Participatory Human Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Discussion of the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis relates the work of a non-governmental organisation, The Spirals Trust, to discussions on human and participatory development. The focus of the study is one of The Spirals Trust's projects, the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project, which is discussed in relation to theoretical material on human development and participatory development. Collectively these perspectives are defined in this thesis as 'participatory human development'. The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project illustrates some of the challenges that face the practice of participatory human development.

Workshops and focus group interviews were conducted with participants who were part of the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project in order to draw out their experiences of the project. Questions were created from themes that emerged from the participants' discussion of their experiences and these questions were then posed to members of staff of The Spirals Trust. The experiences of both the participants and the staff members are discussed in order to explore issues that emerge in the practice of participatory human development in the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project.

The results highlight the challenges of putting into action the tenets of participatory human development. Feedback showed that a focus on personal development can help cultivate the ethic of participation. The effort that this entailed on the part of facilitators is discussed. The importance of exposing and continually working with power dynamics that may emerge in projects of this nature is revealed and the eroding influence of bureaucratic compliance in projects like this one is explored. The study also suggests that there is a need to promote development initiatives that challenge the political status quo rather than just finding ways to incorporate the marginalised more effectively into current systems. New questions that the research poses to the practice of participatory human development are considered in conjunction with suggestions for further research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDP	Community Development Practitioner
CSD	Centre for Social Development
FAMSA	The Family and Marriage Association of South Africa
HD	Human Development
PD	Participatory Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
YEP	Youth Empowerment Project

PLATES

Participants playing the drums and shakers at Kingswood College

Coordinator Thami Matiwana and a participant play the horns at Kingswood College

Participant learns to print material from his teacher

Participants doing a mapping exercise during the Spirals workshop

Participants brainstorming the characteristics of good leaders

A participant shows off the leather goods he made

Leather work in action

An apprentice learns from his teacher

A participant shows off the traditional outfit that he made

YEP participants and service providers celebrate the achievements of the YEP participants


The Spirals Trust members from the top left; facilitator Athiná Copteros, director Theresa Edlmann .Chairman of the board Br. Timothy Jolley, volunteer Injairu Kulundu, administrator Margaret Simango and coordinator Thami Matiwana.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the work of a South African non-governmental organisation, The Spirals Trust, and relates its work to discussions about human and participatory development. The human development approach sees the general well-being of an individual as a better indicator of development than the economic indicators which have been emphasised in traditional approaches to development. Participatory development favours 'bottom-up' approaches towards development which are anchored in the involvement of the community in question towards its own development.

The genesis of this project was an interest in the work of The Spirals Trust which promoted personal development in the form of psychological and spiritual healing as a tool towards development. Their mission was to 'enable transformation for individuals in their contexts by providing creative, participative processes that deal with issues of identity and facilitate awareness, healing and change' (The Spirals Trust, 2005). In an effort to further understand their work, I researched development approaches that are similar to that of The Spirals Trust, namely the human development and participatory development approaches. Because these two approaches largely overlap, they will be referred to jointly in this thesis as participatory human development. This became the framework through which the work of The Spirals Trust was viewed. This framework brings together an understanding of development that takes the individual and their holistic needs as the primary focus of development and sees the participation of the individual in the life of the community as a vital aspect of the way that development should take place.

This thesis focuses on the work of one project of The Spirals Trust, namely the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP), which is examined in order to explore the challenges that face the practice of participatory human development. The YEP sought to work with unemployed out-of-school youth in the Tantyi community in Grahamstown, South Africa. The project aimed to 'mobilise' the youth of Tantyi as strategic leaders who could bring forth sustainable growth and development in their community (The Spirals Trust Annual Report, 2007: 20).The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

1.1 Post- Apartheid South Africa and the Development Context

The economic standing of South Africa within the world is categorised as an 'upper-middle-income country with a per capita income similar to that of Botswana Brazil, Malaysia or Mauritius' (May, 2000: 2). Since its democratic consolidation in 1994, contradictions in this categorisation have been exposed. While being touted as 'the most developed economy in Africa' it is also considered to

be the one of the most unequal societies in the world in terms of distribution of income and wealth (May, 2000: 5; Terreblanche, 2002: 29). Many households still have unsatisfactory access to clean water, energy, healthcare and education (Terreblanche, 2002: 25; May, 2000: 5). The prevalence of abject poverty amongst 50 per cent of the population and high rates of unemployment, crime and violence (interpersonal, structural and gender based) further characterise South Africa's developmental context (Terreblanche 2002: 25). Rapidly changing patterns of mortality and morbidity due to AIDS mean that many already poor people have been pushed deeper into poverty (Seekings and Nattrass, 2005: 346). In 1997, a Participatory Poverty Assessment showed that the poor themselves describe their poverty as being characterised by the alienation that they have experienced from kinship and community, with increasing food insecurity, crowded homes and the fragmentation of the family (May, 2000: 5). Areas in which the experience of poverty is particularly rife include the former homelands and rural areas with the Eastern Cape and Limpopo being the poorest provinces in South Africa (South Africa Human Development Report, 2003: 42, 82).

In order to understand South Africa's current developmental context, it is necessary to recognise the impact that the past has on the present. Colonialism and apartheid have had a lasting impact on the developmental context. While it is often argued that:

> South Africa gained a strong economy, modern infrastructure, strong educational and health services, and a sound legal system under colonialism… it is nonetheless beyond dispute that the white colonial powers and the local white establishments that ruled South Africa from the mid-17th to the late 20th centuries used their monopoly over political, military, economic, an ideological power not only to advance themselves but also to plunder indigenous people, disrupt their social structures, and turn them into exploited workers (Terreblanche, 2002:25)

In addition to this, the post-apartheid democratic state is argued by some to have contributed to the levels of inequality in South Africa. The move from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 to the 'neo liberal inspired macro economic strategy' known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996 is said to have put 'considerable emphasis on "top-down" development planning and the wider diffusion of development benefits through a trickle down process' (Bek, Binns and Nel, 2004: 24). As a result of these changes and weak service provision, 'South Africa's developmental outcomes remain uneven and weak, particularly in the area of pro-poor economic transformation' (South Africa Human Development Report, 2003: xi).

The influence that the past has on the present and the additional impact of current responses to poverty and inequality in South Africa necessitate a response to development that is holistic and historically conscious in so far as it is open to the idea that development could mean different things

to different people and could require different strategies to address the well-being of its beneficiaries.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

This study aims to relate the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) to discussions about participatory human development. By unpacking the experiences of the participants and staff members involved with the YEP, we can gain insight not only into the merits and shortcomings of this particular project, but also into more general challenges facing the practical implementation of participatory human development in post-apartheid South Africa. The main questions that this research poses are: in what ways does the work of The Spirals Trust, and in particular the YEP, resonate with the challenges that have been faced by other attempts to implement participatory human development in the country? What additional questions does the YEP pose to the practice of participatory human development? What do the experiences of those involved in the YEP suggest in terms of how participatory human development can best be put into practice? What other research is needed in the area of participatory human development? In order to answer these questions, I have also had to address questions relating to the overall strengths and weaknesses of the YEP programme. The thesis thus both evaluates the YEP and relates the experiences of the YEP to broader discussions on participatory human development.

1.3 Justification

While human development and participatory development are very popular approaches to development, some argue that they are theoretically ambiguous and that more research needs to be done regarding how to implement human and participatory development practically [1] (see for example Nicholls, 2000: 157,159 and Parfitt, 2004: 537). This project hopes to dissect the elements that came into play in the YEP in an effort to understand more fully the challenges facing the practical implementation of participatory human development. This is done with a view to strengthen initiatives that favour this way of working. Essentially, we need to know more about this way of working; and looking at the work of The Spirals Trust, and in particular the YEP, we can improve our understanding of the terrain that participatory human development spans. By investigating the YEP we can gain insight into the inner workings of projects that hope to promote participatory human development and can consider the conditions that are necessary to make this

[1] This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

work successful. In this way, a discussion of the work of The Spirals Trust can add to conversations about the practice of participatory human development more generally.

1.4 Limitations

The Spirals Trust closed its offices at the end of 2007 and changed its structure to a private consultancy run by the former director Theresa Edlmann. Though there are numerous reasons given by the organisation that account for why the closure of the office was necessary (some of which are highlighted in Chapter Three), information from former members of staff has not yet been documented to provide a full view of the pressures that led to the closure of Spirals Trust offices. This research does not delve into the reasons behind the closure of the Trust and how it may relate to participatory human development. Instead, the focus of this thesis is on only one of the projects of the Spirals Trust, the YEP. While my discussion of the YEP may give insights into some of the broader challenges facing the Spirals Trust as a whole, it should be acknowledged that the YEP is only one example of the Spirals Trust's work and that the Spirals Trust was a diverse organisation with several quite different projects.

Another aspect that deserves mention is the fact that I did not include the reflections of the organisations that The Spirals Trust was collaborating with as part of this research. As will be seen in Chapter Four, many comments by the participants refer to the conduct of organisations that The Spirals Trust collaborated with in the YEP. Even though comments on the conduct of these partners are important, my research focuses on the efforts of The Spirals Trust as the leading organisation and coordinator of the YEP. Because this organisation was the leading organisation in the project, a certain level of responsibility falls onto this organisation. However, as will become evident later on, many of the challenges facing the implementation of the YEP related to issues around collaboration with other organisations.

1.5 Methodology: 'Making the Road as We Walk It' - Creative Approaches, Theory Formulation and the Implications of Being an 'Insider Researcher'

In an effort to relate the concerns of participatory human development to the work of The Spirals Trust, I engaged with the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP). I examined the issues that the participants and the members of staff raised with regard to the YEP and related the relevant points to key concerns raised in discussions about the practice of participatory human development. At the outset, I approached the participants and asked if they would be willing to provide reflections on their experiences with The Spirals Trust in a workshop process. While the workshops aimed primarily to provide me with research material they also provided a space for

participants to evaluate their experiences as a whole – a process that they had not been through at that stage of their involvement in the YEP. The question that was posed to the participants was: what can be learnt from the YEP that can help improve the development and implementation of such projects? In line with the grounded theory of research, there was a constant probing, questioning and drawing out of issues in the data that I had collected in order to develop theories about what the participants had shared (Dey, 1999: 6). The information gathered from the participants created focal points that I wanted to explore further in order to understand what their experiences could contribute to discussions about participatory human development. I used the information gained from the participants to create questions that were posed to two longstanding members of staff from The Spirals Trust who were involved with the YEP. These questions were used to set up interviews conducted separately with the former director of The Spirals Trust, Theresa Edlmann, and the project coordinator of the YEP, Thami Matiwana. Conversations with both participants and facilitators of the YEP provided the opportunity for the strengths of the process to be unpacked in terms of what the work involved and for further suggestions to be made about future possibilities. The less successful aspects of the YEP were discussed in detail to show the struggles involved on the part of those working for The Spirals Trust with the objective of suggesting ways in which work towards participatory human development could be better conducted for the benefit of all those involved.

1.5.1 The Use of Creative Methodologies in the Workshops Conducted with the Participants

On receiving the consent of the participants to engage in this exploration, I facilitated participatory workshops followed by informal focus group interviews to create a space where the participants could reflect on the achievements, challenges and shortcomings of the YEP process. By 'participatory' I refer to the usage of 'various techniques or approaches to enable participation' (White, 1999:19; see also Chambers, 2002). A detailed account of the workshop plan is provided in the Appendix 1. By using participatory workshops I hoped to draw on the informal relationship that I had formed with the participants by working with them as a volunteer in the year preceding this research. My work at The Spirals Trust from December 2006 to December 2007 in different voluntary capacities created a casual rapport between me and the participants. My work in the organisation was initially conceived as helping in the coordinating and facilitation of projects that needed extra assistance. I hoped to draw on my familiarity with the participants to create a process

where the participants would feel free to express their views. More will be said on the effects of me being an 'insider researcher' at a later stage in this chapter (Brannick and Coglan 2007).

In order to design these workshops, I drew on my experience in the field of applied theatre and creative methodologies in communication to create a process that would invite different ways in which to engage with the topic. Applied theatre believes 'in the power of theatre form to address something beyond the form itself' (Ackroyd, 2000: 1; see also Thompson, 2003; Taylor, 2003). This includes practices such as drama-therapy, drama in education, psychodrama, community-based participatory theatre and drama for work place training. Each of these (and the many other practices that may exist within and between these initiatives) is a way in which drama can be used as a tool for communication. In my experience, the use of drama methodology in order to address important social issues provides interesting possibilities especially because of the emphasis put on participation and transformation in which 'active participation' is seen as a 'precondition for transformation' (Ackroyd, 2000: 3). It is this active participation that the workshops hoped to encourage. Regardless of this link, the difference between an applied theatre workshop and the workshops created for this research need to be mentioned. Applied theatre involves performative aspects as part of its processes. These workshops did not include performative aspects, but rather intended to use the creative methodologies and activities made available through applied theatre to free up ways of engaging with the topic at hand. Different ways of drawing out the participants' experiences were explored. The aim of this was to create a multi-layered account of participants' experience of The Spirals Trust that relied on different mediums and would hopefully give a colourful and cross-referenced depiction of their journeys.

The workshop consisted of activities that were familiar to the participants such as brainstorming, the creation of collages, group work, and informal focus group interviews. The participants had been made familiar with these ways of working through their collaboration with The Spirals Trust and other partner organisations. This is especially so in the case of the YEP in which the youthful energy of the participants worked well with these strategies. I intended to draw on the participants' familiarity with these exercises in order to create a sense of continuity which I felt would be useful in creating freedom for the participants to express themselves. Most importantly, this way of working was inspired from my own experience and knowledge in the field of applied theatre. My work with different groups of people through my academic and professional life has led me to an understanding of the benefits of this creative way of working.

1.5.2 Reliability

The focus of the tasks and exercises set out for the participants was to draw out the experiences of each participant in different ways. This worked to create reliability in the research as the workshop was designed to ask similar questions in different ways. Using different ways to ask about specific aspects of their experience created a space for me as the researcher to look for continuity in their responses as different instruments were used to gauge similar questions. This methodology hoped to pinpoint and identify the key concerns expressed by the participants in order to bring out the patterns and variations in their representations. This practice is defined as using mixed methods in order to provide triangulation in research. Triangulation is defined as 'the use of multiple methods and measures of an empirical phenomenon in order to overcome problems of bias and validity' (Cox and Hassard, 2005: 110). In this case triangulation was shaped by using multiple methods of data collection to reflect upon a single phenomenon (Cox and Hassard, 2005: 111). Some researchers argue that this way of working has the value of '[capturing] a more complete and holistic, and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study' (Jick in Cox and Hassard, 2005: 111). Others claim that triangulation aids in both capturing the data and in leading to a 'stronger substantiation of constructs and hypothesis' (Eisenhardt in Cox and Hassard, 2005: 111). This is taken even further by those who suggest that triangulation is

> a way to get to the finding in the first place – by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it from different sources by using different methods and by squaring the findings with others it needs to be squared with (Miles and Huberman in Cox and Hassard, 2005: 111)

Despite these positive views on triangulation, there have been significant deliberations about whether the term can be used to denote the use of any mixed methods in the study of a phenomenon. Some suggest that triangulation should only refer to the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods or that it should only refer to the use of many qualitative methods (Kadushin, Hecht, Sasson and Saxe, 2008: 47). The usage of mixed methods in my research relied on applying different qualitative methodologies in an effort to investigate the research question. By providing different ways in which the participants could engage with the topic at hand this methodology hoped to have a layered effect, at first orientating the participants, providing instances for personal reflection and then opening up the conversation to the group as a whole. For example, during the workshop, the participants were invited to identify strengths and weaknesses of the YEP process. Later on, during the informal interviews, they were asked to

talk about their experiences in general terms and so it is likely that they would be able to raise similar issues in both of these exercises. The intention behind this was to draw out different aspects of their experience and then provide the opportunity for reflection on the experience as a whole. This strategy recognised that the information that was needed from the participants would need to be drawn out systematically in order to reach a level where the details of their past experience could be shared with the fervour and freedom required.

1.5.3 Fluidity in the Workshop Structure

The workshops served as a guiding structure through which the participants would be invited to share their experiences. If at any point any of the exercises planned did not serve the group in terms of creating an environment where they could express their views freely, flexibility was needed to change whatever it was that stood in their way. This was done through the group's consent and by taking up suggestions on how they would prefer to work. This practice resonates with the tenets of creative methodologies evidenced in the work of practitioners such as Horton and Freire (1990) who advocate for a process in education and social change in which 'we make the road by walking' . Because it is the group's experiences that my research sought to invite, initiating avenues that were comfortable to the participants was of utmost importance.

1.5.4 Acknowledging Power Dimensions: Clarifying the Intentions and Purpose of the Research

An important aspect of my facilitation was to put measures in place to clarify to the participants that there was no wrong or right answer. It was important that they did not feel that the workshops would be judged by The Spirals Trust or by me as a former representative of The Spirals Trust. A vital part of this process was clarifying boundaries by making it clear to the participants that I was approaching them in my own capacity as a researcher and that the insight that I hoped to gain from them would be used in putting together ideas about what we can learn from the work of The Spirals Trust.

In acknowledgment of the power dimensions that so often exist in relationships between participants and facilitators or participants and the organisation with whom they are collaborating, it became important to find ways to ensure that the participants were central to the process. The participants were considered as 'experts' with regard to their own experiences and so the workshop

had to be tailored in a way that respected this. This principle is an important part of participatory research (PR):

> PR challenges the notion that only professional researchers can generate knowledge for meaningful social reform. Like authentic participation, PR believes in the knowledge and ability of ordinary people to reflect on their oppressive situation and change it. To the contrary, in many cases at the local community level, participants have proved to be more capable than 'experts' because they best know their situation and have a perspective on problems and needs that outsiders cannot fully share (Servaes and Arnst, 1999: 109).

I stressed that the participants themselves were invited to assess for themselves what the merits and the shortcomings of the YEP were with the objective of strengthening development practices such as the one of which they have been a part. Despite measures that were put into place to confront power dimensions it remains important to recognize that:

> Power differentials manifest themselves in various guises throughout the research process. Researchers establish their status of power at the very inception of the study… Their status of power prevails throughout the process of sample and data selection, analysis interpretation and representation (Perumal, 2007: 21).

Regardless of the efforts I put towards trying to break down boundaries I have to be frank about the fact that I may hold power in the eyes of the participants and The Spirals Trust staff members, and that this may have affected the way they related to me in the workshops, informal and focused interviews. Nevertheless, as will become evident later on, the participants did share many negative views on aspects of the YEP, suggesting that they felt sufficiently comfortable to criticise the work of The Spirals Trust and that my previous involvement with The Spirals Trust did not prevent them from speaking fairly openly about their experiences.

1.5.5 Focus Group Interviews

The use of focus groups in the informal interviews with the participants was chosen by virtue of its ability to create a 'dynamic narrative process' even within the prearranged focus of the research (Leavy in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007:173). Benefits of being a part of a focus group in an interview is that it creates a cooperative spirit amongst those involved that is said to promote collaborative ownership in that the group can rely on each other. Leavy goes as far as stating that 'within this context, group members communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences on their own terms' (Leavy in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007: 173). According to Kitzinger (1994:108-109):

> Group work insures that priority is given to the respondents' hierarchy of importance, *their* language and concepts, *their* frameworks for understanding the world….Everyday forms of communication… may tell us as *much*, if not *more*, about what people know. In this sense, focus groups 'reach that part other methods cannot reach' - revealing dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by the more conventional one-to-one interview or questionnaire (Kitzinger, 1994:108-109).

In focus group interviews, members of the group can use the experiences referred to by their colleagues to spark additional thoughts about issues that are pertinent to them. Because I was working with a group that has been marginalised, it was important for me that the process of sharing the knowledge that they have gained be one that was not an alienating experience and it was hoped that being part of a group would make each individual feel more confident about expressing him or herself, than they would have been if I had conducted one-on-one interviews with each participant.

The interviews in focus groups were designed to be semi-structured to specifically draw out information on their experience with The Spirals Trust. The questions were set up to be open-ended in order to invite responses specific to the participants' experiences. Whilst the positive aspects of focus group have been highlighted it is important to acknowledge some documented negative effects that this practice may in inadvertently create:

> Sometimes group members can actually silence others in the group by dominating the conversation or making it difficult for others to comfortably express their own viewpoints. In a focus group where some members have a majority standpoint and some have a minority standpoint, social relations of dominance may be replicated (Leavy, 2007: 183).

In an effort to acknowledge the possibility of this happening a special note must be made regarding the YEP focus group interviews. I decided to separate this group in terms of their gender for both the workshops and for the informal focus group interviews. This is because in my experience of the group I have come to note a difference in freedom of expression between the male and female participants when they are together in a group. Despite being vocal in their own right, I found that sometimes there was not enough space for the women's voices to emerge when the men were present. For this reason, I chose to separate the men from the women in an effort to promote a space in which both groups could freely express themselves.

1.5.6 Language

Additional effort was made towards encouraging a process where the participants could feel free to express themselves in whatever language they felt most comfortable with. Again, my previous rapport meant that the way I facilitated the workshops was familiar to the participants. I have worked with the YEP participants before in a way that those who wish to speak in isiXhosa were free do to so and those whose could speak more English acted as translators when necessary as I do not have a very good understanding of isiXhosa. The result of this was a situation where there was sense of flexibility around the use of language. When comfortable, the participants spoke in English often diverting into vernacular slang to embellish their thoughts. In some instances, participants only spoke in isiXhosa. Sometimes this was translated by their peers during the workshops; other times, their comments were recorded in isiXhosa and later translated by a Xhosa speaking person who is fluent in English. Where participants made comments in English but used a isiXhosa word or phrase as part of their comment, I have included both the English and isiXhosa here, with English translations of the isiXhosa terms used placed in brackets as part of the quote. Comments that were made in Xhosa only have been translated into English here with a footnote indicating that the original opinion was given in Xhosa.

