A REFLECTIVE MULTIPLE CASE STUDY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT RHODES UNIVERSITY

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AZOLA BENITA DOROTHEA BOBO

ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5174-9084

Supervisor

PROFESSOR JACQUELINE AKHURST

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Abstract

Using a social constructivist approach, within the social action model of community psychology, this research interrogates the features of successful community engagement partnerships that exist within the context of higher education. It draws on the co-management model that the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) division proposes, where partnerships are seen to be mutually beneficial. This research further interrogates whether the principles of community engagement that RUCE propose play out in reality, and whether systems of power are deconstructed, in working towards more equitable engagements.

Drawing on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Residence Programme for case studies, this research used a reflective multiple case study design in attempting to answer the research question. Four partner groups (i.e., 4 community partners and 4 community engagement representatives) were selected for this research. Each participant was interviewed twice (with a 6-month time gap) and also participated in two focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the findings.

In taking a social justice approach, it can be argued that RUCE has made strides towards forming collaborative partnerships based on the ethics of *ubuntu* and aspects of transformative learning, which may lead to the decolonisation of higher education. However, critical engagement with the research findings suggests that in many cases the principles that RUCE propose are aspirational. More work needs to be done with both students and community partners to develop the kinds of partnerships that RUCE aspires to. This research provides valuable insight into how carefully managed community engagement partnerships in higher education have the potential to contribute to the transformation agenda of higher education institutions, while promoting equitable societies.

Declaration

I, Azola Benita Dorothea Bobo, declare that this research is as result of my own work, except where otherwise stated. I have given the full acknowledgement of the sources referred to in the text. This study has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any university.

This thesis has been formatted according to the APA 6th Edition referencing technique, as the bulk of the writing was completed prior to the release of the APA 7th Edition.

Azola Benita Dorothea Bobo

December 2020

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To God be the glory!

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KoGaba, oThithiba, abantu bomlambo, oMenyezwa, oCihoshe, oMsuthukazi, oMjobi, oNozinga, amaNgqosini – ndithi camagu!

Ndicamagushe nakoTolo, oZulu, oMchenge!

Black child, your dreams are **VALID**! Ntinga!!

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Dr Sizwe Mabizela. Thank you for seeing me and believing in me. Inkulu into owandenzela yona, ndiswele amazwi.

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List of Abbreviations

ABCD:	Asset-Based Community-led Development
CE:	Community Engagement
DSD:	Department of Social Development
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
HE:	Higher Education
NPO:	Non-Profit Organisation
S@M:	Siyakhana@Makana
RU:	Rhodes University
RUCE:	Rhodes University Community Engagement

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research is conducted in the field of community psychology. Community psychology uses a collaborative approach to research, partnering with community members (in the case of this research, both students and community partners) who participate in the research process, through building relationships with them (Visser, 2012). This research is based upon the social action model of interventions in community psychology. This model aims to generate participation and community responsibility (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001), with the aim of bringing about change through mobilising community members (Visser, 2012). Self-determination and the value of empowerment are emphasised; using a bottom-up approach in trying to tackle structural inequalities and influence change at the community level. This model recognises that community partners have a say in managing their relationships and have the capacity to act for themselves. Furthermore, community partners can recognise and draw on their own assets to address local challenges collaboratively (Preece, 2013a). More detail and commentary on community psychology and the social action model are presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

In this introductory chapter I introduce the reader to the current schooling situation in South Africa and map out the geographical area in which this research is located. What follows is a description of community engagement (CE) at Rhodes University (RU) with a detailed explanation of the volunteer programme that has been used as the unit of analysis for this research. The background to the problem being addressed by this research is explored, and the purpose and relevance of this research is elaborated on. I go on to detail the research approach used in conducting this research and outline my personal motivations for conducting this research. Key definitions of concepts used in this research are briefly explored, and the chapter ends with a brief overview of the thesis.

The current schooling situation in South Africa

"Education plays a positive role in reducing inequality" (Amnesty International, 2020, p. 16). This is of particular importance in South Africa as there is evidence of intergenerational mobility remaining low, with inequalities being passed down from generation to generation

(Amnesty International, 2020). The South African constitution provides for the right to access to education, however, does not provide for the quality of this education (Hendricks, 2008). The country's socio-economic inequalities are mirrored in the education system (Amnesty International, 2020). While there has been an increase in access to education post-1994, inequalities in the education sector remain deeply entrenched with a lack of proper infrastructure being one of the main reasons (Osman, 2015). The expansion of access to education has not always meant the access to good, quality education for all. The South African school system is one of the most unequal systems in the world, when it comes to the quality of education. There exists a wide gap between the test scores of the top 20% of schools in the country with the rest. The country's education system is characterised by a model of dysfunction and inequity (Nomsenge, 2018).

The history of education in South Africa continues to shape the current system (Amnesty International, 2020). Historical racial inequalities in the provision of education in South Africa continue to structure schooling in divisive ways. Shortcomings in the material resourcing of state schools hinder learners' access to quality education and as a result further exacerbate the cycle of poverty as poor children in these schools do not get life chances that are comparable to children in well-resourced schools (Hendricks, 2008).

The Eastern Cape province has serious challenges with poor infrastructure (Amnesty International, 2020), with many of the schools being small farm schools, mud structures, and others in a state of disrepair (Hendricks, 2008). Many of the schools in the Eastern Cape also face problems of access to clean water, safe sanitation, the provision of electricity and sufficient textbooks (Hendricks, 2008).

Educational disparities exist in Makhanda (a small city), where "a few long-established expensive independent schools and well-resourced desegregated state schools exist side by side with a majority of poorly-resourced state schools" (Hendricks, 2008, p. 7). The latter are schools that are in rural and township areas, which are attended almost exclusively by black learners (Hendricks, 2008). Makhanda is characterised by an inequitable educational landscape where three of the twenty most expensive independent schools in South Africa are located (Nomsenge, 2018). These three independent schools combined make up about the same number of high school learners in one state school in Makhanda East (Hendricks, 2008).

In trying to break the cycle of inequalities in provision and scholastic attainment, Osman (2015) proposes that there needs to be a focus on providing good quality early childhood education, through providing early investment in children (Cunha & Heckman, 2007).

The location of this research

This research is located in South Africa, one of the most socioeconomically unequal countries in the world (Amnesty International, 2020). In particular, it is located in Makhanda (previously known as Grahamstown), a city in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa. The province is bordered by the Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces and is one of the three most rural provinces in the country (Hendricks, 2008). It consists of two former homelands, the Transkei, and the Ciskei (Amnesty International, 2020). A homeland is defined as a geographical area that, during the Apartheid era, was demarcated for black South Africans for the purposes of providing prime land for white people and a source of labour for parts of the country. Homelands still tend to be areas that are impoverished more than others (Akhurst, van der Riet & Sofika, 2018). The Eastern Cape is notably one of the poorer provinces in South Africa, having high numbers of impoverished people and people who are unemployed (Hendricks, 2008).

Makhanda is known as a settler city, housing the Settlers' Monument, which is a memorial to the 5 000 British settlers of 1820 – 1821 (i.e., a site of colonial settlement). This area was renowned for several battles between the incoming settlers (particularly farmers) and the indigenous people (Almon, 2015). The apartheid legacy lives on in Makhanda in the way that the city is demarcated. Former all-white suburbs are in what is known as Makhanda West. This area of the town houses the independent and well-resourced state schools. Makhanda East, in contrast, is described as a part of the city, which "is obviously poor, although with islands of relative affluence and some signs of improving infrastructure, including electricity, more tarred roads, and telephones than previously" (Lemon, 2004, p. 278). The majority of state schools are located in Makhanda East, and they are poorly resourced (Hendricks, 2008).

Community engagement at Rhodes University

The goal of CE is "to build on existing assets in order to construct a resource-led foundation for development which is controlled by the community rather than external agents" (Preece, 2013b, p. 990). What this means for CE at RU is working in collaborative ways with community partners, in finding asset-based solutions to local challenges. Effective engagement with communities leads to relationships that are mutually beneficial in nature, and shared responsibility develops amongst all stakeholders (Netshanadama, 2010). This means working in ethical ways, towards more equitable power relations.

