reluctance to include the Bible course. However, on the other hand, Zimkhita might not want the Bible course, even though she identifies as a Christian, because she might think that this might be a way to persuade her to attend River of Life Church whereas she has her own church that she attends. This is outlined by Rulong (2016:1) who writes that with religious NGOs, like Beedz, there might exist "an undeniable pressure to persuade vulnerable people to convert". Perhaps Beedz needs to make it clear why they offer the course, whether it is compulsory, and whether people who are not of Christian faith are welcome to join the Beedz programme.

The one thing that Phumla would like to improve about Beedz is introducing more experiential work activities. She says:

Another thing that I would have liked for use to do a lot is practical in other things because we had a practical for baking. We did that at Haricots so it would have been nice to also do it with the computer course, maybe tell us to go train at a certain place, at certain offices. So, that they can see how fast you are, you see. And tell yourself that ok even in this you are training yourself and in other things you tell yourself ok, maybe we even go to Birches and they say just see there and then you see your progress.

Phumla recognizes that for her learning is not only what happens in the classroom, however it is important to go and practice what you have learnt in real life settings. This, Phumla believes, is important not only for the facilitators to see whether the skills transfer has been successful, but also for the participant to practice the new skills that they have learnt. This is one of the reasons why Phumla was excited to learn more about beadwork and start making and selling her own.

Nomakhazi would like to change the teaching schedule:

The classes, you know because maybe, some other classes they take only two hours and then a week, one day a week, 2 hours. And then you come after that, another week; and then maybe you forgot what you've learned last time. Then you are moving backwards the facilitator because she had or he must revise first what he has done last week. And then, maybe if they maybe add some hours you know.

Nomakhazi recognizes that for her, and perhaps for other women, gaps that are too long in between her classes are not good for her learning process as she may forget what has been taught previously and it may be difficult to link it to what is being taught currently. She also believes that spending more time in class helps in cementing the learning process. This is related to the fact that planners need to take into account different women's needs and constraints before decisions are made around language, literacy curriculum, forms of organisation and class structure (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

It is important that the staff at Beedz be made aware of the various changes that the participants would like to implement. This is important not only for the smooth running of the programme, but to also ensure that participants leave knowing that the programme has fully equipped them either for the workplace, and/or running their own businesses. Having said that, the staff at Beedz also need to evaluate whether these changes are feasible for the programme. It is also important that during the advertising and recruitment of participants of the programme, as well as during the orientation phase of the programme, participants are made aware of the aims and objectives of Beedz, as well as the vision and mission.

Participants have expectations at the start of intervention programmes, therefore it is important to be accountable. Often these expectations are created by the professional when marketing the specific programme. Not only is it unethical to fail to deliver on promises made, however this could lead to making facilitation more difficult at a later stage as the participants become resistant to change (Robinson-Pant, 2003:11).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed important information regarding Beedz, from the perspective of the participants. Moving forward, the staff of Beedz could use this information to further improve on their programme, as they have over the years.

Moreover, it is of utmost importance that Beedz employs effective monitoring and evaluation strategies, drawing on the information that they receive from their trainees. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are crucial for training programmes to be able to adapt more effectively to the changing needs of women leaders (Mober, 2014:153). Robinson-Pant (2003:11) writes that planners need to look at interventions that are relevant to a specific target group, especially within the field of Adult Education and Community Development. This is not only important for the effectiveness of the intervention, but also for the satisfaction of the participants.

It is important to monitor the effectiveness of programmes, as often the empowerment of 'disempowered' individuals is the stated aim of many interventions, and thus monitoring this is imperative as it would enhance accountability. When the empowerment of the individual is the goal there should follow the act of developing, building and increasing power of individuals through their sharing of ideas and working together during training. It is therefore crucial to provide training so that individuals become less dependent on others for help, which will allow them to lead a better life (Botha et al., 2007:10).

Overall, the third world feminist theoretical framework has certainly been applicable for Beedz, as the programme acknowledges the multiple capacities and perceptions of third world women (Sato, 2004:85).