1.5.7 Interviews with Members of Spirals Staff

Following the insight gained from the workshops, questions were created in order to invite the responses of staff members of The Spirals Trust. These questions are included as part of the Appendix 2. It seemed helpful to get the views not only of the YEP participants, but also of the two main YEP facilitators. In the interviews I hoped to encourage the staff members of The Spirals Trust to acknowledge the struggles and unexpected elements that they encountered in their facilitation of the YEP. These interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. Staff members were encouraged to reflect on aspects of the project that worked well, and aspects that in retrospect could have been better managed. I thought it was important to ask the members of staff for their opinions because if the objective of this research was to learn about The Spirals Trust's way of working, a necessary component, in addition to the experiences of the participants, would be the reflections of those who designed and implemented the process. By including these reflections, this research hoped to break down the boundaries in research that often pitch the experiences of participants against the voices of those who implemented the project. Even in saying this, priority was given to

the participants' voices. By asking the participants first about their experiences and then asking the members of staff to comment, I tried to limit the comments of the staff to the issues considered pertinent by the participants. This gave them a chance to respond to the comments made, and in instances share other aspects of their experience that may have contributed to the participants' perceptions. It should be noted, however, that the participants' comments were always kept anonymous and that while the staff members were given a general idea of what the participants had said, care was taken that they would not be able to identify which participants had made the comments concerned. By speaking to both the participants in and the facilitators of the YEP, I hoped to create a comprehensive view of what the project entailed while focusing on the themes raised by the participants. In this way, the research found ways to include the voices of those who may be perceived as having the power in this project whilst still holding them accountable for the experiences of the intended beneficiaries of the project.

1.5.8 My Involvement with The Spirals Trust

Through the work that I have done in The Spirals Trust as a volunteer researcher in 2007 I became familiar with the workings of the organisation from the perspective of an 'insider'. The definition of an insider researcher refers to research done by 'complete members of organizational systems in and on their own organizations' (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007: 59). The sense of ownership presented in this definition was experienced by me to a lesser degree because my temporary and undefined position with the organisation provided me with a level of detachment from the organisation that I would not have had if I had been a full member of staff. Therefore the extent of my 'insider-ness' can be seen as being a point on a continuum between being an outsider and an insider.

As indicated above, my work in the organisation in 2007 involved the coordination and facilitation of projects that needed extra assistance in 2007. As such I gained familiarity with the participants and members of staff through various activities that I was involved in throughout the YEP. My role as a volunteer afforded me a casual relationship with the participants and the fact that I was also of a similar age to most of the participants made us relate to each other in an easy way.

As my interest in the Spirals' way of working grew, I decided to explore the YEP for my Masters degree in 2008. There was a gap between the period in 2007 when I was directly involved with The Spirals Trust as a volunteer and the time in August and October 2008 in which I sought out the participants to ask them about their experience with The Spirals Trust. The perspective I gained as an insider is thus relevant to the time in which I was a volunteer. During this period, I did

not actively pursue the objectives of my research, as they were not thoroughly defined at the time. I did not therefore intervene in the proceedings of the YEP as a researcher, but was part of the proceedings as a volunteer.

Despite the caution that I have taken to substantiate my research by anchoring my results in what the participants and staff members of The Spirals Trust have said, my previous involvement with The Spirals Trust and its participants is a factor that has no doubt influenced and affected my findings. The insight that I have gained into the group dynamics that existed within the project may have informed some of my deductions. The occurrence of this type of insight is acknowledged in research as an instance in which:

> The researcher possesses exclusive knowledge of the community and its members, or the researcher has privileged access, in which he or she has a claim to the hidden knowledge of the group that an outsider must otherwise acquire at greater risk (Labaree, 2002, 101).

Positive and negative aspects of being an insider researcher are documented. Possible positive aspects of this perspective include the idea that 'the relative position of the participant observer can reveal a new perspective, a hidden meaning, or a unique understanding that is not otherwise achievable by an outsider' (Labaree, 2002, 103). However, it has been said that familiarity entailed in being a participant observer 'wraps' the researcher into a 'consciousness of comfort that hides the opportunity for the mundane and the ordinary to inform the study' (Maynard and Purvis in Labaree, 2002, 108). Thus, 'literature reveals the need for the insider participant observer to actively question [their] familiarity' (Labaree, 2002: 108). Additionally, while an insider can have a clear understanding of 'hidden meanings' within a context, it is important to note that 'we can be both part of and excluded from any social situation' and thus that an insider may not always pick up on all these 'hidden meanings' (Deutsch, 2004: 898). This line of reasoning stems from an understanding that 'all human relationships encapsulate multiple subject positions that take on different salience and meaning in various contexts' (Bloom in Deutsch, 2004: 898). Thus, the fact that I had been a part of The Spirals Trust as a volunteer does not mean that I have been privy to an all-encompassing understanding of the YEP proceedings.

Taking these points into consideration it is important to acknowledge that some of my pre-constructed assumptions and knowledge about the community may have been incorporated into this research (Renzetti & Lee, 1993). In line with a feminist understanding of research I recognise that my own 'assumptions, beliefs, sympathies, and biases' have interacted with the findings of this research (Renzetti & Lee, 1993: 177). In this way, my methodology upholds the view that:

> The researcher is not a neutral observer. He or she brings existentialist limitations to the scholarly endeavour. The values and biases of the researcher are inevitably injected into the research (Steady, 2004, 52).

As such I am located in the research rather than being a neutral observer. This element echoes Perumal's sentiments that the research that she has engaged in 'constitutes shared knowledge, rooted in the inter-subjectivity of', in my case, nine research participants and myself (2007:26-7). The recognition of subjectivity as valid methodology in qualitative research has grown. More insight into this is provided by Van Heugten (2004: 207) who says:

> Whereas until recently the positivist concern with objectivity and detachment predominated, it is now more widely accepted that these ideals are impossible and perhaps undesirable in human research. Subjectivity is no longer eschewed to the extent it once was. Within this, the exploration of less quantifiable experiences and of metaphor and narrative, has been reintroduced into social sciences as a valid undertaking.

Knowledge in this perspective can be 'attributed to the experience of the individual' meaning the perspectives of individuals about a particular experience constitutes relevant knowledge in research (Reinharz, 1979).

1.5.9 Ethical Considerations

As a way of making sure that my discussion was an honest reflection of the beliefs of the participants, and that the participants' were protected in this research, my way of working required an adherence to ethical practices. The participants and the members of staff of The Spirals Trust gave their informed consent to be a part of the process and to have their comments used as part of my research. Both participants and staff were also consulted with regard to the representations of their views in this research. Participants and staff members of The Spirals Trust were shown the transcripts of the workshops and interviews in order to create consistency between what they had said and what I had written down. This was done in order to 'address possible misinterpretations and interpretational variance' (Perumal, 2007: 27).

The participants in this study were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. The use of pseudonyms was the preferred way of working of the participants. Through this they felt that they could share their opinions without being self-conscious. It was clear to me that these pseudonyms would not completely protect the participants from being identified especially by the Spirals' staff who had a very close relationship with them. Researchers suggest that the use of pseudonyms and

anonymity in research does not always give the desired effect. This practice is said to make three assumptions:

> (a) identification can harm, embarrass, or invade the privacy of participants; (b) the use of pseudonyms and other anonymizing techniques can prevent identification; and (c) identifying settings and locations makes participants more easily identifiable (Nespor. 2000: 546).

These assumptions mask the fact that pseudonyms can be unreliable because 'there is no way that a scientist can ensure that the identity of a community studied will remain secret' and there are too many ways in which the identity of a community can be revealed (Nespor, 2000: 546). In an effort to further protect the participants from being reproached about what they had shared the Spirals members of staff were asked not to contact any of the participants about what they had said in Chapter Four. Only if they accepted this condition were the Spirals members of staff allowed to have a look at the representation of their views in the research and the conclusions were drawn from them. This became necessary because the staff members would inevitably come into contact with the participants' viewpoints when viewing representations of what they had said.

Also, it must be said that even though transcriptions of the feedback of the participants and the staff members were originally done in full, before their inclusion in this thesis the comments made were edited in order to provide a fluency in reading and some clarifications that might be necessary for a reader that is unfamiliar with the South African context. As much as I tried to retain the idiosyncrasies of expression of individuals, certain ambiguities or linguistic errors had to be smoothed out in order to better guide the reader for clarity's sake. What I did in cases where more clarity was needed resonates with transcribing experience described by Riessmann in which she described the difficulties in capturing spoken language into written text (2002: 25). It is understood that 'seemingly mundane choices of what to include and exclude and how to arrange the text have serious implications on how a reader will understand the narrative' (Reissman in Huberman and Miles, 2002:225). In every case, I hoped to clear the text from repetitive phrases and false starts in order to bring out the clarity of the participants expression.

1.6 Chapter Breakdown

This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter Two which provides an overview of the human development and participatory development approaches. These approaches have overlapping concerns and are referred to jointly in this thesis as participatory human development. A summary of both human development and participatory development is given emphasising the key aspects of the approaches, as well as debates and challenges that face their implementation. These discussions are used as a backdrop to my discussion of the attempts by The Spirals Trust to promote participatory human development in the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project.

Chapter Three focuses on introducing The Spirals Trust and the YEP to the reader. The Spirals Trust's genesis, history and methodology are discussed and changes that the Trust has gone through are described. The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment project is discussed in detail, highlighting its beginnings, its agenda and the details of the programme. The Spirals Trust's role in the project is related and the link between the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment and participatory human development is established.

Chapter Four discusses the workshops and interviews held with the participants and the interviews conducted with members of Spirals' staff. An outline of the workshop plan is given as well as an account of who was present in the participants' workshops. The themes that emerged from the participants' workshops and interviews are presented in detail and responses to the participants' experiences by the Spirals' members of staff are juxtaposed with the participants' point of views.

Chapter Five relates the information gained from the participants and members of staff to the earlier discussion of participatory human development. The key questions that are used to link the case study to the research question are: what insights can the YEP experience give us regarding how participatory human development may best be realised in practice? What additional research do these experiences suggest is necessary?

CHAPTER TWO: THINKING THROUGH HUMAN AND PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

This chapter explores different approaches to development, with the context of post-apartheid South Africa and the work of The Spirals Trust in mind. It has been argued that traditional approaches to development over-emphasise economic indicators as a barometer of the welfare of the society (Desai, 1991: 353). In contrast to such approaches, I look at other issues that may be relevant in the assessment of developmental initiatives. In order to avoid over-emphasising economic indicators, I adopt an approach to development that I will refer to as participatory human development. This approach incorporates aspects of both the United Nations Development Programme's human development approach and of participatory development both of which will I will discuss in detail. The examination of participatory approaches towards achieving human development provides a useful starting point for a discussion of development in post-apartheid South Africa. South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid has contributed to a post-apartheid context characterised by poverty, marginalisation, unemployment and high levels of interpersonal violence. Work towards development in this context requires awareness of the way in which apartheid continues to affect the daily lives of South Africans. Participatory human development seeks to promote the development of individuals on a personal level as well as working towards ways in which alternative possibilities for their lives can be engendered.

The material on human development and participatory development forms the backdrop to my discussion of the work of The Spirals Trust. This organisation's way of working is rooted in an understanding of development that emphasises the importance of participation and that, as with the human development approach, considers development to be multi-faceted rather than principally about economic advancement.

2.1 Human Development in Theory and Practice

The United Nation's Development Programme's (UNDP) perspective on human development (HD) appeals for a human-centred form of development that reconceptualises what development means to the individual with reference to a wide range of factors including political threats, economic scarcity, food security, health concerns, environmental issues and personal or community matters (UNDP, 1994: 25). This approach is holistic and historically conscious in that it is open to the idea that development could mean different things to different

people as each individual comes with a particular history and particular needs that may require addressing. It accepts that there are myriad conditions that may impact upon an individual's efforts to attain a state of 'well being'. According to Davids (2009:41):

> The human development perspective demands varied and complex indicators, or composite indicators that reflect the diversity of the poverty condition. It also involves developing indicators for those less tangible dimensions of poverty and indicators that reflect the perceptions of the poor themselves. In this regard public participation strategies should be introduced as strategies and policy considerations.

Participation is emphasised as a vital aspect of the UNDP's vision of development. The UNDP seeks to foster a developmental environment where people can widen their range of choices and 'exercise these choices safely and freely' in a manner that enables people to be 'empowered enough to take care of themselves' (UNDP, 1994: 230). Emphasis is placed on aspects such as social reciprocity, participation and interdependence (Desai, 1991:35). The emphasis on participatory practice as a means towards attaining HD suggests that not only is development something that needs to be human-centred in theory, but in practice it must come out of the efforts of the community itself in collaboration with development agents. The participation and choice of the community in question is of utmost importance.

The HD approach seeks to challenge traditional approaches to development by insisting that 'consumption of commodities' and income should not 'be the sole criterion of development' (Desai, 1991: 353). The concept seeks to accentuate the importance of other 'aspects of a decent human life' (Gasper, 2004: 163). HD seeks to '[reconceive] development-as-product [the goal of development] to mean human well-being and development-as-process [the practice of development] to mean its increase' (Gasper, 2004:166). Bajpai believes that the genesis of the term 'human development' can be accredited to Mahbub ul Haq, who proposed the idea that 'development thinking and policies must take as their focus the welfare of individuals rather than simply the macro-economy' (2000: 8). Gasper gives more information on what HD incorporates by stating that it has 'the great merit of reintegrating concerns about economic and social development, human security and human rights which were unfortunately divided within and between the various United Nations organs and Bretton Woods institutions' (Gasper, 2004: 169). Seven categories of threats faced by the individual are identified. These include: 'economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political' threats (UNDP, 1994: 25). HD is conceived as something that affects many aspects of a person's wellbeing and not just their material subsistence. Thus, according to the HD approach, poverty should not be measured

solely on 'income aspects' but should also be understood as 'a denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life' (UNDP, 1997: 2).

A key word reiterated in discussions of this concept is the 'choice' that individuals make to lead and live the lives they value. Amartya Sen contributed to the development of the idea of HD by stressing the importance of people expressing their 'valued options' for life and emphasising people's 'capabilities to lead the lives they value' (Gasper, 2004:166). In this perspective, a person's acknowledgement of what it is they value is seen as an important part of their freedom not only by making their

> lives richer and more unfettered, but also by allowing them to be fuller social persons, exercising our own volitions and interacting with – and influencing – the world in which [they] live (Sen, 2000: 15).

'Democratic discussion' and 'decision-making' is the way in which 'priority capabilities' should emerge (Gasper, 2004:177). Once these valued capabilities emerge, support should be provided to help people to be empowered enough to work towards these capabilities for themselves (UNDP, 1994: 230). Initiatives of this nature require collaboration between different principles that are necessary in the steering and facilitation of development:

> At one level it is about the fulfilment of basic material needs, and at another it is about the achievement of human dignity, which incorporates personal autonomy, control over one's life and unhindered participation in the life of the community (Thomas and Wilkin, 1999: 3).

Central to the idea of HD is the need for the participants to exercise choice in the type of development that is promoted. This requires the opening of spaces in the developmental process for the opinions of the local community to be heard and incorporated into the agenda. Glasius calls this interest for the local community a 'subjective focus' (2008: 37). This means that the details of what development might mean in a particular context must be informed by local experiences and understandings. Facilitators of HD should ask members of the community 'what makes them feel secure and insecure' and must work in partnership with them towards these demands (Glasius, 2008: 37). The importance of 'dialogue' and 'conscientisation' within this perspective draws on Freire's understanding of emancipatory education in which the process of learning includes 'perceiving social, political and economic contradictions and taking action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Mayo, 1999; 64). Empowerment for Freire means that non-literate people need to challenge dominant views of themselves by naming their world (Freire, 1971).

While the many elements that come together in the focus on HD provide an appealing and alternative focus for developmental initiatives, more research needs to be done to assess the possibilities of practical implementation of this approach (Nicholls, 2000:157). Nicholls suggests that the 'philosophical underpinnings' of the principles informing HD do not make practical implementation easy (Nicholls, 2000: 159). HD's theoretical components

> [range] from Sen's Capabilities Approach and the Basic Needs Approach at the centre of the spectrum, to Liberation Theology and Freirean notions of empowerment on the left, and neo-liberal ideas of market liberalisation on the right (Nicholls, 2000: 159).

The amalgamation of these ideas have created an 'eclectic' theoretical formulation filled with ambiguities and contradictions that make this approach difficult to implement, also necessitating further research on how HD can be practically implemented (Nicholls, 2000: 159). Concerns about the practical implementation of HD are also stressed in the continued debates that revolve around HD which are spearheaded by academics and development practitioners such as Sen(2005), Drèze and Sen (2002), Gasper (2004), Nussbaum (2000), Dean(2009), Tobias(2005), Zimmermann(2006) and Charusheela(2008) amongst others.

A recurring feature within the different components that make up the ideas around HD is an emphasis on participation. Participation is implied through the emphasis on terms such as 'choice', 'capabilities', 'taking care of oneself' and 'personal autonomy' that are a central part of human development. This added aspect of HD proposes that development should not only focus on the individual as a whole instead of emphasising economic aspects of life, but should also be a process that includes this individual in the active pursuit of the development desired. These components of HD make it quite similar to the approach commonly referred to as 'Participatory Development' (PD). By further examining PD, we can delve into some of the practical implications of the practice of promoting human development itself as human development clearly needs to be implemented in a way that promotes broad participation.

As a practice that has evolved out of a diversity of developmental initiatives across decades, PD provides insight into different tried and tested initiatives that hoped to promote the principle of participation in development. The value of looking into the aspect of participatory development is that it challenges practitioners within the field of HD not only to come to grips with the theoretical implications of HD, but also to engage with practical aspects that may hinder or bolster efforts towards it. The principles behind this way of working and the concrete issues that it brings up in development practice are explored in the next section. This is done in an effort to demystify some of the theoretical headiness and ambiguity that surrounds HD in order

to respond to Nicholls' concern that more research needs to be done on how development agencies are putting HD into practice (Nicholls, 2000: 159).

2.2 Participatory Development in Theory and Practice

An emphasis on participation in development has been 'one of the central influences in mainstream developmental thinking' (Parfitt, 2004: 537) and has influenced a number of different practices. Attempts at promoting participatory processes as part of development began with the rethinking of developmental initiatives that started in the 1950s and 1960s driven by concerns of 'giving voice to the voiceless' and 'social transformation' (Freire in Guijt & Shah, 1998: 5). This rethinking helped 'define basic principles to guide people's empowerment in their own development processes' (Guijt & Shah, 1998: 5). The 'participation boom' in the 1980's 'saw great activity amongst grassroots activists and NGOs in seeking alternatives to outsider driven development approaches' (Guijt & Shah, 1998: 5). Following this, the term PD rose to prominence in the 1990s with 'frenzied levels of global interest in participatory methodologies, the new synonym for "good" or "sustainable" development' (Guijt & Shah, 1998: 5).

Robert Chambers is acknowledged as one of the leading proponents of PD. His involvement in PD is mostly in the area of Participatory Rural Appraisement (PRA) which initially employed 'techniques used to mobilise local knowledge in the conduct of development programmes' and later moved on to 'mobilise indigenous capacities for self-management of development projects' (Williams, 2004: 557, 559). Moving from small scale initiatives, the participatory discourse has 'rapidly become part of the official aims and objectives of governments and international development agencies' (Williams, 2004: 557). More recently, participatory rhetoric's 'move from the margins to the mainstream' can be seen in the World Bank's adoption of its language in its World Development Report for 2000/1 (Williams, 2004: 557). Its popularity is also witnessed in its adoption as a central part of 'human rights principles' in development as proposed by the UNDP (Jonsson, 2005; 49) and as a key factor in HD (Human Development Report, 1993).

Keeping in mind the huge scope of actors that employ its tactics, PD is said to take on several different meanings. For Hickey and Mohan (2004:9) '"participation" has been called on to perform a wide range of functions for differing purposes, ideologies and political projects'. These varying applications of PD call attention to the set of values that underpin its application in different contexts (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 53). Popularly, the term is said to 'refer to involving the "beneficiaries" or more generally, "local people", in development processes' (Eversole, 2003: 781). Participatory development seeks to challenge the 'top- down' processes of

development in which a specific elite group of practitioners define what and how development takes place in different contexts (Stokke and Mohan, 2004: 253). In PD, the 'locals' are perceived as 'active subjects rather than passive objects of their own development' (Eversole, 2003: 781). Through this focus, participatory approaches seek to 'ensure the transformation of existing development practice and more radically, the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion' (Hickey and Mohan, 2004:13).

Additionally, this form of development, in harmony with the UNDP formulations on HD, not only seeks to address the 'problem' as it manifests but is also attentive to underlying issues. In this way PD is a 'holistic model providing support for the whole person, educationally, emotionally, socially and culturally' (Eversole, 2003: 784). Conscious efforts toward moving beyond a materialistic perspective of development are upheld in PD for the reason that according to this perspective:

> People's participation is not only about achieving the more efficient and equitable distribution of material resources; it is also about the sharing of knowledge and the transformation of the process of learning itself in the service of people's self-development (Connell, 1997; 250).

The promotion of personal development in PD is important in that it 'stimulate[s] members of the community to take their own decisions and action, and to review and evaluate themselves' (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000; 55). They do this through increased networking within their community in which the agencies they are interacting with provide 'access to tools and information… about the wider context in which they live and work, in order [for them] to make informed and appropriate decisions about their development' (Connell, 1997: 251). The aim of this practice is to 'reconfigure society to the benefit of the majority of it members, while empowering them to develop themselves as they see fit' (Connell, 1997; 248). In this perspective, learning should not only be the task of those for whom the 'development' is intended, but should also be acknowledged as part of the process for those facilitating and collaborating towards this end (Chambers, 2005:216).