Power is embedded in CE, however this is not necessarily acknowledged or explicitly addressed in much of the CE literature. The functioning of power in CE has been defined by Donaldson and Daughtery (2011, p. 84) as "a set of relationships between people and/or systems where power is derived from Actor A's control of resources that Actor B needs or strongly desires". Based on the recommendations of the White Paper of HE Transformation (1997) to make CE part of the HEIs' agenda (Bengu, 1997), there has been a recognition of the importance of building collaborative partnerships between universities and the communities they seek to engage with (Preece, 2012). Collaboration focuses on reciprocity, recognising the assets that each party contributes to the collaborative relationship, and positions universities as partners as opposed to sole providers (Preece, 2012). In this way, community partners are not seen as 'passive beneficiaries' of engagement activities, but rather are able to contribute to and define the engagement (Mitchell, 2008). These partnerships will be most beneficial when all parties' contributions are positive both for the university and the community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

The Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) Division is responsible for institutionalising CE at the institution (Rhodes University Community Engagement 2020a). RUCE was established in the early 2000s and has since grown to have a staff complement of 10 full-time staff members. Of these 10 staff members, 3 are employed in academic positions. RUCE has managed to establish a national presence, participating in the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF), and hosting an annual national symposium that attracts both local and international CE practitioners. RUCE is also engaged in numerous national and international collaborations. The principles and the approach used by RUCE include mutuality (all CE activities are mutually beneficial for

all parties involved); using the asset-based approach to community development (working from a strategic model of engagement that recognises your own and the assets of others from which to build); and involving joint learning, action, and reflection (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Residence Programme

The ECD Residence Programme is a volunteer programme that was started in 2016 by RUCE. It is called a *residence* programme due to it being primarily for students living in both on-campus and off-campus residential accommodation, referred to as halls of residence. Halls of residence, hereafter referred to as halls, are defined as groups of student residence accommodation buildings, ranging from 3 – 5, within proximity to one another that make up a hall. Most of the halls consist of both male and female residences, however some of the halls consist of male-only or female-only residences. Students in a hall share a central dining facility and have a shared culture (i.e., engage in various extramural activities that unite them). All but one of these halls offer on-campus accommodation for students. The Oppidan hall consists of students living off-campus, in various areas around Makhanda. These students all rent private accommodation in Makhanda West and Makhanda East. Although these students all live-in private accommodation, they still have shared elements of being a student, and come together from time to time to engage in sporting and other cultural activities that unite them, hence being grouped as a hall.

In previous years, the ECD centres were part of a different volunteer programme also run by RUCE, which included a variety of community-based organisations. It was during RUCE's strategic planning session, at the end of 2015, that the idea came about to start a new programme for ECDs, based on the reasons outlined above. The new programme and its aims were communicated to all the ECD centres and RU halls of residences. These ECD centre and halls of residences welcomed the opportunity to join the programme, forming partnerships.

At the onset, the programme followed the Siyakhana@Makana (S@M) 19-week project planning cycle. The aim of S@M is to introduce students to community development processes, while working closely with community partners on a shared goal. S@M is a 19-

week long process, with each week being dedicated to a specific project task (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

Role players in the ECD Residence Programme are a RUCE coordinator, a volunteer manager, and a CE representative. A RUCE coordinator is a staff member at RUCE who is appointed to oversee the running of the programme. Their duties include working closely with both the community partners and CE representatives; keeping open lines of communication; organising meetings, workshops, and training opportunities, and organising transport for community partners to get to campus and for CE representatives to get to the ECD centres.

A volunteer manager is a community partner who is the main contact person for their organisation. Each organisation takes on the responsibility of selection or electing a volunteer manager. They are called a volunteer *manager* as one of their main responsibilities is to "manage" the students' CE activities in their organisation. Other responsibilities include attending the various meetings, workshops, and training opportunities offered by RUCE; orientating and supervising students when they visit their organisation; providing any organisation specific training that they deem necessary to undertake the volunteering; keeping open lines of communication and working closely with students on identified goals. A volunteer manager may either volunteer for this role or be appointed by their colleagues.

A CE representative is a student who is either selected or elected by their peers for this role. Each residence has their own CE representative with some halls also having this role, at hall level. The residence CE representative is required to oversee the CE activities of their residence only, whereas a hall CE representative is required to supervise the residence CE representatives and coordinate the CE activities of a hall. In the case of one of the halls, there exists a position for both an external CE representative and an internal CE representative. Whereas the external CE representative coordinates the CE activities with external stakeholders (i.e. the community partner and the broader Makhanda community), the internal CE representative coordinates the CE activities with only internal stakeholders (i.e. within the hall and within the broader RU community). The tenure of a CE representative is usually a year, with the option existing of being re-elected or re-selected.

This programme runs as a year-long programme, following the cycle of the RU academic year. RUCE established this programme with two main aims. The first aim was to work in a co-ordinated effort in ECD in Makhanda, with a focus on addressing the crisis in education, as outlined above. The second aim was to provide structured opportunities for students to be involved in CE (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

The S@M project planning cycle can be found in Appendix 1. Week 1 is about establishing relationships and forming a partnership. Here, CE representatives visit their partner organisations for the first time and their community partners do an orientation. Expectations are discussed, which is followed by the signing of an MOU between the CE representatives and the community partner. A sample of this MOU can be found in the S@M handbook (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b). Week 1 ends with the planning of a transect walk, which is a community mapping tool that is used for asset identification (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

The transect walk happens during week 2, where the community partner leads the CE representatives on a walk in the community in which their organisation is situated. During this walk assets are identified and after the walk a map is drawn which outlines them (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020c). This map is a physical representation of the geographical location that the organisation is situated in. It highlights the resources that are available in the area that may be accessed.

Week 3 is about goal identification. The three goals that the community partner has for the year are discussed and one of these goals is chosen to focus on for the year (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020c). This goal is then developed into a Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-based (SMART) goal (Bovend'Eerdt, Botell, & Wade, 2008).

Week 4 is dedicated to joint project planning. The goal that was chosen in the previous week is teased apart into activities, and each person in the partnership is assigned a different activity that they will need to do towards the goal. These activities have time frames. A risk analysis is conducted, and a monitoring plan is put into place (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020c).

During weeks 5 and 6 each partner group presents their planned activities to achieve their goal to the rest of the S@M group and a panel. This panel consists of RUCE staff members as well as carefully selected community members who can provide some insight into the chosen goals. During the presentations, synergies between the groups are identified and, where goals are similar, collaborations between the groups are encouraged (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020c).

Weeks 7 to 12 are the project implementation weeks, where each group actively works on their plans to achieve their goals. During week 13 a meeting is held with all the groups to check and evaluate progress, and to also try to address any potential problems. Thereafter, during weeks 14 – 18 groups continue to work on their goals, and in week 19 a final meeting is held to evaluate the success in reaching these goals (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020c).

The aim of working within the S@M project management cycle for the ECD Residence Programme was to address the infrastructural goals of the ECD centres, contributing to the centre being able to provide a stimulating learning environment for learners. These goals vary from establishing a library for learners, to mobilising community members to clean up a dumpsite next to an ECD centre (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

At the mid-year review meeting, during the pilot year of 2016, the community partners expressed the wish to have more interaction between student volunteers and their learners. In particular, the community partners wanted to include reading activities with their learners as this had been the key feature of the previous volunteer programme that they had been a part of, that they missed. This is how the Reading programme was born. Introducing the Reading programme meant that the ECD Residence Programme had two concurrent processes running alongside each other: S@M and the Reading programme. CE representatives recruited volunteers from their halls who, through weekly volunteering, engaged in reading and various literacy activities at the ECD centres with which they were partnered with (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b).

Each year, the ECD Residence Programme begins with the RUCE coordinator visiting all the community partners to check whether they are still interested in participating in the programme. This process occurs in early January. Once the community partners indicate

interest, they then sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the year ahead. See Appendix 2 for a sample MOU. This MOU outlines the responsibilities of RUCE and of the community partner, as outlined above. Following the completion of the MOU signing process, an annual strategic planning session organised by RUCE is held. This session, typically held during the end of January or the beginning of February, is an opportunity for community partners to initially formulate the goals their organisations have for the year. An example of what the programme for this training session is attached in Appendix 3. The training session that usually takes place during the beginning of March, coordinated by RUCE, is attended by all CE representatives and community partners. Attendance to training is strongly encouraged. During this day-long training session participants are introduced to the principles of CE and the S@M project management cycle.

As part of the training session, the community partners meet the CE representatives they will be working with during that year and exchange contact details. During this initial meeting, each party is given an opportunity to outline the expectations they have from the partnership. This initial meeting is also an opportunity for community partners to introduce their three goals for the year. After the training session CE representatives are encouraged to elicit support from their peers in their halls to support the goals of their community partner. They are also encouraged to keep regular contact with their community partner and visit their centre at least for an hour once a week, during RU term time, to work towards the goal.