7 Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the thesis through drawing on the various themes contained in it. This thesis adopted a third world feminist approach to researching a programme called Beedz, a skills training project for women, established in 2006 by River of Life Church in Grahamstown. For African women, problems such as skills training have been of central concern in their lives, and many African women have articulated that they wish these issues had the same kind of exposure within the feminist movement in the West (Johnson-Odim, 1991:322). Even though it was never the intention of Beedz to purposely set about being a third world feminist organisation, it has tried to address this in Grahamstown.

Churches in many developing countries have been instrumental in providing assistance, whether this has been through short or long-term programmes for social development. These are churches like River of Life Church in Grahamstown. The role of the church in community development has received renewed interest, with a growing recognition that churches can play a leading role in motivating the residents of lower class areas (such as Grahamstown East) to better themselves and their communities (Williams & Bakama, 1992:1). Based on the information received from the interviews conducted with both the participants and the organisers, several conclusions can be drawn on the Beedz programme, and recommendations can be made for the improvement of the programme.

As Beedz is run by the church, there is a lot of emphasis on Christianity, both from the organisers' and participants' perspectives. Whereas one participant expressed that she did not like the Bible course, all other participants who spoke about the course had positive things to say about it and about how it has changed their lives. As there are mixed feelings with regards the Bible course, perhaps Beedz needs to make it clear why they offer the course, whether it is compulsory, and whether people who are not of Christian faith are welcome to enroll for the Beedz programme. This is because participants like Zimkhita do not want the Bible course, because they might perceive this as a way to persuade them to attend River of Life Church. This is outlined by Rulong (2016:1) who writes that with religious NGOs, like Beedz, there might exist "an undeniable pressure to persuade vulnerable people to convert".

One could also conclude that Beedz is successful in achieving its aims, as all the participants interviewed feel that they have gained valuable and transferable skills from Beedz. Not only

have they gained in terms of the skills that they were taught, but most have also experienced a personal change in their lives. Beedz therefore focuses on the overall wellbeing and empowerment of the women, and as such is consistent with the third world feminist approach (Johnson-Odim, 1991:318), which has led many participants who have left the programme to inform others about it and encourage them to attend.

One of the aims of the Beedz programme is to equip women with skills so that they are able to start their own business. Indeed, this has come across with the participants that have been interviewed. Although the businesses that they have started have not been formal, it seems that to a large extent they have been successful. A recommendation that can be made to the organisers of Beedz with regards this, as Nombeko mentioned in her interview, is perhaps introducing an extended course where women who do decide to start their own businesses feel supported. This would be similar to the EPAG pilot project in Liberia that offers placement and support (including micro-enterprise advisory services and internship and job placement assistance) even after the actual training is over (The World Bank Group, 2014:2). Furthermore, the organisers of Beedz should look into ensuring that the participants, while still enrolled in the programme, receive the necessary support because, as outlined in the interviews, a few participants were discouraged by close friends and family from taking part in the course, which may lead to drop-outs.

Returning to the main research question, the researcher argues that what can be learnt from this research is that through using a third world feminist lens and by including women, you create spaces for them to empower themselves. This has happened particularly in Beedz, where participants have graduated having gained not only skills, but have also become more self-aware and self-confident. Although Beedz has not intentionally set out to work from a third world feminist perspective, the researcher argues that Beedz is a project for women that is not focused on traditional feminist issues, as it looks at a broad range of issues in order to improve women's lives. Furthermore, it not only equips women with skills which are relevant and can be applied in each woman's life, Beedz also creates an environment which fosters personal change within the women. Women interviewed have echoed that they have witnessed growth in various aspects of their identity, after having completed the course. Although these findings cannot be generalised to skills training projects across South Africa, they do provide a voice for the participants of the

Beedz project. The main aim of this research was to explore the experiences of the women who have participated in the Beedz programme, what they went through, and whether the programme benefited them or not. In particular, this research explored how the participants experienced Beedz as a programme for women without an exclusive focus on traditional feminist issues.

It is important to note that it was never the intention of the Beedz organisers to adopt a third world feminist approach. However, the researcher in analysing the programme found it to be fitting in with third world feminist theory, in that the programme tries to improve women's lives by looking at broader issues that affect women. This includes looking at ways to improve each woman and her circumstances, in a way that will benefit her and her loved ones. The researcher found no indication that the Beedz organisers were aware or thinking about using this particular feminist approach, however this research shows that they have inadvertently put this into practice. Through this programme, more women in the Grahamstown community are feeling empowered and are able to earn a living, through using their entrepreneurial skills and/or through employment opportunities that have opened up since having completed the course.