2.3 Degrees of Participation

The existence of numerous interpretations of PD reveals that PD is a contested concept and also that there are varying degrees to which participation may be promoted as a part of development. Whereas some definitions of PD emphasise participation as a means, others regard

participation as an end (Parfitt, 2004: 538). Parfitt, relying on data from Oakley *et al* (1991), identifies four different ways of defining participation:

a) Participation as a voluntary contribution by locals to a development initiative that they neither design nor are allowed to criticise;

b) Participation as people's involvement in implementation, decision making processes, evaluation of the process and the sharing of the benefits of developmental programmes;

c) Participation as organized efforts to increase 'control over resources and regulative institutions' to those 'excluded from such control';

d) Participation as an active process by which beneficiary groups 'influence the direction and execution of a development project' in order to 'enhance their wellbeing in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance or other values they cherish' (Parfitt, 2004: 538).

These definitions highlight the different degrees to which the principle of participation can be adopted. In practice, PD has sometimes entailed the use of participation merely as a means of bringing about development and other times as an end in itself, which encourages people to work towards the 'active pursuit' of their own development (Parfitt, 2004: 539). Parfitt is opposed to the use of participation solely as a means to other ends commenting that in such instances participation is a 'short term exercise; the local population is mobilised, there is direct involvement in the task at hand but the participation evaporates once the task is completed' (Parfitt, 2004:539).

The variance between the different conceptions of how far participation should go in PD is one of the foremost debates within this practice. In a similar exercise to Parfitt, Paul (1987) identifies four methods of participation:

> *Information sharing* refers to a process where the agency informs intended beneficiaries about the project, and so flows of information and control are both in a downward direction. … *Consultation* [in which] information flows are more equal, with the agency often making use of local knowledge, however control is still top down…*Decision making* [in which] beneficiaries have some control and *initiating action* [in which] both information and control flows are primarily upward from the beneficiary group to the agency, but the donor agency retains some degree of control (Paul in Nelson and Wright, 1995: 183).

The extent to which the transferral of power from the elite development practitioners to the local beneficiaries actually takes place is highlighted in these discussions of different levels of participation. By pointing out that participation may mean different things in different contexts, we are warned of the possibility that talk of participation may be empty rhetoric in projects that reinforce objectionable power dynamics. The increasing usage of this term within mainstream

developmental practice is specifically seen as a threat towards PD's realisation of its ideals. Williams cites Rahnema (1997), who states that:

> the unprecedented interest governments and development institutions have recently taken in the concept of participation' [acts as] an indication that it has already been politically tamed and [is] serving [an] important economic, institutional and legitimating function for a mainstream vision of development (Rahnema in Williams, 2004: 558).

Untangling participation from its use as a buzz word or as a one-size-fits-all development recipe remains a challenge that requires investigation of the practices of existing participatory development projects (Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 1043). Critics point out that when participatory rhetoric is used in projects that are 'far from being inclusive and bottom-up, it reconfigures power and value systems which may end up being exclusionary, if not tyrannical' (Mosse, 1994; see also Cooke and Kothari 2001, Mikkelsen 2005). The word tyrannical implies that the use of PD rhetoric may insidiously impose a form of development that favours top-down approaches and is prescriptive. This reconfiguration of power towards those who already have it may happen because the rhetoric of participatory development could be used as simply another method of integrating the poor or 'grassroots' into development initiatives that uphold traditional top-down methodology and leave little room for their influence and opinions (Parfitt, 2004: 537-8). As such, a stated commitment to participation does not necessary reflect the ability of the intervention in question to work fundamentally towards the transformation of power dynamics in a given context.

There is a complex web of factors that may underpin the character of a particular project. This point is elucidated through the assertion that the word 'participation' itself is too loaded and complex a term to capture the essence of the many relationships, networks, interests, and voices that come into play in its quest (Eversole, 2003: 791). In this way, the touting of participation in projects runs the risk of underestimating what the term implies. In order to understand the nature of a project which claims to be participatory, we need to explore the levels and characteristics of power, motivation, legitimacy and trust within the developmental relationship (Eversole, 2003: 792). Furthermore, the character of the development left behind after an initiative can be assessed in order to ascertain whether it:

> Enables people traditionally objectified and silenced, to be recognised as legitimate 'knowers', to extend their understanding of power relations, widen their choices and determine the ideas of development… And are such 'people' centred perspectives transforming the apparatus of development… or does the flow of events surrounding participatory development produce side effects which incorporate marginalised people more effectively within a decentralised

> …system of power, working invisibly and 'behind our backs' (Nelson and Wright, 1995:18).

This quote provides useful points for consideration. It helps us look into different factors that need to be thought through in initiatives that hope to promote participatory development. The broader implications of the choices that can be made are also indicated, pushing PD practitioners to reflect on whether the development initiative in question promotes social transformation and change or whether it incorporates participants into decentralised systems of power. Decentralised systems of power refers to the incorporation of participants into initiatives that do not necessarily challenge the status quo but rather provide leeway within the existing system for the participants' to fit in.

2.4 Notes on Facilitation

Chambers' perspective of participatory development pays particular attention to the role of development agents. His view on their role within PD seeks to challenge those with power and resources in projects to 'acknowledge their own power… be aware of how they (often habitually) use it to dis-empower others' and further 'learn how to use their power to empower those with less power' (Chambers, 2005; 114). According to this approach, the development agent should work as a catalyst or facilitator who presents ideas but does not give orders, encourages participation but does not organise people around his or her preconceived ideas of what is best for them (Connell, 1997:257). This relationship 'demands a delicate and evolving balance between guidance and support, facilitation and response, on the part of the development agent' (Connell, 1997: 248). Kapoor comments on the potential threats hidden within the portrayed neutrality of this agent:

> The convenor or facilitator may well portray him/herself as a neutral and fair arbiter, but the fact that s/he manages the proceedings almost every step of the way: deciding on the need for, and purpose of the meeting; selecting whom to include/exclude on the invitation list; making up the agenda… power is tilted decidedly in favour of the convenor, and, while it may be used accountably and democratically (as Chambers hopes for) it can just as easily be abused (Kapoor, 2005: 1207).

This point provides a sober representation of the issues which come into play with regard to the role of facilitator. It highlights how the role of the facilitator is not a 'neutral' role but one that can impact quite seriously on the nature of the project being proposed. This role can easily feed the ego of 'benevolent interveners' (Kapoor, 2005: 1207) and create a form of development that

creates as many problems as it wishes to ameliorate. Indeed, the relationship of the facilitator and the participants may be sometimes be so skewed that the participation of the locals becomes pre-empted and conditioned; assuming people's responses in the same way as a situational comedy includes dubbed canned laughter on behalf of its audience (Kapoor, 2005: 1209).

2.5 The Institutionalisation of PD

In a field that mostly relies on the work of non-state actors that are externally funded, an element that is said to influence the values of PD is the institutionalisation of its practice (Kapoor, 2005: 1211). The institutionalisation of PD, through pressure from external funders, may inhibit the realisation of its aims in many ways. Some examples are given:

> It [participatory practice] is made to conform, for example, to bureaucratic review and approval procedures, budgetary deadlines, and/or reporting requirements… As a consequence PD is transformed into a package – discrete and manageable – to suit institutional culture (Kapoor, 2005: 1211).

Because of this external influence, PD initiatives that conform to these pressures can be trapped in a situation where they adhere to some of PD's values whilst diluting other important ones. The value of having a process driven by local initiatives in which their desires could be translated to a working project can be undermined by a pre-packaged structure that is rigid in its explorations of 'preconceived proposals' (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 43). The creation of an open ended process in which the project can take on a life of its own and continually respond to the needs of the people as they emerge is in tension with the funders' desire for a safe, delineated project. As Parfitt (2004: 548) points out:

> [Funders] want a clearly delimited product that would serve to meet the procedural obligation for consultation, not a process that could throw up challenges and possibilities beyond the bounds of the projects that they had in mind.

While funding bodies may apparently support participatory development, this support becomes tokenistic in the sense that they assume that participation can happen within their defined boundaries for the project. This tension is succinctly captured by Parfitt (2004: 549):

> This raises complex interrelated problems concerning how to reconcile the somewhat contradictory demands of many development agencies for rules, regularity and efficient delivery of outputs (which imply top-down hierarchy) with

> the demands of empowerment for a more processual approach involving handing over the stick.

By structuring participation according to a set of rules, we risk eroding possibilities that might have been far better suited to the vision of development upheld by the participants. Organisations that are forced to take on these bureaucratic demands run the risk of playing to the ears of the funders and the demands of the proposal rather than supporting a work in progress that is continually responsive to the needs of those the development project is supposed to empower. Wright and Nelson substantiate this view by stating that 'participation which truly empowers implies a process which is unpredictable' (1995: 41). Tension between product and process manifest in the way that 'excessive pressures for immediate results can undermine the process' (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 50). A question that can quickly put into focus the presence of these tensions is 'how much influence do locals actually have to express and address their real concerns?' (Eversole, 2003: 783).

2.6 Re-Politicising Participation: Challenging Institutional Power

PD has been accused of 'emphasising personal reform over political struggle' (Williams, 2004: 558). The lack of interrogation of 'class and power' as part of participatory strategies is seen as being a shortcoming in its practice (Parfitt, 2004:545). The emphasis put on the power of the individual within the expression of PD – and HD for that matter – puts so much emphasis on the agency of the individual that they downplay the pervasive forces of capitalist society that create many dead-ends for actual development. This sentiment is echoed in the assertion that:

> Under capitalist social relations of production, individuals can be free neither from hegemonic controls over their participation in the public realm, nor from the direct or indirect consequences of the exploitation of human labour (Dean, 2009: 267).

Even if people are able to articulate and work towards a realisation of themselves based on their values, they remain susceptible to the pressure of the pervading social climate that may undermine their efforts.

This point emphasises the fact that human beings do not exist independently but are part of a broader context. The perpetuation of the myth that 'communities are capable of anything, that all that is required is sufficient mobilisation (through institutions)' moves the responsibility for the consequences of these projects from the agencies and development workers and on to the participants themselves (Cleaver in Williams, 2004: 561). The ideal of participatory development cannot be realised unless people are able to challenge the systems of oppression

that may hold them hostage and thus political mobilisation ought to be a fundamental part of participatory development. De Beer (1997: 31) makes a clear case for 'structural transformation' as a fundamental part of participatory development. The difference between 'participation as involvement (system maintaining) and participation as empowerment (system transforming)' is highlighted strongly in his other works to further clarify the different ways participation can be promoted in developmental initiatives. (De Beer in Svenskerud 2003: 24). The arguments discussed above urge us to look carefully at what participatory development needs to involve in order to promote the 'empowerment' and 'transformation' publicised as part of its image.

2.7 Conclusion

In sum, the debates that surround the practice of HD and PD challenge practitioners engaging in these compatible fields to think carefully about how to implement participatory human development. Participatory human development in this perspective refers to a perspective on development that takes individuals and their needs as the primary referents within development and defines development more broadly than many traditional approaches to development. It additionally sees the participation of the individual and the community as whole as vital in the attainment of this development.

Debates about the promotion of a form of development that goes beyond economic aspects and emphasises human well-being as a whole, lead us to questions about how to put these ideals into effect. The promotion of choice in order to genuinely meet the subjective needs of the beneficiaries of development projects is an especially important consideration. In addition to this, realistically looking into the effects that the institutionalisation of PD has on its practice and the extent to which its politics can be seen as system maintaining or system transforming pose further challenges to the practice of participatory human development. These challenges need to be rigorously investigated not so much to enable us to identify 'good development' and 'bad development', but in order to try and reveal the web of factors that make it so difficult to implement participatory human development.

I intend to use the above discussion on HD and PD as a backdrop to my discussion of a particular attempt to promote participatory human development. The foregoing discussion will be related to the work of The Spirals Trust – and in particular, to the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project. As will become clear in the chapter that follows, the approach of The Spirals Trust in the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project resonates with the ideas of participatory human development. Spirals aims to facilitate human-centred development that focuses on the holistic needs of individuals in a context where some work has been done

towards achieving post-conflict reconciliation but where the disabling impact of decades of protracted conflict still persists. The importance of acknowledging the history that an individual comes with as a fundamental part of development is highlighted in their work. The focus on the individual in HD is echoed in Spirals way of working, which sees personal development as a fundamental part of promoting development as a whole. The work of The Spirals Trust emphasises the importance of self-reflexive dialogue as a way to cultivate agency in the lives of individuals and works to create interdependence between people (The Spirals Trust: 2003). Their work serves as interesting platform for bringing together approaches that seek to advance the values that people have for themselves (in contexts where there has been marginalisation) and those that hope to strengthen links and create communities in which human development can be realised.

Through examining their work, we can begin to ask questions about what happens when an organisation takes for itself a vision and mission that echoes the sentiments of participatory human development in the hope of working towards transformation and social justice? Did The Spirals Trust face the same challenges that have been faced by other attempts to implement participatory human development? What additional questions does the 2006/7 YEP pose to the practice of participatory human development? What insight does this organisation give into the practice of participatory human development in societies that have experienced and may be still undergoing significant levels of conflict? The work of The Spirals Trust in the Eastern Cape will be described in detail in the next chapter highlighting its genesis, its specific way of working, and the way in which this way of working correlates to the values of participatory human development.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SPIRALS TRUST AND THE 2006/7 TANTYI YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

The Spirals Trust was a non-governmental organisation that worked in the Eastern Cape between 2002 and 2007 and was based in Grahamstown, South Africa. The organisation sought to promote a vision of development that was responsive to the South African context where the effects of apartheid and the continuing inequalities under the democratic dispensation have shaped the current developmental context. Their mission statement speaks of their desire to 'enable transformation for individuals in their contexts through providing creative, participative processes that deal with issues of identity and facilitate awareness, healing and change' (The Spirals Trust, 2005). Spirals staff members saw their work as a continuation of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, relating the concerns of peace building in South African to a developmental agenda (Edlmann, 2006: 13). It did this primarily through the emphasis it put on personal truth telling as part of its methodology (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). This included creating spaces for the telling of personal stories through creative activities, dialogue and simple conversation. The creative methodologies that the organisation used drew from drama-based techniques and entailed an understanding of the psychological processes needed in the healing of past memories in order to move on to future possibilities. A key aspect of the work was the effort put towards encouraging development initiatives where individuals could move from a state of dependence to one of interdependence (Nchabeleng, 2000:4). In this way, the Spirals staff sought to stimulate participation and personal action as catalysts towards change. The organisation favoured working both with marginalised groups of people and with strategic members of the NGO community in order to make change happen. This relationship-based model meant that the organisation saw collaboration with other service providers and members of the community as key to their vision of development (The Spirals Trust, 2007:16). The work of The Spirals Trust included various initiatives all of which sought to stimulate personal development as a fundamental part of human-centred development and peace building within South Africa.

An understanding of how an NGO like The Spirals Trust has responded to the South African context is helpful in developing a broader understanding of the role that NGOs can play in building participatory human development, particularly in societies that have experienced and continue to experience conflict. The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) was one of The Spirals Trust's projects. The objective of this project was to stimulate development amongst out-of-school unemployed youth in Tantyi, an area within the town of Grahamstown, in a way that could nurture

the development of the Tantyi area as a whole. The Youth Empowerment Project is used in this thesis in order to investigate the ways in which the work of The Spirals Trust resonates with challenges that face other attempts to promote participatory human development. Additional questions that the Youth Empowerment Project poses to the practice of participatory human development are also explored.

3.1 The Creation of The Spirals Trust

The Spirals Trust 'was conceived in 2002 to explore issues of identity in the context of South Africa' (The Spirals Trust, 2003:4). Based in Grahamstown, it worked to facilitate transformation and democratic social justice in the Eastern Cape by emphasising the need to address structural, political and gender violence within societies. The Spirals Trust sought to raise consciousness and awareness about issues of identity by facilitating social, spiritual and psychological healing aimed at strengthening 'voice' and 'agency' among the relatively marginalised (The Spirals Trust, 2003). In order to achieve this, the organisation encouraged self-reflexive dialogue in order to promote agency and interdependence between people and their community. Their work sought to help individuals meet their needs in a context where the past still has disabling effects on the present and with the understanding that something more than just economic development is needed in places like South Africa. The importance of personal development as a means towards the development of society as whole was strongly emphasised.

The creation of The Spirals way of working is deeply connected to the history of Theresa Edlmann who was appointed the director of the Trust in 2003 and who since its inception spearheaded the development of the Trust, with the guidance of the board of trustees, towards the further growth of its endeavours. Her life history has been an integral part of the evolution of The Spirals Trust through the way that her interests, experiences and professional development have influenced the concerns and focus areas of the Trust. She provides a telling description of some of the details of her life that lead her towards the creation of this organisation:

> The fact that I did not have an easy childhood and had to work very hard on my own psychological and spiritual wellbeing and health particularly moving into my adult life, as well as later becoming a survivor of domestic violence meant that I was a cauldron of hugely potent and sometime conflicting energies and initially found an outlet for that through drama and was particularly excited by political drama, drama for social change, pedagogy of the oppressed, forum theatre and theatre of the oppressed (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March) .

In the 1980s, South Africa was embroiled in a particularly turbulent time in its history. Edlmann's experiences of Apartheid, her personal struggles and her involvement in anti-apartheid

activism created for her a keen interest in the interplay between political dynamics and psychological and spiritual dynamics as a part of development:

> That was a very cathartic time for me and a time when I was able to find creative spaces in parallel with being involved with political activity and on the side studying. And I think moving into my teaching life and my professional life I was constantly aware of the interplay between political dynamics and psychological and spiritual dynamics and yet really struggled to find a space where those were worked with where there was equal respect for all of those aspects of being. So I moved into the NGO sector into conflict resolution and development work and constantly found myself bumping up against quite technicist theories and understandings or ways of working that did not resonate for me with the kind of ecological and holistic approach that I longed for (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March).

Moving to the Eastern Cape provided an opportunity for her ideas to materialise in the form of The Spirals Trust. There she met theologian Brian Marajh and together with him examined the link between conflicts in a particular church institution, and the legacies of Apartheid (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). Their conversations explored the 'links between our internal projections and the way we play them out as racial or gender conflicts' (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). The collaboration between these two individuals proved to be an interesting place to begin the exploration of these issues for the reason that they in themselves 'were "other" to each other in every way. In terms of gender, in terms of race, in terms of language and how Apartheid affected [them]' (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). Brian's background was in theology, and Theresa was freelancing as a facilitator of creative processes in development and conflict transformation (The Spirals Trust, 2003: 3). In an effort to explore and find ways to respond to the prevalence of issues of identity in South Africa, Edlmann and Marajh engaged in a year long conversation which entailed the 'speaking [of their] stories to each other,' and a 'listening to what that listening did for the other person, but also listening internally to the issues that it provoked' (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). This dialogue culminated in the creation of a workshop manual that could be used by facilitators to explore identity. Subsequent to this interaction, Brian Marajh left Grahamstown leaving the possibility of using this manual to Theresa Edlmann. Workshops based on the manual were piloted and so began a body of work that evolved into the creation of Spirals in 2002 and the Trust itself in 2003. The shift towards the Trust itself refers to the creation of the non-governmental body that was formed to support the further realisation of the ideas articulated by Edlmann and Marajh.

The name 'Spirals' was chosen because 'of [their] understanding of how identity works' (The Spirals Trust, 2002: 9). For Edlmann and Marajh 'spirals are constantly in motion – coming back to similar but never identical places again and again' (The Spirals Trust, 2002: 9). More is said on the symbolism of the spiral:

> The spiral is an ancient and universal symbol. It is a depiction of a fundamental human life form – spirals being the way in which water and air move, and the structural form of many living organisms. Using it as a symbol captures the idea that issues of identity are ancient beyond our knowing, and will continue to unfold in ways we cannot comprehend (The Spirals Trust, 2002: 9).

This definition also grew to include an understanding that the work that was being encouraged by The Spirals Trust would ideally have the effect of propagating itself as each individual affected by the work could in turn push forward its agenda in their own contexts.

3.2 Development in a Post-Conflict Context: Promoting Historically Conscious Development in the Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape provided an important opportunity for The Spirals Trust because of the relative lack of a strong NGO presence in this region especially with regard to organisations that promote conflict resolution. There was thus a gap in the Eastern Cape for the kind of work that The Spirals Trust aimed to do:

> In the Johannesburgs or Durbans or Cape Towns there are organisations like the Centre for Reconciliation or Diaconia or the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation or Healing of Memories or numerous other organisations that do the work differently but also do the same work in many ways, whereas nothing like that has existed as an Eastern Cape based entity. It's always been outside-based organisations coming in and so I think that's what lead to us deciding to set up a Trust was that we started this part time programme. By the end of the second year I had presented what we were doing to the United Nations and we were inundated with requests for programmes so there is no question that there was a need (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March).

Additionally, the Eastern Cape was an important place to focus their efforts as one of the poorest provinces in South Africa (The Spirals Trust, 2006: 1), (South Africa Human Development Report, 2003: 42). The situation of poverty in the Eastern Cape can be seen as an illustration of the damaging effects that the apartheid past has had on the social and economic climate of the region (Urban Services Group Household Livelihood Assessment, 2004:1).

The Spirals Trust's development work was tailored to respond to contexts that have experienced conflict. This is demonstrated not only by the objective and focus of the organisation but also, and perhaps especially, in the tradition from which this work emerged. The approach adopted by The Spirals Trust was influenced by pacifism, Quakerism as well as the work and life of former Archbishop Desmond Tutu who Edlmann worked for as part of the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). In addition to this, the Spirals way of working also drew on the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) which Edlmann participated in as a leader. AVP's principles stress that there is 'transforming power - that there is power available to people should they choose to act non-violently' (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). The conceptual origins of The Spirals Trust tried to:

> …Continu[e] the work that the [Truth and Reconciliation] Commission had begun - allowing stories to be articulated in a way that enabled both a catharsis and the freedom to make new, more conscious choices in the light of what had been learned through the process (Edlmann, 2006: 13).