Reflection facilitates personal insight (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010) and opens opportunities for deeper, critical thinking (Gasper-Hulvat, 2018). Engaging in reflection is also an opportunity for one to consider their civic participation and its effects (Waldner, McGorry & Widener, 2010). Based on this understanding of reflection, once each quarter, the community partners and CE representatives get together for a reflection meeting facilitated by RUCE staff. During this reflection meeting each partner group outlines what goals they are working on, the progress towards these goals, and successes and challenges thus far. During this reflection meeting the group is encouraged to work together to jointly come up with solutions to the problems that they have identified. Partnerships between the different partner groups are encouraged to pool resources, where there is a similarity of goals.

Halfway through the year, usually in June or July, the community partners get together and have a mid-year review meeting, which is facilitated by RUCE. During this meeting community partners and RUCE staff share what is working and what is not working in the partnership. Jointly, they decide on how they wish to re-shape the partnership going forward for the remainder of the year. In October of each year a celebration ceremony is held, where each partner group showcases their successes for the year. Various RU and community stakeholders are invited to attend this. At the end of the year, usually in November or December the community partners get together again with RUCE staff and reflect on the work done during the year. They share what worked well, what did not work well, and what they wish to change going forward. RUCE takes these recommendations from the meeting and uses some of the feedback to plan for the year ahead.

The first year of the programme, 2016, was a pilot year. During this year 13 ECD centres and one Primary School joined the programme, making a total of 14 community partners. All of these community partners are from Makhanda East. 13 RU halls and 2 residences joined the programme, making a total of 15 RU partners. The total number of partnerships that were established during the pilot year were 15, with one of the ECD centres being partnered with two halls due to there being more RU partners than community partners.

The partnerships were formed through each RU partner being given an opportunity to choose which community partner they wanted to work with, based on the relationship that they would have formed with them, through briefly working with them on past CE activities. As most RU partners had already developed some sort of a relationship with an ECD centre, the matches were easy to make. One of the halls opted to, as part of the programme, continue working with a Primary School with whom they had built a good relationship over the years. While the programme encouraged residences in a hall to work together with one partner, 2 residences from different halls opted to form their own partnerships, outside of the hall partnership, with ECD centres with whom they had built a relationship with during previous years. They did this while continuing to be a part of the programme. RUCE allowed for flexibility in the partnership formation, as one of the aims was to ensure that good relationships are built.

The ECD Residence Programme has evolved since its pilot phase. During the time that this research was conducted, 15 ECD centres were part of this programme, each being partnered

with a hall of residence. 7 of the 14 community partners who were part of the programme during its inception were still part of the programme. Mid-way during the data collection process the programme structure also changed due to changes made at RUCE. The programme no longer had two concurrent processes running as part of it. S@M became the sole focus of the programme, with the Reading Programme being moved to be a stand-alone volunteer programme drawing on a different cohort of volunteers. The restructured Reading Programme saw volunteers working in the ECD Centres for a duration of one hour a week, during term time, conducting literacy activities with the learners. CE representatives and community partners on the ECD Residence Programme worked solely on goals identified as part of S@M.

Background to the problem

For community partners to take ownership and participate in CE activities, students need to recognize and respect the community partner site as a place for mutual learning (Preece & Manicom, 2015). Through this learning process students recognise that communities have knowledge and expertise, which they share with students in the process of co-construction of knowledge (Du Plessis & Van Dyk, 2013). Community partners have abilities that should not be undermined, including capacity building and knowledge generation (Netshandama, 2010).

Although many universities in the United States have developed strategies for CE, engagement with communities has largely been one-sided, led from the university as opposed to being reciprocal (Bruning, McGrew, & Cooper, 2006). Many partnerships between universities and communities were focused on ideas based upon charity as opposed to social justice, where resources are seen as mutual and are shared equally amongst all parties (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). The charity model creates unequal relationships, which are characterized by hierarchy, elitism and are unidimensional, whereas a social justice model advocates for relationships that are participatory, democratic, and cooperative. Six main themes that are characteristic of university and community partnerships are summarised by Holland (2005). These are: working together in exploring and understanding goals that are of mutual benefit; understanding the assets that each partner brings to the relationship, as well as what expectations exist; joint project planning; showing a

commitment to the partnership; having a shared vision for the partnership; as well as continuously reflecting on the partner relationship. These themes are implicit in my investigation, which forms the basis of this study.

In this study I sought to investigate the features of successful partnerships in CE. I sought to understand how students and community partners experience jointly planning, executing, and evaluating CE activities that they are involved in together; and examine what insights emerged over time.

Purpose and relevance of this research

Many international studies on partner relationships have only been at single case study level (Cox & Seifer, 2005). Therefore, the aim of this research is to contribute to the limited knowledge, particularly in the South African context, about the features of partnerships as well as processes that need to be followed in not only starting new partnerships but also sustaining them. In addition, historical factors of South Africa might further complicate developing more equal partnerships (Netshandama, 2010). The 'voices' of community partners have not been incorporated in depth in accounts of university partnerships, and research done has largely been from the perspective of students (Akhurst, 2016). There is a need for community partners to be actively involved in the construction, delivery and learning outcomes of CE activities (Hart & Akhurst, 2016). The role of community partners, in community engagement activities, need to be reimagined for the systems of power to be deconstructed, in trying to work in participatory ways towards greater equality (Mitchell, 2008). This research therefore investigates features of four different case studies of partnerships across different partner relationships between CE representatives and community partners. The main aim of this research was to provide a space to reflect on CE practices.

The relevance of this research is to contribute to the growing knowledge of CE activities in South Africa, looking at how these can be transformative within the context of higher education (HE). In addressing the purpose of this research, the research question that this research sought to answer was:

- What are the students' as well as the partners' experiences of building and managing partner relationships (the co-management of community engagement activities)?

Further research questions were:

- How do students and partners experience jointly planning, executing, and reflecting on community engagement activities, in which they are involved together?
- What are the emerging insights and issues over time?

The main aim of the research questions was to provide a space for participants to reflect on their partnerships.

Research approach followed

To answer the research questions, this research took on a reflective multiple case study approach, based on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Residence Programme, within a Vygotskian social constructivist framework (Pitsoe, 2007). This research approach provided an opportunity to explore the developing community partnerships in this specific context as they have evolved over time (Preece & Manicom, 2015).

A reflective multiple case study approach was chosen, as opposed to action research, as it was envisioned that the research might inform but not encompass action, through reflection; using the social action model of community psychology, as a guide, to ensure the participation of all research participants. The data collection was qualitative in nature, aiming to provide answers to questions by exploring a variety of social settings and the individuals within these (Berg, 2007).

Personal motivations for conducting this research

I undertook this research because, for as long as I can remember, I have been interested in CE. This interest was influenced by my grandmother, who not only raised us on the ethics of *ubuntu* but also co-founded a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in the rural community that I call my hometown. Due to being encouraged to contribute in my community, I started my volunteering journey during my high school years. At this point I

did not realise that volunteering could be theorised and that I could build a career in community development.

I chose to study Psychology due to my strong desire to work with people. I was first introduced to community psychology during my third year of undergraduate study where, as part of my degree I was required to complete a module in community psychology. This was a memorable module for me, as it was the first time that I felt that Psychology could really make sense of my lived experience as a young, black South African woman from a working-class family.

I then had the opportunity to see community psychology in action when I spent two weeks on the *Phelophepha* health train as a student psychologist, during my honour's year of study. The train, referred to as a "Train of Hope", operates as a mobile healthcare hospital in numerous rural areas in South Africa (futureRAIL, 2019). During this time, we were stationed in two rural communities for a week at a time. My duties included providing solutions-focused individual and group counselling, and psycho-education workshops as part of the community counselling programme.

In trying to link my interest in CE to my educational aspirations, I completed my masters' research on a local community development project. I then decided to pursue a PhD in community psychology, choosing one of the programmes at RUCE as the focus of my research. Although at the time of conducting this research RUCE was running two other volunteer programmes, one of which I was also coordinating, I chose to conduct research on the ECD Residence Programme as it was a new programme. I also chose it because it was the only programme where there was a strong emphasis on students and community partners working closely together on an identified goal; with joint planning, executing, and reflection. I chose the ECD Residence Programme as I believed that I had intimate knowledge about it, as I had coordinated it for two years prior to conducting my research. During the time of conducting this research, however, I was no longer directly involved in the coordination of the programme. I undertook this study as I believed that my research findings could potentially enhance the work of RUCE and strengthen the partnerships that RUCE had built with the local community. I also saw the potential my research findings had in informing CE activities in HE.