To conclude, firstly, this research underlines the importance of programmes like Beedz in terms of the South African National Development Plan (NDP), which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality in South Africa by 2030, and which makes mention of women and development, as well as education (National Planning Commission, 2012:261). In that these programmes are not only educational in nature, they also have an income generation component which helps in reducing poverty. Secondly, according to the National Planning Commission (2012:261) the Department of Higher Education and Training proposes establishing Community Education and Training Centres which incorporate and transform the current public adult learning centres. These are programmes like Beedz, which are already in existence and are successful, that could be implemented on a larger scale in order to reach more people.

The third world feminist perspective has also been relevant for this research, as the Beedz programme acknowledges the multiple capacities and perceptions of third world women (Sato, 2004:85). Beedz focuses on the advancement of women's skills and status. Third world feminism is not only concerned with understanding the situation of women and their position amidst unequal gender relations, but is also interested in identifying efficient strategies for the improvement of everybody's livelihood (Ritzer, 2004:15). It is in the applicability of third world

feminism in a South African context where vital literature is lacking, and in which this research hopes to have made a contribution. It is also in the field of skills-based training projects, particularly those for women, and the role of the church in facilitating skills development in which this research hopes to have made a contribution. More skills training projects should think about the benefits of adopting a third world feminist perspective, as it encourages including women, thus creating enabling environments for them to empower themselves.

Appendix One: Interview Schedule for Programme Managers

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your involvement in the Beedz Programme. The information you give will be used for my master's thesis. What you say will be treated as confidential and your name will not appear on any research findings. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time that is fine as well. The interview will last about 30 minutes. I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you?

Questions

What is the aim of the Beedz programme?

What role do (did) you play at Beedz?

Has (Did) this programme made any difference in your life? OR – why might you think it has (did) not made any difference?

On average, how many 'graduates' does Beedz produce each year?

From your knowledge, on average, how many of those 'graduates' are successful in securing jobs after the programme?

From your knowledge, on average, how many of those 'graduates' are successful in starting their own businesses after the programme?

Over the years, how many of your 'graduates' have come back to invest in the programme, whether it be through volunteering on the programme, or through playing a financial role

What sort of funding exists for this programme?

How has the community responded to the programme?

Have (Did) you noticed any change in the trainees from the start to the end of the programme?

What sort of feedback have (did) you received from the trainees with regards the programme?

Have (Did) you received any sort of feedback from males with regards the programme?

From your knowledge, have (did) any of the participants received any negative feedback, or lack of support from their families and/or loved ones, for attending the programme?

How has the programme changed over the years?

Do (did) you stay in contact with the participants once they 'graduate' from the programme? – why or why not?

Conclusion

I have asked all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to say or to ask me about?

Thanks a lot for speaking with me it was really helpful. If you would like to get a copy of my thesis when it is complete, I can make it available to you

Appendix Two: Interview Schedule for Programme Directors

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your involvement in the Beedz Programme. The information you give will be used for my master's thesis.

What you say will be treated as confidential and your name will not appear on any research findings. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time that is fine as well.

The interview will last about 30 minutes

I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you?

Questions

When did the Beedz programme start?

Who was involved in starting the programme?

What was your role in starting the programme?

What inspired you to start the programme?

What is the aim of the programme?

Why the focus on women, and not both genders?

Why is the programme specifically for unemployed, single mothers?

What motivated you to continue with the programme all these years?

Are you still involved, in any way, with the programme?

What sort of funding exists for this programme?

How, to your knowledge, has the community responded to the programme?

Have you received any feedback from males with regards the programme?

From your knowledge, have any of the participants received any negative feedback, or lack of support from their families and/or loved ones, for attending the programme?

How has the programme changed over the years?

Conclusion

I have asked all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to say or to ask me about?

Thanks a lot for speaking with me it was really helpful. If you would like to get a copy of my thesis when it is complete, I can make it available to you

Appendix Three: Interview Schedule for Facilitators

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your involvement in the “Beedz Programme.” The information you give will be used for my master’s thesis. What you say will be treated as confidential and your name will not appear on any research findings. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time that is fine as well. The interview will last about 15 minutes. I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you?