This vision incorporated the ideas of peace foregrounded in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and combined them with a focus on participatory human development.

Acknowledging the history, struggle and trauma of each individual was a primary part of the work of The Spirals Trust. Even though development and poverty eradication was not 'what Spirals was initially about' but rather 'transformation and healing', this organisation chose to place itself within the development sector 'in an attempt to support broader processes of development' because it believed that 'development is not going to work unless we listen to psychological issues that imply transformation and healing' (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). Edlmann (2009: 28th March) argues:

> If the political and economic and geographical disruptions of the last centuries have left individuals and families in such a disrupted state that levels of psychological development cannot take place you will see the levels of corruption that we are seeing now, or the levels of violence or the levels of impunity. The oppressions of apartheid legislation were devastating enough but we are seeing a replication of that. The levels of impunity around violence in our society at the moment are symptomatic of very deep conflict.

Within this perspective, personal development in the form of psychological and spiritual healing needs to be acknowledged and worked with in order for 'real transformation' and development to begin to manifest. The focus on psychological, emotional and spiritual healing as an important part of participatory human development is an interesting approach that was undertaken by the organisation. This practice echoes the work of Martha Cabrera, a psychologist and development practitioner whose ideas influenced Spirals. Cabrera (2003:6) questions what real empowerment means in a traumatized population, insisting that social development in this perspective cannot be separated from personal development. This point is strongly substantiated by Edlmann's (2009: 28th March) own understanding of what 'real' development entails:

> We can put as many houses as we like into a community we can build as many roads

> as we like but unless the people living in those homes are at peace with themselves and can develop functional households and relationships within those households and relationships with the broader community, that development is not sustainable. My argument is that until we have understood the history of our stories enough and recognise the choices that we have the power to make, and the agency that we potentially have to change those stories then … the social realities do not change and the economic realities do not change because everybody trapped within those systems is stripped of a sense of agency.

The organisation considered personal development as a fundamental and crucial part of social development. Spirals' approach was characterised by its focus on psychological and spiritual work as a catalyst for participatory human development. This work was 'primarily directed towards contexts where there was or has been marginalisation, oppression and voicelessness resulting in ongoing trauma and the construction of victim identities' (The Spirals Trust, 2003).

The emphasis put on identity in the work of The Spirals Trust entailed an acknowledgement of the complex strain that issues of identity place on the individual in South Africa. The legacies of systematic and physically violent segregation on the grounds of culture, race, historical background, language and religion have made South Africa a deeply divided society, not least because of the racially determined class and economic divides that are the legacies of apartheid (Zegeye, 2001). The cumulative effects of this systemic pressure are highlighted by Gobodo-Madikizela (in Edlmann, 2003: 86):

> The consequent intense experience of victim identity imposed by traumatic events, repeated systematic abuse and the ever present nature of the memories they carry are therefore multiplied and iterated for people in the South African context - making journeys of healing and transformation long and complex, because each experience of trauma is unique, the pain different and the fusions of memories increasingly complex.

In order to address these issues The Spirals Trust sought to 'promote self-reflexive dialogue that allows past pain, alienation and trauma to surface and be acknowledged in order for people to move forward and cultivate agency in their lives' (The Spirals Trust, 2002).

3.3 Changes and Developments

In 2004 the Spirals offices moved from a section of Edlmann's home into central offices at 109 High Street in Grahamstown in order to better respond to its 'growing networks and the need to be more available for people to visit their offices' (The Spirals Trust, 2004: 6). At the same time, the administrator Pearl Liwani left the organisation and a new partnership between Edlmann as director and Thami Matiwana as administrator began (The Spirals Trust, 2003: 5). Following this, the

organisation began to employ a growing number of interns and volunteers who gravitated towards its work. In 2007 the organisation expanded to include a new administrator Margaret Simango, and promoted the former administrator Thami Matiwana to project coordinator. Athiná Copteros also joined the organisation as a facilitator making an office of four permanent staff.

3.4 The Funding of The Spirals Trust

The organisation was generously supported financially from its inception by the C.S. Mott Foundation on an annual basis. The C.S. Mott Foundation's mission is 'to support efforts that promote a just, equitable and sustainable society' (Mott Foundation, 2009). Their support takes the form of grants given to organisations in order to 'enhance the capacity of individuals, families or institutions at the local level and beyond' (Mott Foundation, 2009). The Mott Foundation

> liked the innovations Spirals was bringing to the field of reconciliation, and saw the models that were being developed as being African-based approaches to primarily African issues. There were concerns expressed about the smallness of the organisation, but there was always support for the integrity of the work and the amount of work we got done with relatively small budgets (Edlmann, 2009: July 13th)

Spirals gained support from other organisations and churches in particular the uMariya uMama weThemba Monastery, Grahamstown. The church-related focus of The Spirals Trust's history is the result of a few things. Firstly, the earliest Spirals workshops began in a church institution. Secondly, Brother Timothy Jolley, who served as the chairman of the board from 2004 till 2008, had church-related connections that helped Spirals with fundraising. Lastly, the fact that this work related to religious/spiritual issues as well as to development issues contributed to the church related focus (Edlmann, 2009: 15th July). The organisation has also received funding from other NGOs around the country including the Ikhala Trust Scape Challenge Fund, The Eastern Cape NGO Coalition, The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, The Foundation for Human Rights and The One in Nine Campaign. A comprehensive list of the donors of the Spirals Trust is available on their website in the annual reports presented at http://nml.ru.ac.za/ngo/spirals/sectionPage.php?ssID=38.

The funding that the organisation accrued in total (in rands) over the years has been as follows:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
412 480	213 048	329 892	507 299	341 620	277 181

This funding when combined with the income generated, project related income, interest received, and other income shows these patterns over the years:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
457 974	276 796	384 443	584 833	655 479	562 051

Apart from the annual donations by the C.S. Mott Foundation, most donations were on a project basis. Projects that The Spirals Trust has engaged with include a large range of activities including workshops and discussion forums held around the Eastern Cape and more broadly other areas of South Africa, Africa and the United States of America. Some of these projects entailed Spirals being the lead organisation undertaking the project on its own. In others, The Spirals Trust worked collaboratively with other organisations. In these cases, Spirals was just one player in a collaborative project.

3.5 Spirals Projects

To better understand the work of The Spirals Trust, it is worth briefly discussing some of its key projects. The Spirals Trust has been involved in many projects in its history which range significantly in terms of what the work entailed and how the organisation was involved. One of the highlights of Spirals work in the Eastern Cape was its involvement in facilitating the promotion of the advanced certificate in education. Spirals worked in collaboration with Rhodes University to be part of a team of facilitators working with 156 educators from Qumbu, Mount Frere, King Williams Town, Peddie and Grahamstown. The course encouraged personal well-being, citizenship education, and physical well-being and career choice education as part of the outcomes based curriculum (The Spirals Trust, 2004/5: 10).

The Masculinities Programme was also a notable project in which Makana-based male artists participated in a series of weekly workshops dealing with their experiences as men. This initiative was facilitated by Jason Bantjes, a psychology masters student from Rhodes University, in 2005. The workshops led to the development of the play 'Ndiyindoda! I am a Man!' which was performed at the National Arts Festival in 2006 (The Spirals Trust, 2007: 10).

The Highgate Survivors' Support Group was another significant project that deserves mention. The Highgate Survivors' Support Group worked to support victims of political violence of a particular incident in East London. Spirals' involvement in this project included creating open and safe emotional spaces where the group could share their experiences and work towards a healing

process (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2006/7: 25-29).

Yet another important Spirals project was the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP). This project is discussed at some length towards the end of this chapter as this research specifically focuses on the YEP as an example of participatory human development in practice.

3.6 Changes in the Spirals Structure

The Spirals Trust changed its structure at the end of 2007. Its offices were closed and the Trust dissolved. This decision was made because '75% of staff had left the organisation' at intervals in 2007 to pursue other interests (The Spirals Trust, 2008: 5). According to the director, each departure was the result of 'valid reasons – health issues, a new and exciting career path opening up and a decision to move into something more suited to the person's skills' (The Spirals Trust, 2008: 5). However, the loss of staff in the organisation may also be seen as evidence of some internal discord within the organisation itself. Underlying organisational issues that are acknowledged to have played a part in the closing of The Spirals Trust relate to the tensions that the organisation faced in 'running a "rigid" office and maintaining all the administrative functions of a Trust when the nature of the work and its vision was to be flexible, highly consultative, fluid and organically evolving' (The Spirals Trust, 2008: 20). In a response to the cumulative pressures that the organisation faced, the board of trustees and the director in consultation with other affiliated members decided to continue with the ideas of Spirals but in another arrangement. Edlmann set up a private consultancy under the name of Spirals at her home giving her a 'mandate to carry on the work of Spirals in her own right in a parallel and autonomous way' (The Spirals Trust, 2008: 22). In addition to this private consultancy, 'people who had been part of Spirals in different ways had indicated a desire to continue growing the work and formed the Spirals Association, a non-profit organisation' (The Spirals Trust, 2008: 22). This association has since then closed because it went through a lull in activity as the founding members have dispersed around the country or are engaged in other endeavours.

3.7 Spirals Methodology: Creative Strategies and Collaborative Networks as a Means towards Transformation

The Spirals Trust favoured using creative methodologies as a means towards attaining their vision of development. Creative ways of working were seen as particularly potent tools in situations where trauma was present because it was hoped that encouraging creativity could help people overcome trauma. According to Edlmann (2009: 28th March)::

> If you look at the fact that we are living with generations of trauma then the reality is that unless we go through a process that heals our brains – the most helpful way to do that is to work with colour, to work with texture, to re-stimulate the right brain - we actually cannot imagine another way, a different way of being so we all sink to the base level of surviving without using those higher critical or creative functions.

The telling of personal stories facilitated through workshop exercises, dialogue or conversations was seen as a way of working through past memories and engendering new possibilities. Edlmann (2009) believes that through the sharing of stories a society can begin to break down the boundaries that exist between individuals by encouraging them to see each other as the product of the violent context, regardless of what identity the conflict created in them. Therefore, encouraging personal storytelling, dialogue and conversation helps unearth hidden issues that need to surface and may support the development of the individual (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). This perspective suggests that through the way that 'we weave, unweave and reweave our stories', healing can happen (The Spirals Trust 2002). From 2005 to 2007 The Spirals Trust increasingly worked with the understanding that the creation of 'empty spaces that are full of possibilities for personal truth-telling, presence and integrity' is what the work was about (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March). In this way, Spirals work tried to encourage an 'emotional space' in which people can share their personal experiences eventually working towards a way forward. These mechanisms hoped to promote personal development as a part of the development vision and also ensure that the program relied on and was fuelled by the participation and concerns of those that were involved.

The drama and psychology-based aspects of this work put great importance on the facilitative skills required in order to create a space in which the exploration of personal stories and experiences could take place. In order to be a catalyst and to help create a participatory process, facilitators were encouraged to '[avoid] the temptation to think they know more, or are further along a road than the participants in a process' (The Spirals Trust, 2002:13).

Spirals emphasised the importance of flexibility in its projects. It aimed to adapt its methodology to suit each of the groups with which it worked. This is because the organisation recognised that each group brings with it its own particular shared identity and individual characteristics that may require the use of different strategies (Edlmann, 2009: 28th March).

Attaining group consent for activities proposed, and emphasising that each activity is voluntary and that each individual has 'the right to pass' if they do not wish to participate was part of the memorandum of understanding created with participants. This was an important part of their approach that was put in place in order to ensure that the process was open and voluntary. The voluntary aspect that this work wanted to promote stressed the importance of participation. The role of the facilitator was seen as important in this process.

The Spirals Trust favoured working collaboratively. The argument behind this practice was that working together with different service providers can help foster a sense of community in the developmental context to which the group belonged. In the often atomistic development context in which organisations operate individually, this organisation sought to coordinate relationships amongst service providers and participants. This practice reaffirms the sentiment that development cannot be solely the task of one body (say the government), but needs to be a collaborative process in which the individual belongs to diverse forms of community (Linklater, 2005).

The methodology of The Spirals Trust can thus be understood as using creative tools and self-reflexive dialogue as a means towards development. Careful facilitation is needed in order to create a space where personal stories can emerge as a voluntary part of the process. Collaborative networking within the community is also an important way in which the organisation chose to work by bolstering the networks that the participants are part of in order build a responsive community as a whole. Spirals' methodology manifested itself in many different forms in the various projects that The Spirals Trust engaged in. The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project will be discussed in detail in the next section. This project will be used to discuss the way in which the work of The Spirals Trust resonates with the challenges that face the practice of participatory human development.

3.8 The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project

The Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) was a part of The Spirals Trust programmes from 2006 to 2007. In this project, The Spirals Trust sought to encourage the youth of Tantyi to be 'agents of transformation, development and change within their communities' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20). The project aimed to 'mobilise' the youth of Tantyi in 'realising their rights' and creating 'innovative sparks within the community that [could] bring forth sustainable growth and development' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20). The project consisted of two phases. The first phase entailed a focus on personal development. The participants were linked up to relevant service providers that contributed knowledge, skills and experiences that would encourage self-reflection on the part of the participants. The second phase focused on creating sustainable skills for the participants by providing them with skills training.

3.8.1 The History and Design of the Project

The 2006/7 YEP was the second YEP to be held in Grahamstown. The first YEP was held in 2005. It was an initiative of the Makana Region of the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition to support and

strengthen local government within the Grahamstown area (The Spirals Trust, 2006:11). The second YEP, which was held in 2006/7, focused specifically on the youth within the Tantyi area. The impetus towards creating the second YEP came from a consolidated effort of The Spirals Trust and the Makana Municipality who decided to follow up on the YEP held in 2005 and focus specifically on the youth of Tantyi (The Spirals Trust Annual Report, 2007: 9).

The focus on the Tantyi community stemmed from research that identified Tantyi as an area that displayed particular vulnerabilities pertaining to its youth. The Urban Services Group Household Livelihood Survey Assessment conducted in 2004 identified Tantyi, the oldest historically 'black' township in Grahamstown, as an area desperately needing support for out-of-school unemployed youth (The Spirals Trust Annual Report, 2007: 9). Furthermore, the focus on Tantyi was relevant because this region has been identified as one of the poorest areas in the Makana Municipality. As revealed in the 2001 census data, about 49.26% of the total labour force is unemployed in this municipality (StatsSA, 2001). Considering the high levels of poverty in the Eastern Cape as a whole this focus became additionally significant. As a response to these findings, proposals were invited by the Eastern Cape Poverty Alleviation Fund to initiate developmental interventions in Tantyi, with a specific focus on the youth. The local committee of the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition supported the submission of a proposal by The Spirals Trust for the 2006/7 YEP to the to the Eastern Cape Poverty Alleviation Fund (The Spirals Trust Annual Report, 2007: 9).

Funding was received in October 2006 from the Eastern Cape Poverty Alleviation Fund and channelled through the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition to The Spirals Trust (The Spirals Trust Annual Report, 2007: 9). The 2006/7 YEP was a collaboration of local NGOs under the leadership of The Spirals Trust which coordinated and managed the project as a whole. This entailed coordinating the participants, the service provider NGOs and the efforts of the local municipality and other strategic stakeholders in the area (The Spirals Trust, 2007: 9). Spirals acted as the 'glue' of the project, setting up the blue print of the project as a whole and liaising between the relevant parties to put the plan into action. The project began in earnest in November 2006 when recruitment of participants and meetings with relevant stakeholders commenced. Spirals also became the 'home base' of the participants – the body which facilitated each stage of the project through a close and consultative relationship with the participants. The participants could continually 'check in' at the Spirals offices and share their experiences of the process as it developed. The insights gained in these instances by The Spirals Trust often influenced an understanding of what was necessary in order to ensure the success of the next step.

The first phase of the 2006/7 YEP began with a strong emphasis on the importance of personal development as a part of nurturing development practitioners and entrepreneurs that could

catalyse change in their community. The objective behind this was to 'locate the participant's personal experience as an essential part of the development of the community as a whole' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:21). This phase relied on input from various NGOs and included an outdoor adventure organised by The President's Award; a personal awareness workshop facilitated by Families South Africa (FAMSA); a wellness workshop run by Hospice; a leadership, development and democracy workshop facilitated by The Spirals Trust; and a budgeting skills workshop organised by uMthathi Training Project (The Spirals Trust, 2007:9). [2]

The first phase of the project started with The President's Award guiding the participants through a demanding hike. A spokesperson from The President's Award described this excursion as one that provided 'a physical metaphor for the experience that one goes through when starting a significant project or a business endeavour' (The President's Award in The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20). Feedback from the participants suggested that they found this trip helpful in terms of what they learnt about communication, teamwork and the importance of mutual respect (The Spirals Trust Summary of the Makana Community Workshop 2006:2). The team building experienced through this hike helped the group to get to know and work with each other as they collectively confronted the challenges of the hike.

After this hike, the participants went on to partake in guided workshops by FAMSA. This organisation coached them in a series of life skills that would be relevant to them as future young entrepreneurs and development practitioners in their communities. Exploring effective communication was an important aspect of this experience. This was done through activities that promoted effective public speaking, strategies for positively handling conflict and approaches in affirming self-respect and respect for others such as agreeing to disagree (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20). During these workshops, participants also explored gender issues and discussed strategies for dealing with family, friends and partners (The Spirals Trust Annual report 2007: 20).

[2] The President's Award is a registered non-profit organisation. It s mission is to empower young people between the ages of 14 and 25, by providing a balanced, non-competitive framework for self-development that will increase their self-esteem and enhance their capacity to achieve in whatever context they find themselves: enabling them to become responsible active citizens within their communities. More information can be accessed at: http://www.presidentsaward.co.za/new/index.php?p=23. FAMSA is a national organisation. Its mission is to empower people to build, reconstruct and maintain sound relationships in marriages, families and communities. They believe that healthy and stable relationships promote healthy individuals, families and communities. More Information can be accessed at: http://www.famsa.org.za/. Hospice is an organisation that seeks to promote quality in life, dignity in death and support in bereavement for all living with a life-threatening illness by supporting member hospices and partner organisations. More information can be accessed at: http://www.hospicepalliativecaresa.co.za/index.html. uMthathi is a registered non-profit organisation. Its vision is for all South Africans to have sustainable access to the food and resources necessary for building a healthy nation. They do this through providing developmental education and training in organic permaculture cultivation methods that enable schools and communities in rural and peri-urban areas of the Eastern Cape to enhance healthy bodies and relationships, sustain their own livelihoods through vegetable and indigenous plant cultivation and develop sustainable agricultural methods. More information can be found at: http://www.umthathi.co.za/

The importance of 'personal well-being' was continued in the next stage of the project with the emphasis put on 'personal health' by Hospice (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). The participants learnt about the importance of 'basic health care' and the causes and cures of common illnesses such as HIV/AIDS and cancer were explored as well as ways in which to prevent their occurrence in their lives (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). The course also gave insight into ways that the participants could take better care of themselves and their families (Hospice Cited in The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007).The importance of respecting 'the holistic needs of a human being' was highlighted as a part of this (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21).

The Spirals Trust brought an end to phase one of the project by conducting workshops on 'leadership, democracy and development' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). These workshops encouraged the participants to move beyond themselves as the focus and start to think about their community, the issues that it faced and possible ways in which they could make a positive impact on its development (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). This is the point where the project's overall objective of mobilising the youth of Tantyi as agents of change began in earnest (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20). This workshop explored the context that the participants live in through creative methodologies. The participatory nature of the workshop meant a constant tailoring of the subject matter so that it directly addressed issues relevant to the participants. It included looking at the 'roots and fruits of poverty and development' in their community and exploring the characteristics of good leaders (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). An analysis of 'fundamental human needs' was conducted in order to encourage participants to critically assess the 'rights that were not being fully realised within their community' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 21). At this point, each person was encouraged to develop their own ideas about what they would like to do in the future and how they felt this vocation could help uplift their community as a whole.

Phase two of the YEP project was an effort to put into action the articulated visions and aspirations of the participants (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 22). The participants were asked to identify two skills from a pre-selected range of skills that were readily available from local service providers with whom The Spirals Trust was collaborating. There were instances where the skills-training the participants were most keen on acquiring was not available because of the lack of relevant service providers to facilitate the training. After a workshop on budgeting by uMthathi Training Project, The Spirals Trust connected each participant with a relevant service provider, stakeholder or NGO that could provide the skills required (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 22). Training in different areas such as leather craft, sewing skills, music skills, gardening skills, community development skills, and home-based care became the focus of this period (YEP Mott

Report: 2007). As this process came to a close, participants underwent an evaluation in which they were encouraged to share their experiences of the training with each other and The Spirals Trust (YEP Mott Report: 2009).

Following the evaluation, each participant was asked to formulate a business plan that corresponded to one or both of the skills that they learnt. The YEP group separated voluntarily into four groups and formulated collective business plans for each of their ideas. The four groups proposed the following: a vegetable garden whose crops could be sold to the community; a shop that would sell leather products, printed clothing and cloth created by the group; a 'Cell C' telephone container that would provide public phones for the community whilst publicising health information gained by the participants' involvement with Hospice; and a public administrative office that would provide services such as CV creation, faxing, public phone, scanning and printing (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2008:11). The business plans were screened by The Spirals Trust and funding was provided as a starter pack for each viable business plan (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2008:11).

Two of these projects were fairly successful. The vegetable garden was successful in producing vegetables that the participants could sell and gain an additional income to support themselves and their family. The public administrative office also showed some promise of generating an income for the participants whilst providing a needed service in the community. However, the participants that were involved in these two projects were unavailable to share their experience of The Spirals Trust and so their experiences are not highlighted in Chapter Four. The other two business plans did not successfully turn into real projects. In these cases the participants decided to fall back onto other aspects of their skills training that had more lucrative possibilities for them. Because each participant underwent training for two skills, participants had the choice of continuing to create work from the other skills training that they had received. For example, if a participant initially learnt how to sew and how to be community development practitioner, the participant could choose to follow the avenues made available to them through the community development work and leave the sewing training behind if he or she thought it was in his or her best interests.