Definitions

This section briefly introduces key terms and concepts used in this research. A more in-depth discussion of these concepts is provided in the subsequent chapters.

Asset-based community-led development

Asset-based community-led development (ABCD) can be seen as an approach, a set of methods for community mobilisation, and a strategy for community-based development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). ABCD's main principle is that strengths and assets of communities need to be recognised to bring about community mobilisation. In doing so, ABCD recognises that it is the capacities of local people and their associations that build powerful communities. With a strong focus on social relationships, ABCD reinforces the importance of social capital (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Community engagement

Many definitions and interpretations of community engagement (CE) exist (Bender, 2008). For this research however, CE is defined as an integral part of enriching teaching and research in higher education (HE) with a deeper sense of context, relevance, and application (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamat, 2008). CE is about building inclusive and reciprocal relationships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and their local communities (Bender, 2008). For South Africa, this has stemmed from the recommendation of the White Paper of HE Transformation (1997) to make CE part of the HEIs' agenda (Bengu, 1997).

It is *community* engagement as HEIs seek to work with partners, based in other sectors such as education or social services, in meaningful ways; through co-defining the outcomes of the planned activities and co-identifying local assets to address locally defined challenges in sustainable ways. In working from a social justice approach within the South African context, these partners may originate in communities that have been previously marginalised. It is community *engagement* as the partnership needs to be based on collaborative relationships that are characterised by dialogue (Bender, 2008).

Transformative learning

Transformative learning is defined as a unique form of metacognitive reasoning for adult learners. It is a type of learning that alters pre-existing frames of reference, such as fixed assumptions, making these assumptions more inclusive and reflective. For transformative learning to occur, people need to be able to critically reflect on their assumptions, which may emerge independently or through group interactions (Mezirow, 2003).

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is defined as both a moral quality of a person, and a phenomenon according to which people are interconnected (Gade, 2012). This research uses the latter definition, seeing *ubuntu* as an ethic, where humanity is understood to be shaped by interacting with one another as co-dependent beings (Letseka, 2012). It is a spirit of mutual support (Cilliers, 2008). *Ubuntu* is about having a common humanity (Nussbaum, 2003) meaning that individuals are understood to be constantly formed by their communities, and their communities by them (Cilliers, 2008). In promoting a communal way of life, *ubuntu* proposes that society needs to be run for the sake of all. This means that there needs to be sharing and cooperation (Muwanga-Zake, 2009).

Volunteerism

CE can take on many different forms within the context of HE (Lazarus et al., 2008) and volunteerism is one such form. A volunteer is someone who offers their services to an organisation or for a cause, without receiving financial reward. Thus, volunteerism entails partnering with communities to reach their goals (Cunha, Mensing & Benneworth, 2019).

Thesis outline

This introduction chapter introduces the reader to this research by outlining the area in which it occurs, the problem that was addressed and the purpose of this research, how this research was undertaken, the CE programme that is a unit of analysis, the purpose and relevance of this research and my personal motivations for undertaking this research. Chapters 2 and 3

are the literature review that serve to contextualise this research within existing bodies of literature. Chapter 4 outlines the methods employed in conducting this research. Chapter 5 introduces the findings at a single case-study level, drawing primarily on the first interviews and focus group discussion. Chapter 6 introduces the findings at multiple-case study level, aiming to illustrate similarities and differences between the cases. This chapter draws primarily on the follow up interviews and focus group discussion, with an aim to outline what changes have emerged over time. Chapter 7 is the discussion chapter and strives to link the findings to the outlined literature in earlier chapters. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by bringing together all the threads and makes recommendations for CE in HE as well as for future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Literature Review

The aim of this literature review chapter is to form a theoretical basis for this study, by situating it in established theory. This is done through exploring the conceptual roots of community psychology, with a special focus on critical community psychology and community psychology in the South African context. The social action model of community psychology is also explored. The theory of asset-based community-led development (ABCD) is introduced, and theories of motivations for volunteerism and embracing community engagement are explored. This chapter ends by looking at transformative learning in the context of community engagement.

(Critical) community psychology

This section first outlines what community psychology is and then considers critical community psychology. Community psychology is the study of people in context, meaning that people are understood in relation to their context, rather than 'just' as individuals (Kagan, 2015). The approach evolved, firstly in Europe, and then in South America and the United States of America (USA), to counter traditional psychology's positivist and dominant nature (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Due to it emerging in various places at different times, there have been different influences on community psychology. However, what has been common has been its manifestation of unease with the individual focus of and adoption of the medical model by mainstream psychology. At its core, community psychology systematically rejects individualism, but rather focuses on understanding the psychological as both emerging from, and dependent on, social relations (Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom & Siddique, 2011).

Over the years, there has been a move to outline the core principles of community psychology in the USA (for example by Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) as being strengths-based, and entailing prevention, empowerment, and community change (SPECs). In taking an asset-based approach, community psychology focuses on the strengths of communities rather than being problem-focused. Prevention is one of the founding concepts of community psychology, aimed at promoting wellbeing and preventing psychosocial problems before they manifest themselves (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Community

psychology emphasises the importance of prevention and early intervention, as opposed to mainstream psychology's approach of intervening once a problem has been identified. In addition, community psychology promotes empowerment through advocating for self-help and community development. It advocates for active participation, choice, and self-determination, where everyone impacted by an issue is encouraged to contribute, and their knowledge is regarded as valuable (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). However, Akhurst (2017) notes that this approach may risk promoting 'top-down' approaches, as it is dependent on who operationalises 'prevention' and 'empowerment', while social justice is not explicitly foregrounded in more conventional forms of community psychology.

To seek commonalities between different forms, Kagan et al. (2011) refer to community psychology as being:

> *community* psychology because it emphasises a level of analysis and intervention other than the individual and their immediate interpersonal context. It is community *psychology* because it is nevertheless concerned with how people feel, think, experience, and act as they work together, resisting oppression and struggling to create a better world (p. 219).

Such a definition emphasises both the unit of analysis as well as emphasising that psychology itself can make contributions.

Community psychology, born from a need for justice and equity (Reich, Bishop, Carolissen, Dzidic, Portillo, Sasao & Stark, 2017), is a discipline that concerns itself with the wellness of communities, and it is constructional rather than pathological in orientation (Kagan, 2015). This means that it provides an in-depth understanding of individual and group dynamics in diverse communities (Perkins, 2010). In a world where inequalities appear to have become more extreme, it has evolved to become more explicitly concerned with social change; and can be seen as an approach that seeks to benefit a greater number of people than those who usually benefit from a traditional psychology that focuses on one-on-one interventions.

Community psychology considers the context of the social settings in which people live and, using a multilevel perspective, focuses on people's competencies and potential, as opposed to their deficiencies. It endeavours to build on strengths within systems in which people are embedded, with the aim of changing social relations and interactions, to enable people to

have more choice and agency in what affects their lives. This means that it aims to understand and address the causes of psychological ill-health in context, without using a deficit approach (Kagan, 2015). Thus, principles of community psychology promote participatory approaches, encouraging practitioners to work in socially just ways in communities that have been previously marginalised and may still experience inequalities (Akhurst & Odendaal, 2018).

A critique of the type of community psychology that developed in the USA is that it developed with, rather than against, the embedded structural discrimination, as was the case in other countries such as in Latin America and South Africa (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). This has necessitated the emergence of a more critical community psychology, in response to the lack of systematic critique of community psychology. Critical community psychology has some of its roots in the Latin American popular education movement, as promoted by Freire (1970), and it has been strongly influenced by liberation psychology, which has seen academics standing in solidarity with the oppressed in El Salvador and in other Latin American countries (Akhurst, in press). Critical community psychology is concerned with "exploring and acting to counter the influence of oppressive systems on people's lives" (Akhurst, 2017, p. 4). Research that is underpinned by critical community psychology advocates for partnerships, participation, and collaboration, as opposed to reinforcing the more common research power relationships, where the researcher is seen as an expert. It further advocates that communities oversee their own empowerment, and thus should have a say in the design of intervention strategies (Eskell-Blokland, 2012).