Questions

From your knowledge, what is the aim of the Beedz programme?

What volunteer role do you play at Beedz?

Do you think that the fact that you are a male, volunteering in a women’s programme, has any impact? – if any, what impact do you think that is?

What inspired you to volunteer on the Beedz programme?

Has volunteering on this programme made any difference in your life?

What difference has it made?

OR – why might you think it has not made any difference?

How long have you been volunteering on the programme?

What has motivated you to continue volunteering on the programme?

What have you learnt about yourself as a result of volunteering on the programme?

Do you stay in contact with the participants once they ‘graduate’ from the programme?

Conclusion

I have asked all of my questions.

Is there anything else you would like to say or to ask me about?

Thanks a lot for speaking with me it was really helpful.

If you would like to get a copy of my thesis when it is complete, I can make it available to you

Appendix Four: Interview Schedule for Trainees

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your experience of the “Beedz Programme.” The information you give will be used for my master’s thesis. The results will also be made available to the people involved in the Beedz programme as it will help them understand what works about Beedz and about the things that need to be improved. Please note that I feeding back this information to Beedz, I will NOT disclose your name, nor will I disclose what you said to me. It will all be STRICTLY confidential.

What you say will be treated as confidential and your name will not appear on any research findings.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time that is fine as well.

The interview will last about 30-45 minutes

I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you?

I’m not going to ask you about any personal things that you might have talked about during your Beedz classes, however if this does come up and you want to talk about it, that’s OK too.

What I’d like to hear about is what it was like to participate and if participating in the programme has made a difference to you.

Basic details

What is your full name and surname?

What is your current occupation?

What was your occupation before you joined the Beedz programme?

If you are comfortable sharing, can you tell me your age?

Can you tell me when you participated in the Beedz programme?

How long were you a part of the programme?

First heard about the skills-based programme

What, in your opinion is the aim of the Beedz programme?

Can you tell me how you first heard about Beedz?

When you first heard about Beedz, what did you think?

What helped you make up your mind to join the Beedz programme?

What, if any, information did you get beforehand?

What did you think about the information?

Evidence of change and effectiveness

Helpfulness

Overall, do you think participating in the Beedz programme was helpful?

In what ways was it helpful?

In what ways was it not helpful?

Can you remember anything that happened or information that you were given in one of your classes that made a difference to you?

Can you think of anything about any one of your facilitators that you found helpful? – *Anything about facilitator as a person?*

Can you think of anything that facilitator said or did that you found helpful?

Can you give me an example of something that worked well about the Beedz programme?

And an example of something that didn't work so well?

Looking back over all your classes, which one is the one that stands out the most for you?

And what was it that made that class the most memorable?

Are there other moments that stand out for you? Why?

Personal Change

Overall, do you feel that you have changed in any way since having gone through the Beedz programme?

What do you think may have led to that change?

Can you give me an example of how you have changed?

How might the Beedz programme have made a difference?

If no change, why do you think that is?

And what do you think people who know you very well would say if I asked them, do you think _____ has changed since having participated in the Beedz programme?

If you could start the Beedz programme all over again, what is anything would you do differently?

Recommendation

Would you encourage others to participate in the Beedz programme?

Why or why not?

What would you tell them about the Beedz programme?

Impact of the Beedz programme within the wider community

Do you think the Grahamstown community has changed in any way since the Beedz programme was started?

If so, how do you think it has changed?

If not, why do you think it has not changed?

Literature on skills training programmes and third world feminist perspective

Can you tell me whether there has been any resistance from your family and/or friends, for taking part in the programme?

What sort of support have you received from your family and/or friends, for taking part in the programme?

Have you had any feedback from males, about the programme?

Do you feel that the Beedz programme has been relevant to you? – have you been equipped with skills that you felt you needed?

Other questions relating to Beedz

If you are comfortable sharing, can you tell me whether your income has increased, decreased, or has stayed the same since having done the Beedz programme?

Conclusion

I have asked all of my questions. Is there anything else you would like to say or to ask me about?

Thanks a lot for speaking with me it was really helpful. If you would like to get a copy of my thesis when it is complete, I can make it available to you

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