3.8.2 Spirals' Role

The Spirals Trust supported the objectives of the project primarily through the coordination, facilitation and administration of the project as whole. This entailed bringing together several of Makana's service providers in order to create a project that synthesised a response to poverty alleviation amongst the youth of Tantyi. Communication and networking with stakeholders was

done in the hope of establishing, building and maintaining positive working relationships amongst themselves as the leading organisation and the collaborating service providers. Spirals' responsibility as the lead organisation also involved monitoring the progress of the project as a whole, and being accountable for it through monthly progress reports to the Eastern Cape NGO coalition. Apart from its managerial role, The Spirals Trust had its turn to contribute to the process by facilitating a series of workshops on democracy, leadership and development, that spearheaded the focus on creating 'innovative sparks within the community that [could] bring forth sustainable growth and development' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:20).

Perhaps most importantly, Spirals provided grounding to the work of the YEP by nurturing trust and kinship between the participants and themselves (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:18). The young people of Tantyi have been said to be 'the victims of many broken promises' experienced at the hands of previous development initiatives that have not worked to their benefit (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:18/22). Spirals' role was to be sensitive to the participants 'through the easy and tough times that the programme went through' (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007:18). It did so by being a 'home base' for the participants' queries, problems and concerns. Edlmann speaks more about this:

> The Spirals link came in the quality of the relationship that we tried to develop with the participants, and the holding space that Spirals tried to be while the participants were going through the various programmes with other organisations (Edlmann, 28th March 2009).

This entailed the daily work of facilitating open conversations about the participants' concerns. As will be seen in Chapter Four, the project relied heavily on the 'emotional space' and nurturing provided by The Spirals Trust.

The closure of the Spirals office in 2007 had a significant effect on the YEP. Because of the internal pressure experienced in the organisation and the restructuring of the organisation into a private consultancy, it was unsustainable for the organisation single-handedly to see the YEP to its final conclusion. The YEP was handed over to FAMSA to oversee the running of the business projects or career paths that the participants had established at that point.

3.8.3 YEP and Participatory Human Development

The YEP's objective was to cultivate a form of development that went beyond the pursuit of material success. The importance of personal development in this project meant that efforts were made towards building relational capacity, promoting effective communication and providing

ongoing emotional support as part of the process. These ideas resonate with participatory human development because they affirm a human-centred, holistic approach towards a form of development that is cognisant of each individual's diverse needs. The YEP also foregrounds ideas of participatory human development because this approach offered access to tools that participants could use to further understand and be aware of themselves and their context. Through this, participants could exercise 'creative choice making' in order to engender alternative possibilities in their context and lead lives that they value (Gasper, 2004: 166; Sen, 2000: 15; UNDP, 1994: 230). The goals of this project were that the young people of Tantyi could begin to claim the rights to which they are entitled from those whose duty it is to protect their rights, and in doing so, bolster their quality of life through their own actions (The Spirals Trust Annual Report 2007: 20). The YEP provides an example of the use of collaborative networks as a means towards supporting participants towards their development. Participation as the means through which the rights of individuals would be upheld is reflected in the practices of the YEP. Furthermore, by stressing the value of stimulating development not only in individuals, but simultaneously in the community as whole, the YEP prioritised the promotion of high levels of participation in the Tantyi community as an important by-product of the project. In particular the YEP highlighted the way in which a focus on personal development through counselling, dialogue and communication helped to cultivate the ethic of participation in the process. Through these practices group expectations and power dynamics that arose in the project could begin to be unpacked. The YEP can thus be understood to be rooted in an understanding of development that is similar to both human and participatory development. What is of importance here, however, is to explore the extent to which the YEP succeeded in putting the ideals of participatory human development into practice. It is this issue that is explored in the final two chapters of the thesis.

3.9 Conclusion

The work of The Spirals Trust in the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project provides an interesting example of the practice of participatory human development in post-apartheid South Africa. In order to look further into the contributions that the 2006/7 YEP makes to participatory human development, the experiences of some of the participants and two permanent staff members who were part of the project are explored in detail the next chapter. This is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the merits and shortcomings of the project from the perspective of those who were significantly involved. By doing this, we can begin to understand challenges and questions that the 2006/7 YEP poses towards the practice of participatory human development.

CHAPTER FOUR: ASSESSING THE YEP EXPERIENCE

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the workshops and interviews held with seven of the YEP participants and two members of The Spirals Trust staff. The workshops and interviews with the participants were conducted on the 7th of August and the 24th of October 2008 with seven out of thirteen of the participants who completed all of the training and workshops in the YEP. The thirteen participants who made it through the project as a whole were the successful group out of the 40 participants who had originally registered for the YEP at the beginning of the project. Many of the original 40 participants dropped out because of a loss of interest or faith in the potential of the project. Quite commonly participants found employment during the process and decided it was in their best interests to put their time and effort into an activity that would quickly satisfy their need for an income. Being a part of a developmental process that would take over a year to show tangible results proved to be a difficult compromise for some participants. Thus the number of participants involved in the YEP oscillated significantly throughout the project leaving only thirteen participants that went through the process as a whole. In assessing the YEP experience these thirteen were perceived as the most reliable individuals to interview. I managed to get a hold of over half of these participants. Unfortunately, I did not manage to get a hold of the participants that were involved in the vegetable garden or the public administration office. It was particularly difficult to try and bring the YEP participants together as they have dispersed as a group and are trying to pursue their ambitions in different ways. I relied on getting hold of key members of the group and asking them to help me locate the others. I managed to get hold of four female participants and three male participants. All the participants had been part of the 2006/2007 YEP, but the three male participants had also been involved with The Spirals Trust and the YEP in 2005. As the YEP programme developed in 2006, certain opportunities that were not made available to 2005 YEP participants opened up and so some 2005 YEP participants were invited to continue their involvement in order to benefit from these opportunities. These participants particularly benefited from the skills training phase of the 2006/2007 YEP. This was because skills training component had not formed part of the 2005 YEP initiative. The seven participants were separated according to their gender and workshops were held with the participants in order to draw out the details of their experience with The Spirals Trust.

In addition to the workshops held with the participants, I also conducted focus group interviews with the two groups. Details of the workshops and focus group interviews are

provided in Appendix 1, but a few comments are needed here regarding how I used the comments made by participants during the workshops and interviews. One of the exercises that formed part of the workshops was an exercise in which the participants wrote down their thoughts on pieces of paper in order to create a collage of their experiences. The information gained from these collages was documented as part of the discussion of themes. I was not able to attribute the quotes gained from this collage to particular participants because when the information was collected there was no way of telling which participant put down what information as the collage included each group's collective thoughts. When I use such quotes in the discussion that follows, I place them in inverted commas to indicate that the comment being used is one of the participants' reflections, but I do not attribute the quote to any one participant. Later on in the workshop, focus group interviews were conducted and information was gained from them. This information is attributed to participants as it was fairly straight forward to record who said what at the time. However, pseudonyms have been used in order to protect the identities of the participants.

4.1.1 Drawing Out the Experiences of the Participants

I hoped to explore the YEP by drawing on the participants' perspectives on the role played by The Spirals Trust. I wanted to find out how much the participants felt the Trust contributed towards their experience, the needs that the work addressed, the sustainability of the work, and to get a general impression of their feelings regarding the journey that they have been through with The Spirals Trust. I set out to find out what the participants thought they gained specifically from the YEP experience, whether the process has continued to generate a life of its own and any other significant issues that they might want to bring up. A detailed account of the workshop plan is included in Appendix 1.

Positive aspects of the YEP as experienced by the participants included the appreciation that they had for the personal development focus of the YEP. They felt that they had gained a sense of self-awareness, confidence and resilience because of this focus. The participants also valued the care and support that they experienced from The Spirals Trust. In terms of the skills training they received, the participants acknowledged the positive impact of collaborating with other service providers in their broader community. Particularly beneficial were the levels of participation that the participants experienced in this project and the way in which these levels of participation were echoed in some of the work that participants undertook in their community. Negative aspects of the YEP mentioned by the participants included the poor levels of

communication experienced. This was particularly relevant in light of the unfulfilled expectations held by some participants. The subtle influence of power dynamics within the project was highlighted by the participants, calling to attention instances where the participants' self-expression was stifled. The negative influence of contextually unrelated training was exposed emphasising the dangers of un-consultative training. Issues relating to a lack of ongoing support are also shared by the participants.

Six themes that emerged from the workshops and focus group interviews with the participants and are discussed in detail in this chapter, namely: 1) Personal Development, 2) Psychological and Emotional Support, 3) Communication, 4) Participation, Power and Group Dynamics, 5) Contextually Unrelated Skills Training and Defining a Collaborative Ethic, and 6) Sustainability and Continuity.

4.1.2 Relating the Participants' Experiences to those of the Spirals Staff

In an order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the YEP experience, interviews were also conducted with two members of The Spirals Trust staff. Questions for these interviews were created from the themes that emerged from the participants' workshops and focus group interviews. Thami Matiwana, former coordinator of the YEP, and Theresa Edlmann, former director of The Spirals Trust, were interviewed separately on the 9th and the 28th of March 2009. In each instance, the issues highlighted by the participants were brought to the attention of the former members of The Spirals Trust who were encouraged to speak to particular aspects of the YEP, how they were managed and how, if at all, the project could have been better handled. A detailed account of the questions that guided my interviews with the former members of staff is given in Appendix 2. I do not provide the date each time I refer to these interviews as all the comments that follow below refer to two interviews: one with Thami Matiwana on 9 March 2009 and one with Theresa Edlmann on 28 March 2009.

4.2 Discussion of Themes

The discussion below is organised thematically in line with the themes that emerged from the workshops and focus group interviews with the participants. In each instance, the participants' experiences are discussed in detail. The themes revealed in the participants' discussion are then related to conversations with the Spirals members of staff who share their insight into the themes raised by the participants. This information includes their perspectives on

what the work entailed on their part, and how successful they believe it was. Suggestions for alternative ways of working for the benefit of all involved are also highlighted.

4.2.1 Personal Development

As its name suggests and as discussed earlier, the Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) aimed to empower young people living in Tantyi. Empowerment was understood in a broad way as reflected by the decision to include two phases: a foundation phase focusing on building self-esteem and confidence and a second phase aiming to equip participants with skills which could help them earn an income. Feedback from participants made it clear that this first phase was very valuable. The focus on personal development provided in the first phase of the YEP process was highlighted as an empowering process for the participants, in the sense that it helped improve their self-esteem and become more independent and assertive. For example, the participants noted that they 'have learnt not to depend but to be independent' and also that they have learnt 'not to be easily deceived'. They added that they have 'learnt that you can start something with nothing, e.g. not to give up easily, until you get what you want'. The participants noted that their experience with The Spirals Trust provided an opportunity for them to be creative in that they were given the chance to think through what it is that they would like to do. One participant describes this experience as one that helped her 'to respect [her]self the way [she is] so that [she] can also respect others'.

The gaining of greater self-awareness was evident in some of the participants' reflections:

> Smangaliso Nxadi: I think the thing that we really learnt there is to know where you are coming from. The first phase of The Spirals Trust helped us a lot.

The participants understood their role in their experience with the YEP as one that required them to face their own challenges as individuals. This 'hard work' as they have described it, consisted mostly of a great of deal of concentration by the participants in which they had to challenge themselves to be 'confident about myself'. Their commitment towards this included the attitude of 'giving myself 100% because I was there whenever they wanted to see us'. The fuel for their commitment according them came from the 'hopes and dreams' that they held for themselves.

In an interview with Theresa Edlmann, it became clear that the organisers of the YEP had reflected upon the importance of developing the confidence, self-esteem and social skills of participants as an important foundation phase in the YEP.

> It [the first phase of the YEP] was very much something that Spirals pushed and we had allies in the form of the President's Award and FAMSA, but the idea around it was that for development to be sustainable people who are going to be pioneers of this development need to be developed themselves and need to develop the personal capacity and the relational capacity to be able to implement whatever skills they were being trained in.

The personal development phase of the YEP was clearly a significant part of the process for the participants. The fact that the participants acknowledge their efforts and struggles in continuing with the process alludes to a sense of justified achievement on their part. They feel that they have played a crucial role in the programme. They frame themselves as active participants, not passive beneficiaries in the process. The assertion that the personal development phase of the YEP was very helpful is interesting in that it points to aspects of the process that those participants for whom the second phase of the project was not very successful, can still count as successes.

By encouraging and supporting self-knowledge and confidence, this stage proved to be an important starting point; a catalyst towards the participants' development. Whether or not their initiatives have directly translated into sustainable work for the participants, this phase has had the effect of opening up possibilities for the participants by helping them navigate their personal terrain and challenging them to stretch themselves. As a part of human-centred development, personal development initiatives such as these provide a strong foundation for the type of work that will follow and should thus be considered as a crucial feature in holistic human development. This is the point where self-knowledge and understanding is nurtured in order to bring forth new possibilities in self-actualisation and human development.

4.2.2 Psychological and Emotional Support

The participants indicated that their relationship with The Spirals Trust involved a lot of 'care and support' and the feeling that they were looked after as part of the ongoing process. The participants spoke about this project satisfying their need for 'love' and 'belonging' and described The Spirals Trust as a 'family' with each person playing a particular role. They indicated that there was an element of familiarity and 'warmth' built between the group and The Spirals Trust. The organisation itself was seen as a mother or parent to the participants, because of the way in which the participants felt that 'we can tell them our secret'. They described Thami as their leader and 'sister friend' and Theresa as a 'mother-boss-lady'. In keeping with the sense of Spirals as a family, one of the participants described the Spirals offices as follows: 'It was like a home for us because Spirals helped us be where we are today (some of us)'. The support that they feel they

have received as part of the YEP is shown through these metaphors and is further clarified through their description of The Spirals Trust as playing the role of 'counsellors, guides and teachers'. This is captured in one participant's reflection: she says that 'they always give us support not to give up'. Within this, Spirals acted as a motivator for the participants, 'someone who believed that we could make it'. One participant takes this further by stating that 'it was like someone picked me up with nothing and left me with a future'.

While the co-ordinators of the YEP had set out from the beginning to include psychological and emotional support as part of the process, the levels of counselling and nurturing that needed to go alongside this project were unanticipated. Theresa Edlmann reflects how important this aspect of the YEP became:

> I think the major things that I sit with are recognition of just how important those negotiating spaces are and if people were to run a similar project in the future I would encourage them to make even more space available for that rather than less … It highlights the necessity of that component in a youth development process. Basically, a parenting space that teaches about the value of relationship and the importance of finding non-violent means of negotiating within oneself and with the people around. [Instances of conflict] were never only about those events, they were about a lifetime of hurt and so just by staying with the principle of conversation, staying with the principle of trying to work beyond projections towards each other and actually meeting each other and understanding and collectively finding solutions to deal with problems - that was the principle we just tried to stick with.

The importance of communication, dialogue and personal attention in a project of this kind must be emphasised. Providing a space in which the participants could share their stories and issues with The Spiral's staff proved to a crucial aspect of this project that challenged the organisers to step beyond their perceived mandate and play a more personal role in order to create an atmosphere in which participation and communication could take place. The energy that it takes to retain this kind of relationship also needs to be mentioned as a feature of this kind of work.

One reason why so much psychological and emotional support had to be provided may have been because so many of the participants came from broken families and did not have parent figures to go to for advice and support. According to Theresa Edlmann:

> There aren't any parents in their lives to [provide them with support] right now around these particular issues, [so it is best that] we step into that gap and try to be a 'good enough parent', to use the psychological language.

The way in which these dynamics were worked with by the members of The Spirals Trust reveals the many roles they had to play as facilitators in the YEP. Thami Matiwana revealed some of the challenges that she experienced in trying to be a counsellor, sister, mother and friend in order to facilitate dialogue amongst the group:

> I know that sometimes you have to separate [yourself from] your work but I think that I got close to them… I think our relationship was strong and respectful and there was a trust and respect between us. …. There were several cases where I had to sit down with one of them to try and advise them what to do ... I could see that they were coming from rough times. I was like a mother-sister … yeah it affected me a lot it made me forget about my life and become too involved. It changed me a lot in a way that – remember, I was doing a job – and it became, I don't know, it became something else … Some of the kids, sometimes they get into trouble because they don't have somebody to talk to. We are coming from a culture, the African culture, that says that you don't tell everything to your parents … To be honest [the YEP process] changed me a lot. It changed me because I'm not a mother but I had to be a mother, you know, I had to be a sister to somebody else.

This extract shows Thami Matiwana coming to grips with the complexity of the work that she engaged in with the YEP participants. As coordinator of the project her work did not just entail organising logistics but also involved providing very personal support and counselling to participants. In particular cases when the psychological issues faced by participants proved to be very difficult to navigate, alternative support was provided for them through the Rhodes Psychology Clinic.

The importance of psychological and emotional support in the YEP is apparent in the discussion above. This theme relates to the first theme of personal development as this and the psychological and emotional support provided by The Spirals Trust emphasise the extent to which the organisation engaged personally with the participants. The provision of nurturing and care for the participants as part of the ongoing process created personal links and relationships with the participants. These relationships were positive because they encouraged the participants to stay with the process that they were going through and try their best. When this support was difficult to provide, referring participants to alternative providers of support, such as the Rhodes Psychology Clinic, helped the facilitators to find other ways to respond to the difficulties experienced by participants.

4.2.3 Communication

Successful participatory development relies on good communication between participants and the organisation facilitating the development initiative. Despite the relative success of personal development and psychological help, participants' responses to communication exposed some contradictions and ambiguities. This section looks into particular issues that came up with regard to communication in the YEP.

Participants in the YEP spoke of the lack of communication between themselves and The Spirals Trust indicating that 'sometimes they [The Spirals Trust] were making decisions without first consulting us'. This sense of poor communication is further shown in the participants' discussion of unfulfilled expectations within the process. It is important to note that at the outset of the process the participants apparently thought that the project would result in jobs for them, jobs that would more than likely be provided by The Spirals Trust itself. In contrast, The Spirals Trust viewed the goal of the YEP as being to promote the development of the youth in a way that would encourage them to define for themselves how they would like to develop themselves and how this could help their community. Some comments by the participants indicate the perception that the project would result in a job:

> Nombulelo Bikitsha: My expectation was that The Spirals Trust was a place where I'm going to get a job because at home only my mother was working, so I was so happy that – no man! – I got a job! Especially when I got the call that 'hey, your name was selected, you've got it, you must come, we are going to have a meeting'. I was so happy at first [as] I thought it was a job. Or like maybe I thought it was a project just for one month, then after that they are going to give us jobs.
>
> Nonhle Kunutu: And me too I thought that we are going to work because we were sitting in the location [township] doing nothing.
>
> Sicelo Mahali: Yah! From my expectation we were expecting that we were going to have some training and after this training they are going to look for a job for us so that we can go and work.

The participants' preoccupation with finding paid employment is an understandable one given their context. It should be noted that the participants evidently viewed development as something that happens fairly quickly. Possible repercussions of this outlook is that the participants' pre-existing perceptions of development could have affected their experience of the YEP and their perceptions of its successes and failures.

The feeling that their expectations were not fulfilled and that communication between Spirals and themselves was poor is not only evidenced in the initial expectations of what they thought Spirals' invitation to participate in the YEP meant, but emerges again in the way they felt that the skills training was negotiated. Reflecting on the skills training, participants stated that promises that were made were not implemented. For example one participant said:

> Nolwazi Bam: They never stopped promising. They said each of us will have two different skills but some ended up with one because of their budget, so some ended up doing what she/he doesn't want to do.

Instances where the coordination of the project required the placing of participants in skills training that only had the capacity to work with a certain number of participants also led to this disappointment. In these cases the organisation sought to create balance within the group by making sure that everybody got to have skills training in at least one of their most desired skills. Depending on the space available in each group some participants were able to have training in both of their desired skills; in other cases, participants did not make it into one of the skills training courses they wanted and were asked to think about another choice that was worthwhile for them. This left some participants feeling disappointed with communication around skills training. The issue of skills training became a serious point of contention for some of the participants, especially in light of the participants' need for a skill that was useful, sustainable and could provide long-term options. This theme is explored in detail in the fifth theme. Lastly, on the point of communication, the male participants in the group felt that there was a gendered aspect to communication in the YEP. They believed that the female participants were treated better and communicated better with than they were.

Feedback from Theresa Edlmann and Thami Matiwana give insight into possible reasons behind the problems relating to communication between participants and facilitators. The organisers of the YEP went through a long process in order to recruit and retain members for this project. The different institutions, clubs and groupings that they approached are highlighted:

> Theresa Edlmann: There was a fairly lengthy process of recruiting people to participate and so Thami went and visited sports clubs, youth groups and churches. [She] identified as broad a range of social groupings within the community as possible and distributed application forms. Young people then applied on the basis of expressing interest in being involved in a community project rather than only about their personal development.

The aim here was to attract a wide selection of youth who had the concerns of their community in mind as well as their own development.

Thami Matiwana, who was tasked with trying to identify appropriate young people, experienced several difficulties in the recruitment of participants as it became evident that the Tantyi community, in which the project was based, did not trust her intentions or the objectives of the YEP. Particularly telling is the Tantyi community's rejection of the work that was being proposed by Spirals because of their experience of the empty promises of NGO initiatives such as this one. She relates the way in which some members of the Tantyi community reacted to her presence:

> It was difficult because people were sick and tired of the 'project'. [T]hey would say to us that even in schools people are coming and promise us funding … huge money … and they don't give us what they promise. So I think people lost trust in the NGOs and their promises and projects. So most of them were not buying the whole idea [of the YEP] because [they had prior experience of failed development projects].