Critical community psychology is a value-based discipline, promoting principles such as:

> working towards a more just society; taking a multilevel, systems approach; adopting an action orientation; working on prevention of social ills where possible; working with power, diversity and in inclusive ways; working towards empowerment; working and thinking in interdisciplinary ways through collaborations and alliances; and engaging in reflection and evaluation (Kagan, 2015, p. 13).

This quotation illustrates the way in which such approaches are more conscious of and strive to explicitly address power differentials, seeking to promote greater justice through greater reflexivity.

This means that critical community psychology can enhance social justice while disrupting taken-for-granted conceptions of psychological wellbeing (Carolissen, Canham, Fourie, Graham, Segalo & Bowman, 2017). This is done through partnering with and supporting those who wish to enact change and increase equity (Reich et al., 2017).

Critical community psychology thus emphasises social justice, equity, and community participation and control. It foregrounds the importance of engaging community voices in the development of programmes (Seedat, 2012). Social knowledge should be encouraged to emerge, as opposed to only formal academic knowledge being valued (Eskell-Blokland, 2012). Thus, in critical community psychology, knowledge is seen to be socially constructed, rather than something that is uncovered. This means that knowledge is seen as being created through people's interactions in the social sphere and constructed in interactive contexts (Viljoen, Pistorius & Eskell-Blokland, 2013). It is important for a researcher in community psychology to be reflexive and aware of their motivations, so as not to adopt the hegemony and arrogance that mainstream psychology is accused of by critical community psychology (Eskell-Blokland, 2012).

Critical community psychology, part of a wider movement for a just society, is a moral and fundamentally ethical project. Three core elements are proposed for critical community psychology: community, stewardship, and social justice (Kagan et al., 2011). 'Community' refers to groups of people who affiliate with one another and are supportive towards each other. 'Stewardship' encourages compassion, contribution and belonging (Akhurst, 2017). Stewardship emphasises careful consideration and use of assets, and community emphasises working in a collaborative way towards the betterment of all (Kagan et al., 2011). 'Social justice' promotes equity, fair treatment, and the right to self-determination (Akhurst, 2017). In writing about social justice, Kagan et al. (2011, p. 37) state that "[i]f we are serious about justice as a value, we are serious about people's rights to self-determination; to fair allocation of resources; to live in peace, with freedom from constraints; and to be treated fairly and equitably". Thus, social justice, as a value, emphasises working towards creating a more just society (Kagan et al., 2011).

Critical community psychology highlights the need to work towards change, drawing on conscientisation (Freire, 1970) along with action (Akhurst, 2017). It is an action-orientated discipline, going beyond understanding to promoting action for social transformation

(Kagan, 2015). Its principles include consultation, participation, and ownership, in an attempt to frame a democratic approach to engagement (Eksteen, Bulbulia, van Niekerk, Ismail, & Lekoba, 2012).

In critical community psychology, action is linked to the politico-economic realities. Critical community psychology moves from merely using prevention strategies towards a focus on liberation. Initially, community psychology emphasised the importance of prevention as a corrective to a focus on individual treatment. However, this emphasis on prevention alone is not enough. Critical community psychology goes beyond this, by looking at how people can take control of the circumstances that make them ill in the first place (Kagan et al., 2011). To counter the influence of oppressive systems, it looks at the root cause of distress and actively challenges the structural inequalities (Akhurst, 2017). It therefore can be "radical in the sense of getting to the root of social and psychological problems rather than merely bandaging the casualties" (Kagan, 2015, p. 15). Thus, there is an emphasis on looking at the root causes of problems. Choosing a liberation perspective, critical community psychology encourages the use of a campaigning approach as an option when collective action on a shared project is taken. Here, the emphasis is on people being agents of their own liberation (Kagan et al., 2011).

Central to liberation is power. Large power differentials result in inequity, which translates to low levels of community cohesion and wellbeing (Barrera, 2015). Working towards liberation and social justice means questioning oppression and considering the role of power in structures and processes. By engaging in this kind of questioning, awareness is built around these issues, which translates into insight for enacting meaningful change. Grassroots action needs to translate into the building of community power. It is only when power is seized by the oppressed that true transformation and liberation can occur (Riemer, Reich, Evans, Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2020). For this research, the aim was to mobilise participants to express their views in terms of how the ECD Residence Programme is run and offer alternatives and solutions to problems that may present themselves; this advocates for participants' voices to be heard and reinforces the idea that issues should be addressed collaboratively. This is because researchers in community psychology aim to not only understand the quality of life for communities, but also to enhance it (Eskell-Blokland, 2012).

Community psychology in South Africa

Community psychology has a longer history of formalisation in South Africa than in any other country on the African continent. There are many reasons for this, such as there being more public health programmes than in the rest of the continent; and activities that could be described as community psychology being seen as community development led by community-based organisations (Reich et al., 2017).

In South Africa, community psychology developed in a similar oppressive context to that in Latin America, drawing on the writings of Paulo Freire and critical sociology, with a focus on political liberation and transformation (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). Additionally, community psychology in South Africa has had a strong Marxist influence due to its role in the liberation struggle (Kagan et al., 2011). For South Africa, community psychology emerged as a force against apartheid racism and socioeconomic exploitation (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). Thus, during the mid-1980s, community psychology represented an attempt to develop a more relevant psychology due to dissatisfaction with mainstream psychology (Carolissen, Shefer & Smit, 2015). This was done in two ways: (1) overtly opposing apartheid, and (2) developing practice and theory that was relevant to those who were marginalised (Arumugam, 2001). This emergence of community psychology saw an assertion of both critical and black voices in South Africa, which called for community psychology to be located within the larger liberatory psychology project. It was part of a process of asserting community identity and establishing democracy (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). This call for a more relevant psychology questioned the individualistic nature of the discipline and how Euro-American principles were being inappropriately applied in the South African context (Carolissen et al., 2017).

Community psychology was formalised through various activities and roles. These included increasing the resilience of oppressed and vulnerable groups, challenging the apartheid exclusion of local knowledge in psychology teaching, and learning activities, engaging in dialogues, and generating policy in anticipation of a democratic South Africa (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). Despite the efforts that were made towards this, hegemonic practices that privilege Eurocentrism and individuality still prevail, with only a few local examples being used in current psychology texts as illustrations (Carolissen et al., 2017).

Community psychology is especially relevant in South Africa; as Akhurst (2017, p. 3) states, "it provides a participatory asset-based approach and promotes deeper consideration of the social asymmetries that characterise South African communities…". The term 'community' has historical political, economic, and social connotations of disadvantage in South Africa, and it is therefore not surprising that it may be interpreted in such a way that students perceive community psychology to be exclusively for poor, black people (Carolissen, Rohleder, Bozalek, Swartz & Leibowitz, 2010). Generally, in the South African context, such 'communities' are in under-serviced urban, peri-urban, or rural areas, with disadvantaged and materially poor residents (Bender, 2008). Kagan (2015, p. 15), however, defines community "through social and psychological relations of belonging and identity", and as a key element of critical community psychology, promoting engagement that is prosocial (Kagan et al., 2011). Involved community members should be regarded as partners who participate fully in their own development through identifying assets in the search for sustainable solutions (Bender, 2008). It is important to consider the functions and *modus operandi* of community psychology within the South African context, since it resonates with the theories around the ethic of *ubuntu* and decolonisation, which are explored further in the next chapter.

The social action model of community psychology

There are various models of community psychology; however, for the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the social action model (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001), as it seems to align most closely with the approach taken. However, some aspects of the social liberation model are also considered to be of relevance. This model is among the more radical perspectives, which advocate for the empowerment of people (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). In the social action model, the community is the unit of intervention. Community in this model is defined both geographically and politically. Interventions guided by the social action model are aimed at eradicating structural inequalities (Yen, 2013).

According to Ahmed and Pretorius-Heuchert (2001, p. 71), "the social action model has its roots in the war on poverty during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations of the United

States in the 1960s". This model advocates for the importance of considering links between behaviour and social systems and believes that mainstream models of psychology fail to take this into consideration. The social action model can be seen as a 'bottom-up' approach that seeks to mobilise people to bring about change at organisational and community levels, and in structures and procedures that inhibit wellbeing. In this model, self-determination and empowerment are promoted as values (Visser, 2012). The model targets community groups, with the aim of creating enabling spaces for people's socio-political empowerment, especially in marginalised communities (Arumugam, 2001). This is done through working from a humanist and an empowerment paradigm, seeking to challenge institutions of social oppression (Arumugam, 2001). Cooperative social support and self-help groups are encouraged, with a focus on these groups feeling empowered to claim their rights and putting institutions and those in power under pressure to be responsive to them (Akhurst, in press).

Focusing on structural inequalities as the root cause of community distress, the social action model aims to mobilise communities to improve their own lives, as suggested above (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). It also focuses on people's constitutional rights and conscientizing people about these and associated actions, through strategies of popular education (e.g., Freire, 1970). Challenging the idea of individualism and drawing on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, the social action model argues that civic society needs to provide basic security, health care, and food for citizens. It is therefore social structures that are challenged, since these are the ones which create institutional inequity in the first place. Thus, the primary goal of this model is transformation and social change; aiming for social change is central to this model, with a clear commitment to the transformation of oppressive social conditions (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001). A researcher/psychologist using this model therefore aims to be a social change facilitator who creates enabling spaces for people to empower themselves; this is done through mobilising and establishing contacts which previously did not exist, to draw on previously unavailable resources (Arumugam, 2001). In addition, in using the social action model, practitioners can make meaningful contributions towards the development of social policy (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011).

A critique of this model is that, unlike the social liberation model, social change is targeted not at a macro-level, but at meso- and exo-levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), with the communities directly involved in the processes. This then could be seen to limit its

effectiveness at the macro-level, since although issues may manifest as problems at a micro-level, these are often influenced by the larger system of inequality (Arumugam, 2001). For example, in the ECD Residence Programme, the aim is to work within Makhanda, particularly within the identified public schools in Makhanda. While change may be effective within those schools, some of the problems that arise may emanate from a regional and national policy level.

As raised above, the role of the researcher/psychologist in the social action model is that of a social change facilitator (Arumugam, 2001), who also plays an advocacy role (Akhurst, in press). In drawing on this model in this research, the aim was to create spaces of dialogue and reflection in the interviews and in focus group discussions, while in the ECD Residence Programme itself, opportunities for networking with various community stakeholders are created. Given the various power dynamics and educational differentials between the participants in this research, there were some limitations in relation to influencing systems, as the social action model proposes. This is expanded further in the discussion chapter.

Asset-based community-led development

The concept of ABCD starts from the position that all communities have existing resources of resilience, coping skills and knowledge that need to be incorporated into any development process. The goal therefore is to build a resource-led foundation for development whose control is in the communities concerned (Preece, 2016). Thus, ABCD starts with what is present in the community, as opposed to what is absent. ABCD is internally focused, meaning that it focuses on the problem-solving capacities of local communities. It is concerned with strengths that reside in the community. This internal focus stresses the "primacy of local definition, investment, creativity, hope, and control" (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996, p. 100). ABCD is relationship driven, thus making it important for HEIs to work with local communities and build relationships with them (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

When HEIs do a 'needs-mapping' of communities, they are in danger of creating dependency in those communities. Earlier community psychology advised a 'needs-mapping' prior to any form of intervention (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010); however, this has been proven to not be ideal as community members may come to believe that they need 'outsiders' (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) to address their local challenges, and that their

wellbeing depends on them being beneficiaries of a service. Such a deficiency model does not create enabling spaces for community members to empower themselves. Therefore, ABCD is advocated for, as it maps the communities' capabilities, assets, and capacities. The process of ABCD includes discovering and detailing the assets of all individuals in the community and harnessing these to address community challenges (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

Therefore, instead of engaging in a 'needs-mapping' exercise, HEIs and community partners should engage in a community asset-mapping exercise which documents both tangible and intangible resources that communities have. This process has a focus on capabilities and assets and acknowledges that networks and relationships are important. Community assets are foregrounded, and leadership and community knowledge are promoted, with community ownership being encouraged (Lazarus, Bulbulia, Taliep & Naidoo, 2015). Asset-mapping relies heavily on foregrounding community partners as experts and reinforces participatory and collaborative community action (Eksteen et al., 2012). Through using this approach, communities are conceptualised as resourceful and resilient (Lazarus et al., 2015). For example, the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) Division uses ABCD in its approach to community engagement (CE) activities. Students and community partners are trained on the philosophy of ABCD at the beginning of each year. In addition, as part of the S@M project planning cycle, RUCE representatives and community partners participate in a transect walk, where they map assets in their local community. This is elaborated on further in the introductory chapter.

Student volunteers' and community partners' motivations to embrace community engagement

It is important to understand people's motivations to become involved in CE activities and, in particular for this research, volunteerism. Therefore, this section looks at student volunteers' as well as community partners' various motivations for participating in CE activities. Volunteer programmes and relationships between HEIs and community partners are dependent on having willing and available student volunteers. High volunteer turnover may be detrimental to volunteer programmes (Oostlander, Güntert, van Schie & Wehner, 2014).

Volunteering is an interesting psychological phenomenon (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Volunteerism may be defined as planned, ongoing activities which are of benefit to non-intimate others, and which may yield little or no tangible rewards for the volunteer (Finkelstien, 2009). Volunteerism can, however, provide physical and mental health benefits for the volunteer (Stukas, Hoye, Nicholson, Brown & Aisbett, 2016). Volunteer activities typically occur in an organisational context (Wadijaja, 2010).

All volunteers engage in volunteer activities to fulfil certain psychological functions. These functions may be distinct for different volunteers, and sometimes the same volunteers may want to fulfil distinct functions in different periods of their lives (Wadijaja, 2010). Volunteers not only have different degrees of motivation, but they also have different kinds. This means that they differ in their levels of motivation as well as in the orientation of that motivation. Orientation of motivation is about the underlying attitudes and goals that compel a person to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen and Miene (1998) developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), arguing that there are six general psychological functions that volunteerism serves. These functions are values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. When people are motivated by the *values* function, they engage in volunteerism due to their desire to help those they perceive to be less fortunate than themselves. Those motivated by the *understanding* function wish to explore their strengths and learn new skills and knowledge, while further understanding their roles in volunteering. Those motivated by the *social* function volunteer in order to gain approval from others, strengthen their relationships and increase their social interactions. People motivated by the *career* function volunteer because they perceive their volunteer experiences to be beneficial to advance their career aspirations. Those motivated by the *protective* function volunteer as a means to work through their feelings; these may be due to personal problems or the result of feelings of guilt for being more fortunate than others. Lastly, people motivated by the *enhancement* function volunteer because they want to feel needed and important, in other words to gain greater self-esteem.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations both play an essential role in volunteerism (Wadijaja, 2010). Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation to do something because one may find it inherently enjoyable, interesting, or challenging. It is about the positive experience derived

from engaging in the activity, leading to becoming inherently satisfied. The reward is said to be in the activity itself, rather than external to it (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Volunteers who are intrinsically motivated will volunteer due to personal convictions and not external pressures or rewards (Finkelstien, 2009). In contrast, extrinsic motivation is about doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and holds an instrumental value (Finkelstien, 2009). This can come in the form of incentives such as praise and recognition from others. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations should not be seen to lie on opposite ends of a continuum but should rather be thought of as "relatively orthogonal dimensions" (Finkelstien, 2009, p. 654). This means that both forms of motivation may play a part; and that there may be elements of both in the motivations to participate in activities.

Motivation is a psychological concept. Volunteering provides a way to study basic psychological processes when it is examined within the framework of motivation (Finkelstien, 2009). Being motivated means being moved to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students may be motivated to engage in volunteerism for several reasons. They may enjoy being altruistic and may also enjoy the recognition they receive from others due to being involved in volunteerism. These two motives are associated with a non-material satisfaction (psychic income). Additionally, students may be motivated to develop graduate attributes, which may contribute to their employability (Roy & Ziemek, 2000). This can be seen to be an egoistic motive, related to tangible rewards (Wadijaja, 2010). Students may also be altruistic, having a strong desire to help others. Therefore, they may be sensitive to the needs of those with impoverished circumstances (Akhurst, 2017). Students undertake and continue with volunteer activities for as long as these align with and fulfil their motivations (Finkelstien, 2009).

Just as students may have different motivations for participating in CE activities such as volunteerism, so too do community partners. There are various factors that motivate communities to partner with HEIs. The most obvious motivating factor is where the community partner needs assistance and the HEI is seen as having valuable resources, such as knowledge and access to decision-makers and money. This may cause a power imbalance, where the community partner is seen as the beneficiary and the institution is seen as the benefactor (Barrera, 2015). The positionality of HEIs, having a status of privilege and power, may further entrench power differentials (Lazarus et al., 2015). It is proposed that effective partnerships should not be formed merely because of a need to access resources

that the other party has, but should be based on shared goals (Barrera, 2015). Enabling communities to take responsibility for decision-making steers them away from developing a relationship based upon dependency (Preece, 2016).