The fact that previous organisations had come to Tantyi and tried to implement developmental initiatives such as this one could have contributed to the expectations that the participants held about what the promises being made in the YEP would mean in their lives.

Theresa Edlmann describes the expectations and hopes of the participants as she encountered them:

> Massive. We were going to change their lives and make everything all right and they would no longer feel pain, they were no longer going to live in poverty. You know, I think the idealisation of what [the YEP] would be was one of the hardest things to deal with.

According to her, the participants had unrealistic expectations because of the kind of promises previous NGOs working in the community had made:

> I think [the existence of prior projects] caused major conflicts and this is the difficulty of engaging in this sort of work… As much as we tried to be extremely ethical about not making promises we knew we could not fulfil, in the participants' heads the tapes were running of previous times that they had been promised the world and in many of the other cases, as the young people said themselves, these people did not deliver at all. … In some ways we copped the anger and disappointments and betrayals that had happened previously in their lives.

She suggests that for some participants the YEP gave permission for 'a narrative of victimology' in their feelings - 'just like everybody else Spirals let them down'; while for others it was an

important 'healing process' which helped them move on. Thami Matiwana provides more insight into what these expectations translated into on a daily basis, especially what it was like for the participants to come to grips with the idea of development being promoted:

> I think now for them maybe now they understand the word 'development' because even at the beginning I think they were expecting us to make decisions for them up until we had to explain 'This is about you, this is for you, so you have to make a decision. We can't make a decision for you, we can't tell you what to do, we are here to listen to you and do what you are telling us to do'.

These exchanges show how The Spirals Trust staff members grappled with the tensions between what they were providing as an organisation and what was expected from them as outsiders coming into the community of Tantyi to do a youth empowerment project. The type of development that they were hoping to promote was at odds with the meanings of development the participants had in mind.

The perceived lack of communication in the YEP compromised the project and left some participants unsettled about the experience that they had been through. Connecting participants to skills training was an instance in which some participants felt marginalised due to the constraints the organisation faced in the provision of skills training. The participants' pre-existing perceptions of development may have also resulted in them having expectations that were not adequately managed by Spirals. Most participants expected to attain tangible jobs as a result of their interaction with The Spirals Trust and those who have not secured employment perceive the process that they have been through as a failure because of these expectations. It is important that projects of this nature make their aims very clear from the beginning so that the participants know what it is that they are consenting to be a part of. Furthermore, the comments made by the YEP facilitators suggest that it is also important, but difficult, to manage expectations shaped by previous development initiatives. The expectations held by the participants should also be seen as inevitable considering the fact that there is little industry or employment potential in Grahamstown. Thus the need for employment is a need faced daily in this context and did not surface solely because of the communication of the organisation.

4.2.4 Participation, Power and Group Dynamics

Participation is, obviously, the central principle that fuels the practice of participatory development. However, as indicated in Chapter Two the degree to which participation actually takes place within developmental initiatives that supposedly promote it is a contested issue

(Parfitt, 2004: 538). The fact that participatory work invites group processes and interactions with different players means that there needs to be continuous dialogue between those players as part of the process. Regardless of the democratic process and openness that a participatory development project may seek to promote, there exist different levels of power dynamics that may play out within a project. In this section, I look into elements of participation in the YEP. The extent to which some participants felt that they have been able to spread the ethic of participation in the work that they do is explored. Other instances in which participation could have been better encouraged in this project are also discussed.

According to the participants the act of participation was a need that was fulfilled in the YEP. They saw this need as addressing both their participation in the various workshops and training sessions that they were a part of in the YEP, and also the extent to which the project helped them to participate at home and within their community. For example, one participant, Nomfundo Bikitsha, said: 'I am going to help my mother by … putting food on the table and by also developing somebody because I was also helped'. This need was of key importance to the participants because for many of them their life within their community is characterised by limited inroads to participate in their community. This participant felt that she has gone through a process and come out of it stronger, with more options afforded to her. Her position as someone who did not have many options and somebody who expected someone to come and help her has evolved. Through her own effort, and the guidance of others, she has built on herself and become a community development worker in her community. This growth not only affects her and how she can help her own family but also has catalytic effects in her community as she identifies herself as a leader that can help others realise their rights.

> Nomfundo Bikitsha: I am a CDP [community development practitioner] at Raglan Road Multipurpose Centre. It's all about development, developing small children, helping those who don't get [social welfare] grants to get grants, helping those who are being abused and also helping [HIV] positive people to make a better future for themselves and to have hope. …. Being a CDP you are like a developer. We have a centre in Raglan road. We get people, for example, if they have a granny at home she can't write, she can't read, you tell her that 'Granny, at the centre we can help you read and write,' so there are classes at the centre for old people who can't write and read. And also [we] do many things different things. And you don't just tell them to do, you ask them 'what do you want to do?' then you help them in order to achieve their goals.

The ethos that development should be a process through which people can identify for themselves what they need, and then work together towards the means of attaining those needs is upheld in this process. This participant has replicated this ethos, learnt as part of the YEP, in

the development interventions that she is carrying out in her community. The contribution that she is making to her community is one that is enabling through the invitation it creates for others to articulate for themselves what it is that they value and what they think could help them have a better quality of life.

Another participant who also underwent training to be a CDP also presents herself as someone who has been empowered to fight for her own rights as well as those of her community:

> Nonhle Kunutu: … I am now a CDP at St. Phillips pre-school. I am there to develop kids and now I'm still fighting [against] the bucket system[3] there in the pre-school. [T]he pre-school is so small [so] I'm still fighting for [a better place for the pre-school]. Next to the pre-school there is a big house…so I'm going to talk with my pastor to [about using this house for the pre-school].

Other participants who have been part of a programme on Home Based Care with Hospice also echoed this reflection. Through her training, one participant has been repositioned within her community as someone who can help others understand what she has learnt:

> Nolwazi Bam: It helped me a lot because like the old mothers who don't know anything about HIV and AIDS if they see a thin person always they say that he has AIDS because he is thin… it helped me because I can tell them and explain to them so that they could know.

The ways in which the YEP participants have been able to participate positively in the life of their community is shown here emphasising the way in which they themselves have been able to help other members of their community through knowledge that they have gained as part of the process. The fact that the participants were able to successfully participate in the YEP has enabled them to become facilitators of participatory development in their community in their own right. There is an aspect of continuity that is evident in this case. The participation that they have been a part of has been replicated in the intervention of the participants within their community.

Whilst this is a celebrated aspect of the programme there are other aspects of the YEP in which the ethic of participation was lacking. The rest of this section looks at some of the barriers to genuine participation experienced by participants and also explores the responses of The Spirals Trust at the time and their reflections in retrospect.

[3] This refers to the use of a bucket for sewage disposal. This system is used because of the inadequate sanitation and plumbing in her area.

The participants reflected on the ways that differences in levels of power and influence affected their experiences of the YEP. One participant indicated that even though she got to do what she wanted to do in the project, there existed a kind of pressure that had power over her. Her reflection highlights the fact that by virtue of the power that the organisation holds, there was a part of her that felt she had to do what she was told in order to benefit from the process.

> Nomfundo Bikitsha: I feel that I had a say at first because I've ended up doing courses that I want to do. But sometimes you feel that you are doing things ... that you are being like a teddy bear who is being driven around. You've been told what to do and sometimes you will see that a person is just telling you that 'so and so told you to do this and that' - but you will see that, no man, this is not true. But you will do it because the person wants you to do it, and sometimes you feel that you don't have a say because it's the place that you are getting the money from, they are paying your fees so you just do whatever they want you to do.

This sentiment is echoed in another participant's reflection that showed that he felt that the power somehow lay in the organisation deciding for them what was best.

> Sicelo Mahali: Me, I feel in most of cases they were coming with something that they think will be good for us. But most of the cases we didn't have much to say.

These comments suggest that participants did not feel that they could fully express themselves. It is interesting to note that the participants' role at times became a passive one, as they perceived themselves to be on the receiving end of the benevolence of the organisation. Several problems relating to the establishment of a participant-driven process are highlighted here: even within a structure that aims to be participant-driven, power dynamics exist that may reinforce the relationships and structures that the organisation may be trying to transform. An emphasis on participation does not automatically nullify these power dynamics.

A sense of being stifled was particularly acute experience for those who were not lucky enough to get into the skills training that they wanted. The experience was an alienating and disempowering one for them. Additionally, the participant quoted below felt that she couldn't express her frustration because she did not want to be perceived as ungrateful or always complaining.

> Nolwazi Bam: Mna [me] I felt bad because…I chose a course that I didn't like and I wanted to do CSD[4] but I couldn't do CSD and it made me angry. I felt like

[4] The Centre for Social Development is one of the organisation that Spirals collaborated with. They were in charge of community development training.

> a walking doll, because sometimes when you want to say something you can't say it because it will be like you are always complaining.

Even though the facilitators of the YEP had emphasised the need for dialogue and for sensitivity towards others in a 'safe space', at times participants felt reluctant to share their real views for fear of seeming ungrateful for what was being provided for them.

Members of the Spirals staff acknowledge the presence of power dynamics both within the group and between themselves and the group. Theresa Edlmann commented on power relations within the YEP group:

> I definitely think there were huge variations in terms of the types of homes that the individuals came from and whether there was a sense of stability that people bought into that group or a sense of devastation and trauma and huge neediness. Inevitably those issues played themselves out within the relationships too but also emotionally. Because some people could arrive in clean new clothes to workshops [whilst] others didn't even have the resources to wash their clothes or clean their teeth before arriving at workshops– and for teenagers and young people those are huge issues… but I think [frustrations] were often expressed in the form of personal or gender based conflicts so there were massive dynamics.

These issues resulted in there being a particular dynamic within the group that hampered the creation of a 'safe space' for them to share their issues. Instead, a process of negotiating how each person fitted into the group (whether through conflict, silence or conversation) was experienced.

Reflecting on the power dynamics between her and the group Theresa Edlmann points to the complexity that her identity placed within the group processes.

> I definitely had massive power in their eyes, how real or perceived that was is impossible to tell. I'm aware that the power was around [my] position, but it was also around race and sometimes the paradox of being a white person in development is healthy and sometimes it reinforces power constructs in unhelpful ways.

These dimensions made efforts towards creating participation very tricky. Edlmann speaks about the challenge of getting participants to participate in the YEP. The aspect of participation did not come easy for the participants

> I think there are cultural issues around the voices of young people not being valued and … we were asking them to be the main voice so that was a massive shift that we were asking them to make without them necessarily understanding the benefit of it until much later …I think the issue of gender roles around who has voice and who doesn't have voice was absolutely massive. And I think too,

> there were several members of the group who live, I suspect, with daily violence and trauma and so …one of the huge impacts of trauma is that it paralyses you it strips one of a voice and so to be invited to a turbulent, active, foreign kind of space and then asked to speak I think was intensely threatening for a number of the group. It was a lot that we were asking them to navigate when we said 'we are just asking you to participate' or 'we just...', we often throw in that word 'just' to minimise what actually was a really heroic journey that we were asking each individual to travel in the sense owning a sense of purpose and destiny for themselves in an environment that in many ways stripped them of this…

Only some of the participants were able to persist in and maintain these high levels of participation. This comment reveals how the context from which the participants come, may make it difficult to introduce a participant-driven processes. It may be that preliminary work was needed in order to get the participants to a place where they really could participate meaningfully in the project.

Through this perspective it becomes apparent that when facilitating participatory development initiatives, it is vital to continually scrutinize and be aware of power dimensions that may exist in relationships and work to acknowledge them in an effort to encourage those involved to express their views. The point here is to be aware that the rhetoric of 'safe spaces' is not always sufficient to encourage all members of a group to participate. As one becomes familiar with the group dynamics that exist, it is necessary to keep on one's toes to acknowledge the silent voices and encourage them to emerge.

4.2.5 Contextually Unrelated Training and the Need for a Collaborative Ethic

The second phase of the YEP Project entailed working with the participants towards creating a sustainable life skill. The issues that came into play during this phase of the YEP hold important insights for other attempts at promoting participatory development. In the section below, the participants' thoughts about the skills training process and the perspectives of the staff of The Spirals Trust are discussed in an effort to tease out what can be learnt from this phase of the YEP experience.

When asked to reflect on how much influence they felt they had in the choice of which skills training to do, the participants' responses highlighted some concerns. In instances where the preferences of the participants with regard to skills training corresponded with the capabilities of the organisation, participants felt that the process was valuable and that the skills training was appropriate. Consider these comments:

> Buyiswa Sehlude: I'm feeling good because I chose that thing I want like sewing, I love sewing.
>
> Nonhle Kunutu: Mna [me] on my side I'm great, I'm fine, with my courses, there's [no problem]. But in the beginning I was scared because I didn't know what CSD and Hospice [were], but now I'm fine with my courses.

For some participants the skills training has opened up new opportunities for them, including employment opportunities. The participants who had positive experiences did skills training that incorporated them into pre-existing bigger projects such as community development initiatives, palliative care or pre-school teaching. Opportunities such as being a community development practitioner (CDP) have reaped positive rewards for such participants. One participant shares her experience:

> Nomfundo Bikitsha: These things have contributed in my life… because today I am a CDP because of one of the courses that I have been doing with CSD [The Centre for Social Development]. I have [achieved my] goal …. And also, with some of the [training] I did, for example, if I can open my own business. I have budgeting [skills], I know how to do a budget and, I also [trained] with Hospice [so] I can be a nursing sister in the future if I want to. I can also be a care worker. And also I know that I can develop other people just like me because I have been developed so I can develop others as well.

Some reflections show that the skills training phase of the course managed to further build upon the increased confidence the participants had acquired during the first phase of the YEP:

> Nonhle Kunutu: It has taught me that anything is possible; you can start something with nothing…
>
> Nolwazi Bam: And also it tells me that everything is possible to the one who believes. [I]f you [believe you] can make it, really you can make it.

These bold statements point to a sense of unbounded possibilities that the participants feel are open to them as a result of their collaboration with The Spirals Trust and other partnering organisations.

While some participants experienced the skills training very positively, others saw the process as one in which they were promised something and did not get it. This was particularly the case where the skills training did not involve incorporating the participants into pre-existing initiatives, but rather provided them with a once-off opportunity to learn a skill (such as sewing or making music) without providing opportunities in which they could subsequently use this skill. The idea was that the participants would create their own opportunities to use these skills

through, for example, setting up their own small businesses. This kind of skills training created anger and resentment and a feeling of abandonment in those who experienced it.

All the male YEP participants who were available for the workshop had done this latter kind of skills training. They reflected strongly on their frustrations around the training process that they had been through and the possibilities (or lack thereof) that this training provided regarding future business endeavours. They were particularly interested in creating a shop for themselves in which they could sell leather craft, clothes they had sewn themselves and printed material. Each participant was trained to specialise in one of these skills (leather craft, sewing or printing fabric). The training, according to the participants, lacked real substance and was not able to translate itself into a life generating project:

> Sicelo Mahali: …we didn't meet our expectations. Especially on the skills training it was like we were being shuffled around just for a period of time. And then when we were doing leather we were thinking that we were going to make jackets and stuff. I think that was what was said in the beginning, but when we went there it was not what we were expecting. And even what we were doing it was like a short period of time and we couldn't, like, open our heads and understand. Even the person that was teaching us the skill is not professional … So [it seemed] fake. But we have to accept, you see, because we didn't have things to do at that time and we were looking for what we were looking for. Which, of course, we didn't get.

At this point I asked the participant to clarify what he meant by when he said that the skills training was 'fake'. He, and other participants, shared their thoughts:

> Lonwabo Langa: Ahh it was fake. It was whack[5] in a way that …you had to choose two skills, I chose leather and also music. I was expecting - it was like Kingwood College[6] - so I know like there's those guys have a lot of instruments and know how to play them so I thought that when I come out I will … know how to push a guitar and hold a piano - all instruments … violin… but eh! I [got] there and I was given a drum! Even the coordinator herself when she came around she even thought the same way that when she got there she [expected to] find us holding a Spanish guitar playing senorita, but we were holding horns, and that's also music but that was not exactly…
>
> Smangaliso Nxadi: We wanted to sew leather not [do] leather craft. The problem was we didn't sew leather. And then they said that we will sew some tracksuits, [but] we didn't sew those tracksuits. I don't know what happened.
>
> Sicelo Mahali: It seemed like when they say there is sewing and leather they chose what we must do, [which] not like we are expecting. [We] were expecting to know how to sew maybe a jacket and when we arrived there they only taught us

[5] Slang: derogative for something that is not good, or that is useless.
[6] Kingswood College is the local elite private high school that was providing training in music for the participants.

> how to make traditional clothing so you see it's not like one of the things that we wanted or the thing that I can see I can make a living out of.

The question of the training being of immediate significance to the participants' contexts and interests is raised within this exchange. There seemed to be a gap between what the participants felt would be helpful to them and what was made available to them.

The issue of context relevant development is underscored by one of the participants:

> Sicelo Mahali: We thought about it… but back to the thing [of] the training that we receive[d], they only show us how to sew these things [traditional Xhosa skirts]. Like we don't know, like, when we want to make an arm how you are going to cut it, how you going to measure it, so you don't want to make something [skew or incorrect]. … They assumed [about] what can help us, and so the things that they come up with were not relevant to the society where we came from or to our lifestyle you see… I don't know how to put it ….

Though unsure about his expression, this participant clearly puts across a concern that the skills he learnt could not translate into something that he could use within his context. As youth within their communities their hope for training corresponded to a genuine desire to enter the market and create commodities that would be popular amongst the youth. This desire was not met because of a lack of understanding of what they wanted. They were placated with training that went through its own motions and filled its own criteria of what the coordinators felt was relevant for these youths to learn. The tensions here lie between the participants wanting to make contemporary, fashionable items or learn to play a diverse range of instruments and training that only taught them how to make and play traditional things. The skills that these participants learnt could not be translated into lucrative business opportunities. As a result the next step of the skills training, which was to turn their skills into businesses, did not succeed.

The question of how to market what they had on offer became a secondary issue to the participants who insist that the skills training that they received meant they were unable to produce marketable products.

> Sicelo Mahali: According to the thing like marketing, we had a product that was not generating money. [W]e were just selling for material because when we come with our price people were telling us that 'this is not good for this price' … and we end up selling our things cheaper.
>
> Lonwabo Langa: It's out of market!

> Sicelo Mahali: [There were] lots of people who were already doing it and some people who already have like lot of resources they are selling cheaper than we are supposed to. So that's why we don't even have a market. Like maybe if you want to print a t-shirt, you say it's like R20, they say 'I know another place they say it's R8 to print a t-shirt'.

The participants in this instance highlight the sentiment that it was not so much their marketing skills that lay at fault but rather some of the commodities that they had been trained to make did not have much of a market value within their context.

Difficulties in managing the start up funding given to the group in order to bolster their businesses became apparent. The financial cost of sustaining and making a living out of the skills that they had learnt proved challenging.

> Smangaliso Nxadi: With the money, let's start with the money first. Because we were told, 'Ba [that], this is the money for you guys for December time so you can buy anything you want for December time'. So we shared that money between everybody... and then we have some few things to sew and then we sew those things and then the machine was broken.
>
> Lonwabo Langa: We were having marketing problems some of our things we couldn't sell and we didn't have enough material like to work on it. And we have difficulty with [machines that kept breaking down] and so and other people they have some temporary jobs so they went to go do the jobs and those of us left ended up losing interest because we [were not] generating any money.

For those involved in sewing and textile print training their experience has been one that has been disempowering because the skills they received were not relevant or could not translate into income-generating business opportunities.

It is evident that where the YEP provided participants with skills training that formed part of pre-existing community initiatives, the skills training succeeded in providing participants with sustainable life skills. However, feedback from participants clearly shows that unsupported 'once off' training, especially in skills like leather craft, music and sewing, did not succeed in providing opportunities for participants to develop successful businesses, as intended by the YEP facilitators. The training in leather and sewing skills offered knowledge in how to make traditional items whereas the group hoped to learn to make urban, contemporary items. When looking at the music training, it seems that rather than responding to the expressed needs of the participants, this training simply slotted participants into an ongoing initiative by the service provider. This type of response is not only superficial but patronising because participants were offered 'training' in an instrument with which some were already familiar, i.e. the drum.

This type of training did not encourage a healthy collaboration between the service providers and the participants, but instead left some of the participants frustrated and angry as captured especially in the interviews with male participants. In working towards participatory human development this aspect of the training raises important questions about the ethic behind the interventions promoted.

To better understand why some of the skills training did not work, it is useful to explore the way in The Spirals Trust collaborated with other invited service providers who provided the skills training. The vision behind the skills training was described by Theresa as being 'to provide young people with sufficient skills to be able to generate income [so] that they could move a step up from their current levels of poverty'. However, while participants were invited to participate in their own development by articulating what it is that they would like to do, the organisation was not always able to respond adequately to the preferences expressed by participants. Some of the barriers towards achieving this vision become evident in the responses of the Spirals staff when asked how much the participants were involved in designing the type of skills training that they wanted.

> Theresa Edlmann: Not designing – we did ask them initially what skills they wanted to [be] trained in and there were some cases where we had to say sorry we can't do that… where we were able to match what the participants wanted and what was available we undertook to do that.

The difficulty of getting relevant service providers in the context of Grahamstown is cited as one of the issues that influenced the way that the skills training was handled and designed:

> Theresa Edlmann: You know in the context of Grahamstown it's not so much that you have the luxury of choosing, it's just about who is available and so we identified people within the sector that we were working. [It was] very hard to move beyond the NGO sector for the most part given the nature of the funding and the programme. … There were needs identified by the young people that we couldn't meet.

Thami Matiwana further reflects on the weak aspects of the skills training and how the organisation could possibly have worked towards deepening participation when it came to the skills training. In particular, she comments on the fact that sometimes participants did not really know what they were signing up for apart from the fact that it was sewing or leather craft. She suggests that more transparency about what training in these skills entailed would probably have been helpful for participants. Taking participants on a tour of what was on offer could have helped as participants would then have had the chance to see what was on offer and to decide if

this was what they wanted to participate in. In this way, they could have assessed whether the training provided could open up adequate business opportunities.