Community partners may also be motivated to partner with HEIs as they want to have access to volunteers, and they value the additional resources (such as knowledge, skills, and access to networks) that HEIs provide. Additionally, they view volunteers as role models to their programme beneficiaries (Worrall, 2007). Community partners may also be motivated to continue with the partnership as they welcome and value the opportunity to contribute to student learning and development (Sandy & Holland, 2006). This is supported by a study conducted by Worrall (2007), where community partners stated that they were motivated to continue partnering with HEIs as they welcomed the opportunity to teach students about their local contexts, highlighting the importance of sensitising students to the socioeconomic divide. The community partners' aim was to contribute to shaping graduates who are more aware of diversity, are civic-minded and have the potential to effect policy changes in the future. Community partners also noted the importance of providing students with opportunities to test and apply their knowledge.

Transformative learning

Research in South Africa (e.g., Isaacs, Rose & Davids, 2016) and elsewhere in the world (e.g., D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009; Levkoe, Brail, & Daniere, 2014) has shown that participating in CE activities may lead to transformative learning. This is because these activities are an opportunity for student volunteers and community partners to access experiences that allow them to enhance their reflections and encourage more introspection (Davis, Kliewer, & Nicolaides, 2017). Additionally, through participating in CE activities, student volunteers and community partners become better able to understand themselves and their communities, as well as social problems in general. This understanding may propel them to act in socially responsive ways (D'Arlach et al., 2009). With this understanding of CE activities having the potential to lead to transformative learning, this section describes and explains transformative learning.

The concept of transformative learning was developed by Mezirow. It is seen as a particular type of adult learning (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Transformative learning is about making sense of various experiences (Jones, 2016). It occurs in different contexts and under varying circumstances (Mezirow, 2009). It may occur through objective reframing, which is linked to reflecting on actions, or it may occur through subjective reframing, which is critically reflecting on one's own assumptions (Mezirow, 2000).

Transformative learning is defined as "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow, 2009, p. 92). This learning is based on the fundamental changing of fixed assumptions and calls for the formation of new frames of meaning. Transformative learning is about the development of autonomous individuals able to think critically, and act in democratic ways (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018). This happens when people engage in constructive discourses with others, using these to reflect on their previously held assumptions that have been based on uncritical assimilation (Mezirow, 2000). When people do this, they start to critically question their assumptions about the world, opening up to different ways of knowing that they had not considered before (Jones, 2016).

Mezirow (2000, p. 22) proposes ten phases that a person tends to follow in the transformative learning process. These are:

- A disorienting dilemma,
- Self-examination,
- A critical assessment of assumptions,
- Recognition of a connection between one's discontent and the process of transformation,
- Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action; planning a course of action,
- Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plan; provisional trying of new roles,
- Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships, and
- A reintegration into one's life based on conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

These phases, however, will vary in different situations, depending on the experiences. (Mezirow, 2000). This is because transformation may occur in a linear manner, or may rather be disjointed, fluid or recursive (Howie & Bagnall, 2013).

Transformative learning theory proposes that individuals undergo a change in their perspectives (Davis et al., 2017). This change may be epochal, or it may be incremental. Epochal transformation is a radical shift in perspective, whereas incremental transformation is more gradual (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). Incremental transformation leads to the transformation of habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000).

Transformative learning may encompass six areas of transformation (Kiely, 2004). These are described as political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual transformation. Political transformation is about expanding one's sense of social responsibility, both locally and globally. Moral transformation encompasses developing mutually beneficial relationships that lead to building equitable partnerships. Intellectual transformation occurs when people start to question their previously held assumptions. Cultural transformation requires a person to rethink dominant cultural values and, in this context, includes the questioning of Eurocentric thinking. Personal transformation requires individuals to rethink their lifestyles, and spiritual transformation is a movement towards understanding one's purpose in life in relation to the greater good (Kiely, 2004).

Engaging in structured CE activities may lead to transformative learning for both students and community partners (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015). However, whilst engaging in CE programmes may lead to transformative learning for those involved in them, practitioners may not always have the language for interpreting and theorising this practice (Holmes, 2015). Community engagement exists on a continuum, from charitable CE to transformative CE. Charitable CE runs the risk of reinforcing prejudices and may exaggerate imbalances of power, whereas transformative CE disrupts this through explicit exercises to enhance critical reflection (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). Transformative CE has the potential to facilitate transformative learning for students and community partners, providing them with important skills that are critical in decision-making (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Levkoe et al., 2014). Transformative learning is seen as the result of teaching for change (Taylor, 2009), and it enhances how students develop new knowledge, contributing to students becoming more civic-minded and action-orientated individuals. This civic engagement only happens when

people stop focussing inwardly and start focusing more outwardly, towards the surrounding communities (Levkoe et al., 2014).

Transformative learning, therefore, is not just about personal development; it is also about social change (Davis et al., 2017). It has both individual and social implications (Mezirow, 2000). Transformative learning alters students' and community partners' worldviews, aligning them to social justice goals of challenging dominant ideologies, deconstructing hierarchies, and critiquing biases. The long-term benefit is a new way of understanding the world, and having an informed citizenry asking critical questions and working to eradicate injustice (Holmes, 2015). Through developing a critical awareness, individuals discover an awareness of the role of power and learn to take action against oppressive practices (Bamber & Hankin, 2011).

Transformative learning is centred around learning through action and experience (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). For transformative learning to occur, activities need to be linked to critical reflection (Lee, Hong, & Niemi, 2014). Critical reflection is essential for transformative learning (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018) and enables people to gain insight, including becoming aware of and correcting any distorting beliefs they may hold (Karlovic, 1992). When students are involved in CE activities, one of three things may happen. Firstly, they may learn something about themselves, their communities, and social issues; this is the desired outcome. Secondly, they may not learn anything much from the experience. Thirdly, they may learn the wrong lessons, which could reinforce previously held prejudice and stereotypes.

To facilitate transformative learning, which is the desired outcome, there needs to be critical reflection (Cooper, 1998). Critical reflection is concerned with the reasons for and consequences of actions (Karlovic, 1992). Reflection, a higher-order mental process (Karlovic, 1992), encourages the person to become aware of previously held ideas, opening up to new ideas (Holmes, 2015). It is about examining one's own beliefs and challenging the validity of presuppositions from prior learning (Karlovic, 1992). Transformative learning theory proposes that there are three main frames for critical reflection: content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection. With content reflection, one engages with the ideas in a meaningful way, checking for facts. In process reflection, one questions

the systems that produced the ideas, while premise reflection is about questioning underlying assumptions and beliefs (Howie & Bagnall, 2013).

Reflective processes are essential to transformative learning. Transformative learning is lifelong learning. When individuals undergo transformative learning, a conversation may occur where they grapple with new information (Mezirow, 1991). This is called a perspective transformation experience, where assumptions are challenged, and one starts to make sense of newly learned information through generating new beliefs (Karlovic, 1992). Perspective transformation, however, is not merely considering something that one has not thought of before (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). It is about a change in a person's frame of reference based on their interpretations of their experiences (Isaacs et al., 2016), and it provides a new way of seeing the world and being in it (Lee et al., 2014). Merely extending one's frame of reference without questioning previously held assumptions cannot be regarded as transformative learning (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). Additionally, perspective transformation goes beyond just changing one's thinking; it also entails a change in action (Mezirow, 2000).

Reflection is an important part of CE as it enables students to start locating themselves in the diverse and unequal South African context and be critical of it. Reflection is a critical aspect of CE activities, as it allows students to link their experiences with their learning (Lee et al., 2014), and it also allows them to critically consider inequalities that give rise to the need for CE activities in the first place (Isaacs et al., 2016). Reflection may be written or oral, and it may be done individually or within a group setting, occurring with varying degrees of frequency (Lee et al., 2014). These sessions provide an opportunity to critically reflect on assumptions and beliefs, in the process evaluating different perspectives which may lead to a critical understanding of social issues (Lee et al., 2014). When this experience is transformative, students and community partners may experience changes in their identity, knowledge and skills (Holmes, 2015).

Mitchell's (2017) study on a service-learning programme in South Africa, Kwa-Zulu Natal, found that CE creates a unique context where students may feel vulnerable and that it can be a disruptive and overwhelming experience. When this experience is combined with reflection and acting on the learning from this reflection, transformative learning may occur. Through engaging in the act of reflection students are 'forced' to be critical of themselves,

which is a desirable practice. Encouraging reflection shapes a person into becoming a critically conscious individual.