A look into the organisation and management of the skills training – in particular the collaboration with other service providers in charge of particular skills – shows a breakdown in communication that contributed to the lack of success of in some of the skills training. In particular it seemed like there was not much support from the other service providers:

> Thami Matiwana: The service providers - some of them didn't have the experience and … their guidance in terms of how things should be done, there was no monitoring … It's like there was no programme.

She also commented specifically on the sewing skills training:

> The sewing I was not happy with the sewing from the beginning, to be honest, because for me what was happening was not what we agreed on. I'm not sure whether I was expecting too much … but what they gave us was not what we were expecting. It was not what was on paper.

At this point I asked how Spirals as the leading organisation tried to navigate a situation where they felt that they were not being given what they wanted by the service providers with whom they were collaborating. In response to this, Matiwana says that they tried to find alternative organisations but it would have been problematic to back out as an agreement had already been made with the first service provider.

Furthermore, Matiwana shares information about another problematic skills training course – the music course that is spoken of quite negatively by the participants. When visiting the group in a session she was disappointed because what was going on was not what she had in mind. She gives more information about possible reasons why this skills training did not effectively address the needs of the participants. She indicated that while the other service providers were paid to provide training, the music training was being provided free of charge by the service provider concerned. Because the service provider was not being paid for the service, the participants who were interested in music were simply inserted into ongoing music lessons that were initially meant to cater for students from Kingswood College. As a result, it is no wonder that the participants were relegated to the side and were not given focused training. This information should have been shared with the participants who were interested in getting musical training – by doing so the participants' expectations of the training might have been different.

The issues in the skills training are deeply connected to broader issues related to Spirals Trust's collaboration with other service providers. When asked about the way in which Spirals

chose the service providers with whom it collaborated, the influence of the proposal and contract that The Spirals Trust had with their funders, the Eastern Cape NGO coalition, becomes apparent:

> Thami Matiwana: Firstly, we chose those ones that are under the NGO coalition and we look at the proposal that we want to do, sewing [for example], and looked at the organisations that were around. I think this Makana[7] or NGO coalition thing didn't give us the freedom to look [into] other options… It was an NGO thing under the NGO Coalition.

When asked whether the contract with the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition created a binding agreement through which the work had to be undertaken, Thami Matiwana responded in the affirmative. She makes mention of the way in which the proposal between The Spirals Trust and the Eastern Cape NGO coalition perhaps influenced the type of skills that were promoted in the YEP:

> … I think we did decide in terms of skills maybe looking at the proposal [rather than] checking with the participants.

It is clear that Spirals' desire to promote a type of development that is open-ended and responsive to the needs of participants was undermined by the pressures of following a particular mandate recognised by their funders who expect specific outcomes. Theresa Edlmann speaks briefly about this tension describing it as being one that involved:

> Working to a formula rather than working to the natural rhythm and dynamic of the group and the context itself.

The difficulties that Spirals faced in terms of communication with other service providers are spoken of by Matiwana who, in her role as YEP coordinator, faced these issues daily. A sense of the service providers not moving in harmony with The Spirals Trust and not always making sure their part of the project was properly managed is relayed by her, which put additional pressure on The Spirals Trust to monitor the project as a whole. Matiwana felt that they had to take responsibility as the leading organisation and this entailed trying to manage a group of service providers that did not pull their weight as much as The Spirals Trust had hoped.

Furthermore, the participatory focus in Spirals' way of working was not echoed in the practices of some of the service providers with whom they collaborated. I asked how the

[7] Makana refers to the municipality that Grahamstown including Tantyi belongs to. Thami's comments refer to the way in which the YEP project was seen as part of a wider project under the Makana Municipality and the NGO coalition.

facilitators of The Spirals Trust could have worked towards making sure that the organisations that they were working with had the same kind of way of working as they do. The importance of clearly setting out the rules of engagement between collaborating organisations becomes apparent as it cannot be taken for granted that the organisations with which one is collaborating will take on a project in a way that one would expect them to, leaving room for misunderstandings. When asked in retrospect how the process could have been improved for the benefit of all involved, Matiwana commented as follows:

> I think maybe the first thing if we can start over is to have a memorandum of understanding between the participants first and the service providers and then maybe visit the service providers and see what they are doing because we sent the proposal to the coalition and then some of the service providers - they know exactly what was on the paper, [but] there are things that we promised the participants [which] didn't materialise and it was not because we lied to them or we didn't care, but I think some of the service providers misled us.

In sum, more work was needed by Spirals to ensure that what was proposed was followed through. Moreover, the relationship that Spirals as the leading organisation had with the other service providers that it collaborated with needed to be improved in this instance to include an understanding by both parties about the details of their collaboration. The statement by Theresa Edlmann that the YEP skills training was not needs-based highlights the way in which the programme itself could not carry out its purpose of promoting the visions of the participants in full. The fact that collaboration within Grahamstown was a difficult endeavour shows why some of the skills training was as poor as it was. Thami Matiwana's admission that the skills training could have benefited from extra research shows us additional levels of work that the project might have needed to in order to provide clarity for the participants about what was being proposed to them. Having a memorandum of understanding that could be continually and clearly negotiated between The Spirals Trust and the service providers could have given the organisation more leeway to challenge work by the service providers if they did not feel it was appropriate. The point here is that what was agreed in the beginning was not sufficient and the details of what the training would entail needed to be negotiated between the participants, The Spirals Trust and the service providers at the beginning of the skills training phase of the project. This would have provided the necessary space for a 'check up' to make sure that what was being proposed to the participants was relevant to their interests.

4.2.6 Sustainability and Continuity

This section looks at issues of sustainability and continuity in this type of development work. The organisational challenges that The Spirals Trust faced and their impact on the project as a whole are explored. Additionally, the tension between following a rigid project plan and working organically to address the evolving needs of a project are shown.

Some of the participants complained about lack of ongoing support and continuity in the YEP. As the YEP wound down at the end of 2007, the project was handed over to FAMSA, which had been one of the organisations with which Spirals had collaborated during the YEP. FAMSA had engaged with the YEP by providing workshops on personal awareness in the first phase of the project. The participants had created a passing relationship with the organisation at this stage but their relationship did not develop to the level of their relationship with The Spirals Trust who were the home base for the YEP proceedings as a whole. Because the participants had not created a strong relationship with FAMSA, having the project handed over to them felt like they were starting from scratch. Some participants felt a sense of abandonment. Additionally, they called into question FAMSA's way of working as their new leading organisation, commenting that 'FAMSA is disorganised, this year they just left us in the middle of somewhere'. This has been a key difficulty for the participants, some of whom still assert that they need more support to make something sustainable from the skills that they have learnt. The participants also commented on a lack of transparency in their relationship with The Spirals Trust. A lack of ongoing communication with The Spirals Trust presented a crucial aspect of this lack of continuity. The handing over of the project to FAMSA left some of the participants feeling vulnerable and abandoned which in turn affected their ability to successfully launch small businesses. They also spoke of the need to continually access links and networks in order to sustain their practices. Lack of these links posed the threat of leaving the participants without productive inroads into the community to support their initiatives; support they were not confident FAMSA could provide.

What started off as an opportunity to learn a skill and translate it into a viable option for generating income and livelihood turned out to be an overwhelming experience for some participants in which things did not hold together very well. A sense of being dumped in the middle of nowhere is expressed by one of the participants:

> Sicelo Mahali: Me, I am feeling like after they provide those trainings or skills, they said we have to start our own businesses, but even the workshops [in which they taught us] business skills, it wasn't like enough time [to prepare people to]

> start their own businesses when they have never, never been in a business. So after then they didn't come back and check you see, how far we are … So I'm feeling like they left us, like in middle of nowhere, just give you your camping things and you will see what you will eat.

There is a real sense of abandonment within this extract in which the participant expresses that he was ill-equipped for the journey and left to find his own way.

At this point it becomes important to illustrate the complexity of such issues: who should be held responsible for the lack of success of their businesses? Should the participants be blamed for their inability to translate the skills learnt into successful businesses, or can the training that was provided be seen as the limiting factor? When I suggested to participants that perhaps part of development is reaching a point where you start to develop on your own, participants responded that they were not ready for this stage.

> Smangaliso Nxadi: Not yet because we didn't get the skills that we wanted so we still need those skills and we need some opportunities too.

These skills and opportunities include aspects such as the need for 'business education'. This refers to the participants' feelings that they still need more education in learning how to run a business. Lack of money to fuel their business was also mentioned which linked to the participants' concerns around the need to find and rent a 'space for a business'. The participants referred to the need for ongoing support in order to accomplish their objectives. The lack of this support was seen as a threat to their progress. The lack of follow up to gauge where the participants were points to mismanagement of the project in the sense that these inexperienced youth embarking on creating their own businesses for the first time needed a lot of nurturing to support their efforts.

When looking at the participants' reflections on the sustainability of the project, responses followed a simple pattern: those who had been a part of ongoing projects that included training in the service sector felt that the process that they had been through has taken on a life of its own and manifested in positive ways in their lives, while those who had received skills training with a view to starting up their own businesses were dissatisfied. What is particularly striking about those who had positive experiences is that they perceive their success as their own, rather than as a result of what the organisation did for them. They have developed confidence in their own abilities:

> Nomfundo Bikitsha: Mna [me] I think the work is sustainable because I'm here today, as a person who had a dream. So for me it's about … I stood up because I

> wanted to do this, so I stood up so I think to me it worked. In the future I see myself being appreciated because I have developed so many people and helped those people who are in need, so I see myself there and I also see myself as having my own old age home and my own preschool.
>
> Nonhle Kunutu: And for me too, it works because while I was growing I was wanting, I was dreaming of becoming a social worker so I think no, it's time, and in future I wish to see myself having my own project.
>
> Nolwazi Bam: Mna [me] I think it helped me because last year I was going to sit and do nothing. It helps a lot to me because I've gained a lot of skills …. I want to be a nurse and now my dreams are getting realised because things that nurses do, I've seen them in hospice, so in order for me to get what I want I must take action ... that's all.

This is positive in that the empowerment is not perceived by the participants as outside themselves, but rather as intrinsically connected to their efforts. When celebrating these projects the participants are in fact celebrating their own efforts as well as acknowledging the support the received.

At first glance the division between those who were satisfied with the process and those who were not would seem to be along gender lines. All the participants quoted above are female while most of those who were disgruntled about the process were male. However, on reflection it seems that is was the nature of the skills training received that affected perceptions, regardless of gender. While most female participants took part in the projects which linked them up to existing development initiatives, those female participants who did training with a view to start up their own businesses also felt unhappy. Consider this female participant who started off with clear dreams:

> Buyiswa Sehlude: I wanted to be a teacher and that dream was not realised. The youth thing emerged and then I wanted to be a part of it. And then I picked sewing then I knew that I would have my own place there and I will sew there and sell my things there.[8]

However, after the skills training in leather craft and sewing this female participant faced difficulties in trying to translate her skills into a profitable enterprise. Her experience gives insight into the feelings of those for whom the skills training part of the YEP failed – they feel trapped because they have a skill they cannot use, but are faced with the expectation that they should move forward.

The male participants who also chose this kind of skills training face this same dilemma. For them the process was unsustainable:

[8] This quote was translated from Xhosa.

> Sicelo Mahali: No, no it's not sustainable at all and not only le group yethu [in our group] even other groups; ya bona [you see] all the groups, not only us.

After the skills training, participants were encouraged to form groups in order to turn the skills that they have received into businesses. Of the seven participants who were available for feedback, two such groups had been formed, one in which some male participants who had received training in leather, sewing and printing skills hoped to open a shop, and one in which some female participants came together to try to get hold of a Cell C container[9] in which they could sell cell-phone products and airtime and run a public phone while also promoting awareness about health and development. These proposed businesses have fallen through for different reasons: the shop which was to sell leather products, clothes sewn by the participants and printed material fell through because, as discussed above, there was little demand for the products the young men learned to sew. The idea for the Cell C container fell through because the company was no longer issuing containers.

The impact of the skills training on the participants has thus differed greatly from one participant to another. The participants who had received service-based training found the YEP experience very valuable, while those who received skills training with the aim to start up businesses have not managed to translate their training into work opportunities. When asked about what they are doing now, the latter group reflected on how they are trying to make links with other service providers in order to make something happen for themselves:

> Sicelo Mahali: Right now I can say we still fail … but we've been discussing these things because the more we talk about these things the more we have to do something about it. So we have been discussing and trying places like Umsombovu[10] so we have looking at things like that and also we want to do something else because this sewing and leather things – this [traditional] Xhosa thing – it doesn't work.
>
> Lonwabo Langa: Ya, for sure, for example when we are working with the students from Rhodes for our business plans[11] and by doing that when we went to Umsombovu [with] our business plan siyazi ba [we know that] we made it and they were like interested - they liked it. I can say from there it was like new experience because before I didn't know … where to start … but now [I have things] I learnt that I still can use in future.

[9] Cell C is a cell-phone service provider. The container would be used as a kiosk that the participants could run.
[10] An organisation set up by government to promote entrepreneurship, job creation, skills development and skills transfer among South Africans between the ages of 18 and 35.
[11] Here the participants refer to the work there are doing with a group of Rhodes University business students who have set up a society that helps young people with their business plans.

Evidently, the YEP process did help these participants establish networks that could help them in the future. However, these networks have not proved to be sufficient to help the participants to realise their entrepreneurial ambitions, at least not at the time of writing. Lack of adequate support structures for young entrepreneurs in the Eastern Cape may have contributed to this failure, making the efforts towards creating sustainable business projects in this region a difficult enterprise.

Participants' comments make it clear that the way that a project ends is as important as the way it starts because it makes an impression on those you have been working with about the importance of the work that you have been engaged with together. If participants feel as though the organisation they have been working closely with suddenly ceases to care about them, the trust that has been built is undone and as a result the process as a whole is undermined. Of course, it may be argued that participants in development initiatives need to eventually 'take ownership' of their own development, but it seems that the way the YEP handled this was inadequate.

To get a full understanding of how the YEP project was wrapped up, I asked Theresa Edlmann what follow up methods were used to find out how the participants were faring. She responded as follows:

> During the year of the implementation of the YEP, broader organisational issues led to a decision to dissolve the [Spirals] Trust and to close the office and so to enable as much sustainability as we could under the pressure of those circumstances we tried to draw on the collaborative relationship-based approach that we'd set up from the beginning in order for there to be a continuity of relationship but also a continuity of input and support for the young people. In as many cases as possible we tried to hand over project groups to partners in other NGOs and some cases I think that it has worked very well and in other cases it was a disaster .

The acknowledgement of the huge discrepancies between the experiences of YEP participants after the project ended leaves much unsaid about the handling of the end of the YEP. Members of the organisation insist that because The Spirals Trust was dissolving at that time, the way in which the YEP was handled was the best that they could do given the circumstances.

> Theresa Edlmann: I really think we did the best we could, we went way beyond the call of duty in trying to do the best we could.

Theresa's comments highlight additional factors, such as the dissolution of the Spirals Trust itself as a factor that compromised the continuity of the project. The issue of continuity needs to be accepted as part of wider issues faced by the organisation. These issues are presented as

insurmountable especially the loss of staff in the organisation which severely jeopardised its ability to stay afloat and fully reach the end of its mandate with the YEP. Despite communicating their situation to the participants, the withdrawal of The Spirals Trust had a significant impact on the sustainability and flow of the project.

4.3 Conclusion

Feedback from the YEP participants highlights important issues that are of relevance to other attempts to promote participatory human development. Firstly, the benefit of personal development as part of the development process is demonstrated. The foregoing discussions suggest that initiatives promoting participatory human development ought to incorporate components which actively seek to promote participants' personal development.

Secondly, the feedback suggests that it may be necessary to provide participants with sustained psychological and emotional support and to make sure that everybody has a space in which to air their frustrations and work with them in positive way. The effort that this may demand on facilitators and coordinators needs to be considered as an important facet of this work.

The ethos of participatory human development and the way in which it seeks to promote a participant-driven process cannot be assumed to be an automatic way of working that will be easily understood or taken up by participants, especially in a context where the participants have had experiences with other development initiatives which have not worked in this way. It is important in work of this nature to continually emphasise democratic and participatory practices and to identify ways in which some participants may be feeling undermined or marginalised.

Skills training that incorporates participants into ongoing projects proved to be more successful than once-off training in particular skills. Discussions with the participants in the YEP and with the facilitators of the YEP highlight issues relating to collaboration with other service providers. The use of a continually negotiated memorandum of understanding when working collaboratively may provide clarity in roles in a way that may lessen the pressure put on the leading organisation in the project. Extra research should also be considered to provide a better picture of what it is that the organisations are offering to participants.

The influence that the funding organisation may have on the nature, design and links that are made through the project should be considered and perhaps be negotiated in order to better serve the objectives of the project. Internal issues that an organisation may be facing need to be communicated clearly to the participants so as not to create a sense of being abandoned which could easily undo the levels of trust and commitment that have been built over months.

The information gained from workshops and interviews with the participants and members of the Spirals staff highlight both instances where the work was successful in its aims and instances where more could have been done to support the participants In the chapter that follows, I relate the above discussion to my earlier discussion of participatory human development in order to see what the experience of the YEP can contribute to an understanding of the necessary components of effective participatory human development.

CHAPTER FIVE: PARTICIPATORY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE YEP: COMPARISONS, DISSONANCES AND THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter relates the information gathered from the workshops and interviews with the participants of the YEP and the staff of The Spirals Trust to my earlier discussion of human and participatory development. The 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project is used as an example of a project that adopted the values of participatory human development. Keeping in mind the themes and questions raised in Chapter Two, the Spirals experience will be reviewed in an effort to unpack the following questions: What insights can the YEP experience give us regarding how participatory human development may best be realised in practice? What additional research does the YEP suggest is needed?

5.1 Personal Development, the Facilitative Burden and the Cultivation of the Ethic of Participation

Personal development can be seen as an important aspect of participatory human development because participatory development seeks to 'stimulate members of the community to take their own decisions and actions, and to review and evaluate themselves' (Botes and Van Rensburg, 2000: 55). It is clear from the interviews and workshops with the YEP participants that they appreciated the emphasis that The Spirals Trust put on personal development as a way of helping participants to 'develop the personal and relational capacity to be able to implement whatever skills they were being trained in' (Edlmann, 29th March 2009). In this way, nurturing self-knowledge and understanding as an essential part of development was an important ingredient of the YEP. Regardless of the limitations of the skills training phase, this personal development aspect of the project is celebrated as valuable by the participants because they learnt to be more self-aware and respond to their context in a responsible way. Through this, the ideal that development should provide people with 'access to tools and information … about the wider context in which they live and work, in order [for them] to make informed and appropriate decisions about their development' (Connell, 1997:251) was upheld.

In order to respond appropriately to the needs of the participants, the personal development phase of the YEP required an unanticipated level of effort from The Spirals Trust. This became clear as the counselling and attention paid to personal experiences that were provided in the early stages of the project, through the series of workshops provided by FAMSA

and Hospice, needed to be carried through in greater intensity in the later stages of the YEP. Emotional support and counselling became a daily part of The Spirals Trust staff members' relationship with the participants. The unforeseen effort of adapting, learning and responding to the needs of the group that had to be done on the part of the organisation in order to support the participants was substantial. This unanticipated aspect of the project was not incorporated into the project conception and funding proposal making this additional work largely unsupported. In particular the facilitators did not benefit from debriefing processes or psychological support that could acknowledge and help relieve the emotional effects that the project demanded on their part.

The YEP highlights the necessity of constant accommodation and adaptation of the process in order to provide adequate support for participants, each of whom came with their own experiences and concerns. The promotion of personal development and the provision of emotional and psychological support was an important way that The Spirals Trust tried to tilt power to the weak 'by using their power to empower those with less power' (Chambers 2005:114). The Spirals experience in this respect provides useful insight into the facilitative aspects that are needed to support this kind of development work. Particularly relevant is the way that conflict within the group was not treated as something that was 'getting in the way of the training' but rather as something that 'enables a squashed and hidden issue to surface and be talked about' (Guijt and Shah, 1998: 67). This is a clear link to the way that in the YEP conflict was not seen as something negative in the process but was understood as 'never only [being] about the event [in particular] but about a lifetime of hurt' (Edlmann, 29th March 2009). Encouraging communication and dialogue in these instances was the way in which this organisation tried to go beyond the anger witnessed in some cases and work collectively towards a solution.

Several issues are of interest regarding this first stage of the YEP. Not only did this phase serve its purpose in terms of trying to support participants' self-knowledge towards their own development, but the continuous and demanding work that it required formed the basis through which participation itself as a value was encouraged in this project. The YEP highlights the way in which the value of participation in itself is not a value that can be assumed to be easily achieved; it is an endeavour that requires significant effort to achieve. Participation is sometimes represented as something that is present, easily attainable and that ought to be defended rather than something that needs to be cultivated and carefully encouraged. It is not always acknowledged that participation in itself requires significant effort. In addition to this, the idea that members of a community ought to participate in their own development may be foreign to

many poor communities themselves. The apartheid era with its decades of violence (direct, structural and otherwise) undermined the humanity of the majority of the South African population, leaving an indelible imprint on the youth of this country. Continuing poverty, inequality and the marginalisation of the poor in South Africa has stripped many young people of a sense of agency in a context that has few healthy inroads into society. Furthermore, many developmental initiatives in the past and in the current democratic dispensation promoted a form of development that was 'top-down' and required little input from the participants or alternatively, involved the making of many promises which were subsequently not kept. The challenges of promoting participation in contexts that have difficult histories are revealed by Botes and van Rensburg (2000:51) who point out that South Africa does not have a 'social tradition supportive of participation' and that poor technology inhibits effective service delivery.

These circumstances all make the promotion of participatory human development complex. In the case of the YEP, the participants' expectations and frustrations were partly the result of previous development experiences where the ethic of participation was misunderstood, mismanaged, ineffective or not present at all. Participation was also undermined by power differentials in this project resulting in instances where the participants were silent, compliant or felt pressured into accepting what was being made available, even when it was not necessarily in line with their preferences. The YEP did not always succeed in creating an atmosphere in which those present felt 'safe' enough to contribute or to challenge The Spirals Trust. It required considerable effort on the part of the facilitators to even acknowledge let alone try to work satisfactorily with issues related to participation that surfaced. These circumstances made promoting participatory human development very difficult. The influence that institutional procedures had on the levels of participation in this project will be discussed in the next section.

5.2 Degrees of Participation: Navigating Institutional Demands

The conversation about degrees of participation that is thoroughly explored in the literature on participatory development and briefly discussed in Chapter Two is significantly reflected in the process of the 2006/7 YEP. The definition that captures the strongest degree that participation can take place in a project describes participation as an active process in which beneficiary groups 'influence [the] direction and execution of development projects' in order to 'enhance their wellbeing in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish' (Parfitt, 2004: 539). The YEP did not fully succeed in achieving this level of participation. The impetus behind this initiative did not come from the participants themselves, but from concerned organisations outside the community who responded to the Urban

Livelihood Survey Assessment which identified Tantyi as an area desperately needing support for unemployed youth (The Spirals Trust, 2006/7:18-22). The fact that the actual motivation for this initiative was not the result of the mobilisation of the youth of the Tantyi themselves may have undermined the extent to which a greater level of participation could have been realised in this project. A question needs to be asked at this point – how much does the definition of a societal issue from the outside diminish the possibility of the issue being addressed in a participatory manner? Presumably, a response from the affected community itself would best support the community's particular vision of development. Perhaps the key concern here is not who initiated the project, but whether or not an externally defined project manages to create sufficient opportunities for the affected community to steer the project. While it may be ideal for development projects to be both initiated and driven by members of the affected community, if the context is one in which levels of agency have been severely undermined, the spark to change things may well have to come from outside. Does the presence of an outside facilitator in this case always spell trouble? Or is the issue perhaps the means through which the outside facilitator conducts the project, and whether time and care is taken to make it a process reflective of the participants' needs and preferences?

In the YEP, the level of participation can be critiqued not only by looking at the origins of the project, but perhaps more importantly by looking at the 'direction and influence' that the participants had in the programme (Parfitt, 2004: 539). As a project that had its origins in NGO responses to a report on the marginalisation of the youth in Tantyi, there was to some extent a predetermined agenda. By determining at the outset the phases and some of the content of the project (first personal development in various forms and then skills training), the project limited the extent to which participants could determine the way forward. The facilitation in this case followed a particular structure threatening the balance between 'guidance, support and facilitation' (Connell, 1997: 248). In this case, there is an 'inherent contradiction between operating at the periphery whilst maintaining control from the centre' (Nelson and Wright, 1995: 186). This refers to the fact that the development was happening in marginalised parts of the Grahamstown community while the funding and general direction of the project came from the Premier's Fund through the Eastern Cape NGO coalition and The Spirals Trust.

The tension between making the project comply with funders' requirements while also being relevant to the Tantyi Youth can be seen in this instance. This is particularly relevant when it comes to the skills training aspect of the YEP where particular skills were suggested from which the participants could choose. Regardless of the instances in which what the participants wanted matched what was available, this aspect can be critiqued as one that gave restrictive

boundaries to the 'valued options' of the participants (Gasper, 2004:166). This is shown in the staff feedback, where Edlmann commented that the options offered were not really determined by all the needs of the participants. This point can be given more weight when looking at some of the skills training components that were problematic and did not fulfil expectations. Problematic skills training opportunities were ones where the participants were subjected to training that did not open up sustainable employment and opportunities for them. The legitimacy of the skills training in these cases is questioned. At this stage, the participants did not feel as if they were part of a process of inclusion and participation, but instead had a sense of resignation and opted to get whatever they could out of the process despite its weaknesses and their lack of influence. Their staying with the process even though in their own articulations they were just being 'shuffled around' shows that they tried to gain something of value from this project despite its clear limitations. The sustainability of the project for them is deficient because there was not enough time and space to generate more genuine participation which 'incorporated the local knowledge and commitment necessary for sustainability and self-reliance' (Nelson and Wright, 1995: 186).

Questions about the extent to which power is reconfigured towards those who do not have it in participatory development are deeply tied up with concerns about the institutionalisation of participatory human development in this case. As an organisation that relied on the funding made available by the Eastern Cape Poverty Alleviation Fund through the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition, The Spirals Trust was bound by procedures which influenced its proposal, design and the time frames in which the project was to be carried out. As Parfitt (2004:548) points out, funders

> want a clearly delimited project that would serve to meet the procedural obligation for consultation, not a process that could throw up challenges and possibilities beyond the bounds of the project that they had in mind.

The tension between product and process is revealed in this quote. This is an issue that reveals the tensions which characterise work of this nature: how can an organisation gain the funding and support needed to make their work possible without having this work undermined by the eroding influence of bureaucratic compliance? Realistically, how does an organisation manage to be responsive to the needs and preferences of participants in a terrain that requires them to follow orders from funders? What other options are available to them in terms of the way in which they negotiate their way of working and how can these be nurtured for the benefit of all involved? What challenges do these questions pose to the realisation of participatory human development? There are no easy answers to these questions. The extent to which an

organisation's vision is compromised by the channels through which it gains its funding need to be weighed by the organisation itself in order to assess whether the likely compromises are worth it. This is perhaps easier said than done when looking at the NGO context in which survival so often depends on outside funding. However, in this case there were instances in which the organisation could have worked better to protect the participants and provide a less alienating experience for them. As the YEP facilitators themselves admit, the organisation ought to have put mechanisms in place to ensure that the collaborative relationships that they entered into as part of the requirements of the funders functioned better.

5.3 Transformation, Power and Politics: What Change?

Another element that may come under scrutiny when relating the work of The Spirals Trust to the literature on participatory and human development is the extent to which the skills training opportunities were 'system maintaining' or 'system transforming' in nature (De Beer in Svenskerud, 2003: 24). De Beer uses the term 'system maintaining' to describe a form of development that does not challenge class and power or the systems that perpetuate inequality. In contrast, 'system transforming' interventions challenge the status quo. In the case of the YEP, it is not clear that the project as a whole can be described as 'system transforming'. Some participants had positive experiences related to the skills training component of the YEP. The participants who have been trained to become community development practitioners under the Centre for Social Development and care givers under Hospice received training that allowed them to do important and valuable work in their community. The sentiment shared by one participant that she can now help others to develop themselves because she herself was given a chance to develop herself is a significant comment that strongly shows a healthy perpetuation of the ideals of participation and development within this project. By collaborating with valuable networks in her community this woman is able to exert positive influence in her life and in the lives of the people that surround her. But even in the light of this experience, how far can we say that this experience has sufficiently enabled participants to challenge the systems of inequality that continue to have a grip on their community? For example, to what extent have they been empowered to find ways to work with members of the Tantyi community to challenge the government itself to create better living conditions?

These questions reveal another layer of the YEP to be scrutinized. Yes, there is value in what they have achieved, but how far does the work that they have been a part of interrogate class and other power inequities? By stepping up to the challenge of being a part of the YEP these participants have taken on the responsibility of trying to influence change in their

environment. However, this outlook may easily perpetuate the myth that for transformation to happen all that is needed is sufficient mobilisation and a community can achieve anything (Cleaver in Williams, 2004: 561). Let us revisit important questions that Nelson and Wright pose to evaluate whether the development left behind in a project in 'system maintaining' or 'system transforming'. They ask whether development

> enables people traditionally objectified and silenced, to be recognised as legitimate 'knowers', to extend their understanding of power relations, widen their choices and determine their ideas of development? And are such 'people' centred perspectives transforming the apparatus of development … or does the flow of events surrounding participatory development produce side effects which incorporate marginalised people more effectively within a decentralised system of power, working invisibly and behind our backs (1995:18).

The aspect of 'incorporating people more effectively within a decentralised system of power working invisibly behind our backs' rings particularly true in this case. The participants who are now working in community development and palliative care could be said to have been incorporated into an ongoing system, decentralised from the systems of power, working to ameliorate the conditions which have resulted from ongoing poverty and a decaying health system in South Africa. The other participants whose skills training did not translate into viable options have not been able to influence their context successfully. They have continued to use the influence of the networks that were made available through this project to try and make successful inroads into their community. They have no cushion to lessen the stress of being a part of a project that did not provide them with a sustainable skill. The lack of success of their small businesses have left them still knocking on doors trying to figure out ways to get absorbed into the system. The frustration that is shown in their reflections reveals another experience of developmental dead-ends for them. How can the process that they have been through support them to challenge the status quo? Moreover, what spaces are there for them to challenge and question the development process that they have been through?

5.4 Conclusion

The YEP experience is a useful example to study when investigating issues relevant to the practice of participatory human development in post-apartheid South Africa. The specific issues that arose during the YEP provide insights and questions regarding the practical implementation of participatory human development. The importance of nurturing personal development as a necessary prerequisite for cultivating the ethic of participation in participatory human

development is evident in this project. The effort that it takes to promote the aspect of personal development is also revealed in this project showing the strain that it can have on facilitators and the organisation if they are unsupported. The YEP experience additionally suggests that development initiatives can only be participatory if this participatory ethic is continually worked towards through facilitative processes that continue to expose and negotiate power dynamics at play. Particularly telling is the portrayal of the many levels at which the ethic of participation needs to be undertaken in a participatory human development projects, in order to fully satisfy its strongest definitions, and the various factors that may bolster or dilute these aims. The YEP experience also demonstrates the eroding impact that compliance with funders' requirements can have. These challenges pose critical questions about what broader support is needed to encourage this work. Lastly, the YEP experience suggests that pedestrian understandings of transformation and empowerment need to be made bolder in the practice of participatory human development. It is essential that we push the agenda of participatory human development towards a realisation of development that does not simply incorporate the poor into decentralised pockets of action, but also holds the broader social structures accountable and amenable to the interests of the poor. Only through this can participatory human development become a means of transforming society in a way that results in the creation of a responsive society shaped to protect the interests of its most vulnerable members.

As indicated at the outset, this research relates the 2006/7 Tantyi Youth Empowerment Project to literature on participatory human development, exploring the questions and challenges that the YEP poses to the practice of participatory human development. In particular, the YEP highlights how difficult it is to put into practice the deepest levels of participation advocated in theoretical discussions of participatory human development. A constant interrogation of power needs to be seen as an integral part of this work. Awareness of the nature of relationships formed as a part of participatory processes is necessary in order to investigate and address power dynamics that may dilute the aims of the project. Furthermore, the challenges that bureaucratic compliance pose to participatory human development need to be properly understood at the onset of projects. This need to be done in order to assess the potential damage that narrowly or rigidly defined contracts can have on the flexibility and adaptability of projects that seek to be responsive to the needs of participants.

This research also highlights some additional issues that have received less attention in the literature. The discussion above suggests that more research is needed to explore the strain experienced by facilitators and organisations as a result of the need to provide emotional and

psychological support to participants. We need to understand what kind of training and support is necessary to support facilitators and organisations in development initiatives such as this one.

An understanding of the conditions and efforts that are necessary to promote 'system transforming' development in participatory human development is also required. A question that could help in this endeavour is: What strategies and broader support are needed to encourage the transformation advocated as part of participatory human development?

Further research on organisations that have used different strategies towards participatory human development would be helpful in drawing out an understanding of the preconditions necessary to satisfy the objectives of participatory human development. Questions for exploration include: How if at all have organisations managed to navigate restrictive funding contracts in a way that has served the objectives of participatory human development? What alternative strategies have been employed towards this endeavour? What key lessons need to be learnt in this area, in order to support this work?

Writings on participatory human development provide a well thought out response to inequality, poverty and marginalisation in developing nations. Discussions on both participatory and human development concentrate on addressing the 'poverty of choices' in an underdeveloped context whilst promoting changes in power relations within society as a whole. Participatory human development encourages processes that seek to reshape our society in a way that is cognisant of and responsive to its most vulnerable members. The sentiment shared by one of the YEP participants in which she describes herself as a developer developing people because she herself was developed is a powerful statement. It shows the spiralling impact that one person can make in their community when equipped with effective tools, networks, support and determination. Thinking through the issues raised in this thesis can help practitioners understand the support necessary to better implement participatory human development. Further research is needed on this so that what participatory human development requires on the part of organisations that wish to promote it and on the part of bodies that wish to support it can be elaborated upon with more nuance and insight.

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APPENDIX 1: Participant Workshop Plan

1) General Introduction

I thank the participants for making themselves available. I stress that I have come in my own capacity and I wish to learn from them as they are experts of their experience with The Spirals Trust. The key question that I hope to pose to them all is what we can learn from their experience that can help initiatives such as this one in the future. I stress that the participants have the right to feel free to express their views because they are an important perspective on what we can learn from The Spiral's way of working. They are no wrong or right answers only the experiences of those who have been collaborating with The Spirals Trust. The general workshop plan is shown to the participants but this is stressed as a guideline to help us get started. If at any time the conversations we are engaged in go in a particular direction that is important to the participants then we should feel free to follow each other in the hope that what is of most significance to the participants be drawn out in the process.

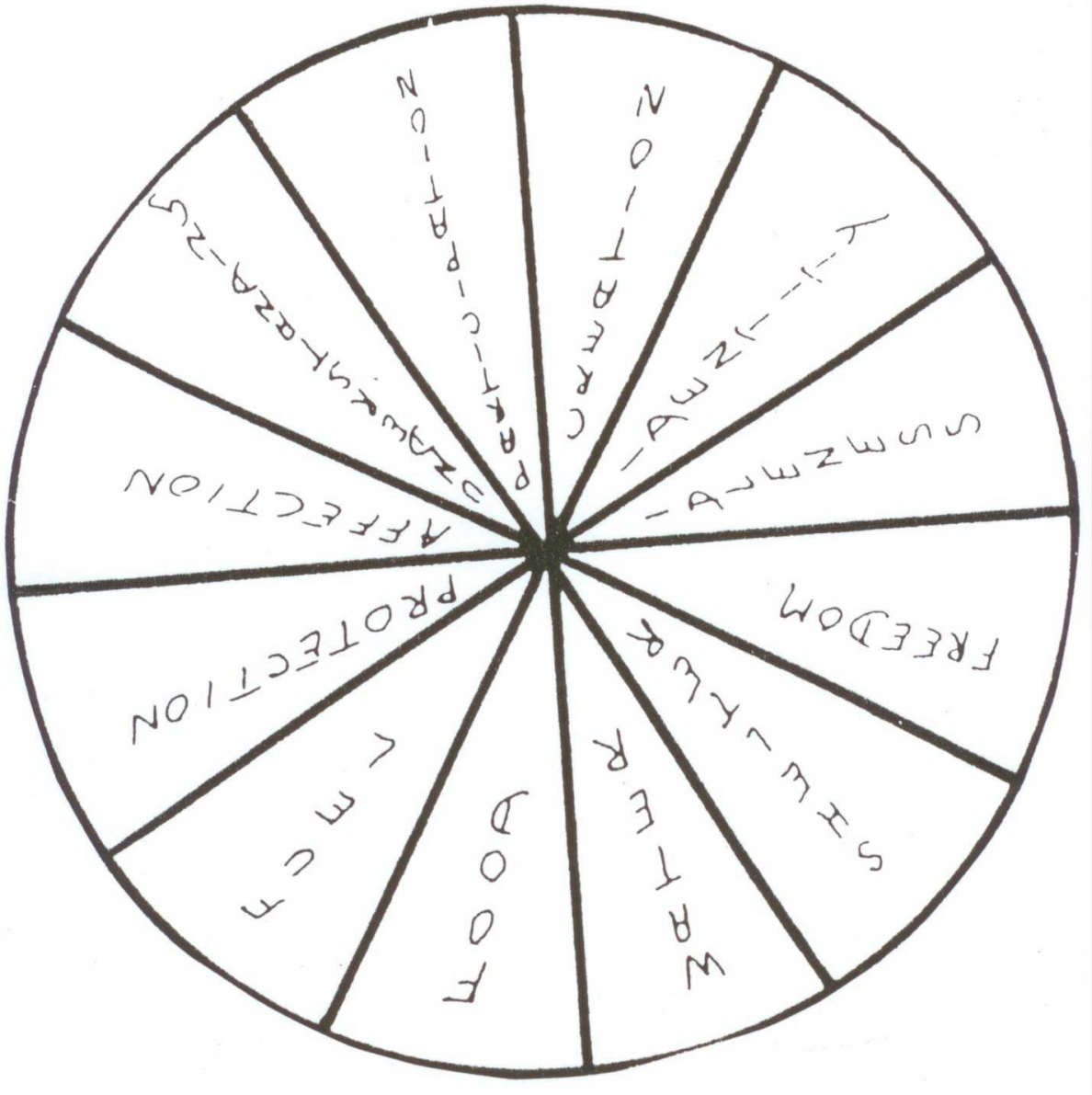
2) Warming Up

Participants are encouraged to work as a group and do a SWOT analysis of their experience with The Spirals Trust. This includes documenting the strengths of the process, the weaknesses that they experienced, the opportunities that have been afforded to them as a result of collaborating with The Spirals Trust and the threats or barriers that they have experienced towards the opportunities generated.

3) Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs

The group is encouraged to think about the needs in their lives that their collaboration with The Spirals Trust has addressed. A wheel of fundamental needs (Hope, Timmel and Hodzi, 1995) is presented to the group to jump start ideas on some perspectives on the fundamental needs of a human being. The YEP group are familiar with this wheel as it was used as part of their YEP training. This will provide continuity for them and will help them engage further with the ideas on fundamental needs by questioning what The Spirals Trust has been able to address. Each person is invited to take a number of coloured cards and write down a word or an expression that captures the needs that have been addressed for them. When each participant is

finished they are encouraged to place their words or expressions on the wall as a collage. Each person is to be mindful of similar words and expressions that their colleagues have put up and try place their words next to them.



4) Role of the Spirals Trust

A similar process is invited this time asking the participants to write down the role they think The Spirals Trust played in their experience. Simple question posed: who is Spirals to you? A grouped or clustered collage was to be made of their viewpoints.

5) Participants' Role in their Experiences

The participants are then asked to think through their role in their experiences; what aspects did they feel they had to contribute in order to make their relationships with The Spirals Trust possible? A clustered collage was to be made of these opinions.

6) Brainstorming the Relationship

Each person is given a piece of paper and is asked to consider the following: if your relationship with The Spirals Trust together makes 100% how much do they think that Spirals contributed and how much do they think that they contributed to make 100%? Under each given percentage examples of what they contributed and of what Spirals contributed are written down below.

Focus Group Interviews

1) Contribution to Experiences

The participants are asked if they would be willing to share their opinions on a tape recorder about how much they felt they contributed to their experiences. Participants have the right to pass at any time they do not feel like participating

Question: How much influence did you have in your experience of the YEP.

2) Personal Journey

We reach the part of the workshop in which the participants are invited to share their whole journey with The Spirals Trust. It is explained to the participants that for everybody there might be different things that are of importance to them and that stand out. Questions are placed on the board. It is stresses that these questions are just being used as guidelines to help us think through the stages that they have been through, and that they should feel free to talk about things of significance to them.

The Following Questions Were Set as Guidelines:

1.What were your expectations at the beginning of your relationship with The Spirals Trust?

2.What did you participate in as part of your journey with The Spirals Trust?

3.How if any way have these activities contributed to you?

4.What needs has your relationship with The Spirals Trust addressed?

5.What things do you feel still need to be addressed?

6.Where are you now?

7.Where do you want to be in the future?

8. Do you feel like the work you have created with The Spirals Trust was sustainable. Why?

Participants negotiate amongst themselves how they choose to reflect on their journey or respond to the questions. In instances where the participants allude to a particular experience without delving further into the details I try to sensitively ask questions that can draw out more information on their experience.

Closure

Participants are thanked for their participation more snacks and beverages are served. Forms stating that their feedback can be used as part of my research on Spirals are filled in. Participants are told that before I finalise my research a document of their feedback will be made available to them for their approval. Those in need of transport money to get back home are given it.

APPENDIX 2: Questions Posed to Spirals Staff

The themes that emerged from the participant workshops are documented in this section highlighting the questions that were posed to the Spirals Staff.

1) The Need to Set Up Front Understanding of What the Project Entails

- In order to provide a bit of background to the YEP can you tell us a bit about how the project was presented to prospective participants?
- Were you aware of some of the participants' expectations at the beginning of the project? If so how did you navigate these?

2) Power Dimensions

- Were you aware of any group dynamics in the YEP group? Or between you as one of the primary facilitators and the YEP group? How easy was it to get the participants to contribute to the process?
- In what ways did you try and create an open space where those involved could share their views?
- What difficulties did you face in this endeavour?

3) *Skills Training: The Issue of Collaborative Networking and Having a Common Ethic*

- What was the vision behind the element of skills training that formed a component of the YEP process?
- How were the service providers chosen that The Spirals Trust collaborated with in the skills training? Were there any criteria involved?
- How much were the participants involved in designing the type of skills training that they received?
- What follow up methods were used to find out how the participants were faring? What issues did you come across with regard to the training?

4) Personal Attention and Personal Growth as Key

- What was the vision behind the first phase (personal development) of the participants' journey?
- How was their collaboration with other service providers managed to this aim?
- What kind of work went into this effort?

5) Lack of Continuity

- How did your involvement with the YEP come to an end?
- What kind of pressures did you face at this time?
- How was the hand over of the project to FAMSA handled?
- What issues came up with regard to this?
- In retrospect how do you think you could have managed it better?