While transformative learning is not clearly articulated as a goal within the ECD Residence Programme, this chapter proposes that the concept could be valuably examined in the programme, to question whether it does facilitate transformative learning. Drawing on the idea that reflection is key for transformative learning to occur (Bamber & Hankin, 2011), the programme makes use of structured and regular reflection. At the beginning of the year, students and community partners are trained on ideas about the concept of reflection, and on how to keep a reflection journal that documents their learning experiences. In addition to this, students and community partners meet quarterly to have facilitated oral reflection sessions. As part of these sessions, they are encouraged to draw on their experiences as well as on the concepts that they learnt from the training they received at the beginning of the year. All of this reflection is done in order to ensure that learning is deepened (Lee et al., 2014).

To further support the ideas of transformative learning community partners expressed how, at the onset of the programme, to be explored in this research study, they thought that they had nothing valuable to contribute to student learning. Instead, they held the idea that students from RU were there to teach them, since they were of the view that the students had more knowledge because they were university educated (Karlovic, 1992). However, this research will show that since engaging in the programme, community partners feel that they have a greater right to claim their voices in the CE space. They became convinced that they too hold valuable knowledge and that students from RU may learn valuable lessons from their organisations. They have become more confident in their dual roles as both teacher and learner. This supports the ideas of decolonisation that are expanded on in the following chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter situates this study in a body of literature that exists in the field. It draws on theories of critical community psychology, with particular reference to the South African context, and the social action model of community psychology which has been used in this

research. Literature on ABCD is examined, and the theories of motivations are explored, with the aim of considering what is psychological about the partnerships that exist in CE. This chapter ends by looking at the theory of transformative learning and its contribution of CE. The following literature review chapter will situate CE in current contextually important ideas and debates around the ethics of *ubuntu* and decolonising HE.

Chapter 3: Contextual Literature Review

This contextual literature review chapter is designed to locate this research by drawing on the theories of *ubuntu* and decolonisation to illustrate the value of CE in HE. *Ubuntu*, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis, is understood to be an ethic. With the rise in current concerns about promoting African psychology and psychology that has relevance to the majority in South Africa (Qangule, 2019), *ubuntu* is of particular interest in this study. The argument that this chapter makes is that CE activities that are centred on the ethics of *ubuntu* have the potential to contribute to the decolonisation project of HE. This chapter also explains principles of CE, with a particular emphasis on partnerships in CE, which are the focus of this study. Where possible, concepts and ideas have been illustrated by drawing from research evidence, however due to space constraints this is not designed to be a systematic literature review.

Ubuntu as an ethic

This thesis proposes that principles of CE partnerships at Rhodes University are linked to ethics of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu*, deriving from the Nguni and Bantu languages of Southern Africa (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016), is a social ethic and a people-centred philosophy (Venter, 2004). It is an important cultural value system that can be found in many African communities (Makoba, 2016). This philosophy is about the building of positive human relationships and developing with others and is premised on the idea that human beings are united (Venter, 2004). There is a "strong orientation to collective values, particularly a collective sense of responsibility" (Mkabela, 2015, p. 288). Thus, *ubuntu* can be seen as a goal and a guide for humanity (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016) and "a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct patterns of life" (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009, p. 63).

While many writers agree on what *ubuntu* as an ethic means, this dynamic term has taken new meanings at different points in history (Gade, 2012). While many variations may exist within different cultures and languages, the conceptualisation retains the same core meaning (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016). *Ubuntu* can provide a framework for respectful engagement, which entails reciprocity and community connectedness (Gade, 2012). People are family within the context of *ubuntu* (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009). This means that "I am human

because I belong. I participate, I share" (Tutu, 1999, p. 31). This quote emphasises that *ubuntu* promotes mutuality.

Ubuntu is a philosophy which seeks to promote the common good, with a society (Venter, 2004), where communalism and social justice are emphasised (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015). *Ubuntu* "speaks to the very essence of being human" (Makoba, 2016, p. 41). This means that *ubuntu* is an essential element of human growth, which includes humanness (Venter, 2004) and is at the centre of all human existence (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016). Using this philosophy, individuals are thus only seen as existing corporately as they are regarded as an integral part of society. This is not to say that individuality is negated, however it should not take precedence over the community (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016). Additionally, the autonomy of an individual is not undermined, each bringing their own individuality into the presence of the community (Waghid, 2017). "*Ubuntu* places the interest of the community above that of individuals" (Makoba, 2016, p. 42), and an individual's personal growth happens in the community context (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009). In *ubuntu*, the group's collective aspirations are translated into the individual's aspirations (Waghid, 2017). Community is seen as a critical factor in an individuals' life and the individuals' wellbeing is understood within the context of their communities (Semenya & Mokwena, 2012).

Ubuntu may also be a positive quality that a person possesses (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009). "*Ubuntu* is bourne [sic] out of the philosophy that community strength comes of community support, and that dignity and identity are achieved through mutualism, empathy, generosity and community commitment" (Gade, 2012, p. 54). This speaks to the idea that "what happens in your community has an effect on you" (Makoba, 2016, p. 44) and that ways of knowing are conceptualised as circular, organic and collectivist (Gade, 2012). An individual whose actions demonstrate *ubuntu* may seek personal gains, however, they will enable those around them to also advance (Schreiber and Tomm-Bonde, 2015), since "*Ubuntu* defines the individual in terms of relationships with others" (Muwanga-Zake, 2009, p. 417). *Ubuntu* is a concept that is both individual and communal in orientation, as although people may act from the position of their individualities there is also the importance of association (Waghid, 2017). In *ubuntu*, "individuals consider themselves integral parts of the whole community" (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009, p. 69). They understand that they belong to the broader community that they are a part of. The focus of *ubuntu* is the community's wellbeing (Makoba, 2016), where there is peaceful co-existence and co-operation (Waghid, 2017).

Characteristics of a person who illustrates *ubuntu* are "caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive, virtuous and blessed" (Le Roux, 2000, p. 43). Such characteristics are evident in ideal conditions. People who are said to show *ubuntu* are affirming of other people, and are open and available to them (Makoba, 2016). An individual is not born with these qualities, but acquires them through socialisation (Kamwangamalu, 1999).

Collective spirit is paramount in *ubuntu*, foregrounding "the importance of community, solidarity, caring and sharing" (Mkabela, 2015, p. 287). "*Ubuntu* aims at building the community as well as bonding people in a network of reciprocal relationships" (Mawere & Mabuya, 2016, p. 98). *Ubuntu* advocates for a sense of interdependence, emphasizing the importance of partnership in realising one's human potential (Mkabela, 2015). It is "an ethical system concerned with the connectedness of each human being to others" (Makoba, 2016, p. 43). *Ubuntu* has a positive influence, bringing people in communities together to promote the common good (Makoba, 2016). Community is defined as "a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds, biological and/or non biological, who consider themselves primarily as members of the group and who have common interests, goals, and values" (Gyekye (1998, p. 320).

While *ubuntu* has been promoted in a positive light by many of the authors cited above, it has also faced many criticisms. One of these is that it could potentially open up a space of cultural conformism, reproducing propaganda and control. Additionally, an excessive focus on bonding may create exclusion of others and may not promote the building of diverse relationships. One should "caution against the misappropriation of *Ubuntu* for ideological purposes that emphasize conformism and hence exclusion" (Gade, 2012, p. 53). I propose that *Ubuntu* can provide a space for cross-cultural understanding to take place (Gade, 2012) particularly within the context of CE. This is due to CE providing a space for meaningful engagement between diverse individuals.

Principles of *ubuntu* should be used to underpin research activities that are designed to enrich understanding within communities. Using *ubuntu* in research moves away from the kind of research that is conducted *on* people and moves towards research that is conducted *for* people (Mkabela, 2015). This is important, as participants are experts of their own lives and experiences. A researcher's role is therefore to learn from what participants are willing

to share. In using *Ubuntu*, research is designed in a way that does not seek to further marginalise participants who have experienced forms of oppression (Schrieber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015). For the purposes of my research, I see *ubuntu* as encompassing partnership, relationship building, growth and development, and joint learning and mutuality. These largely overlap with one another. I propose that this understanding of *ubuntu* can serve as a fundamental ethic of CE partnerships at RU (Ramose, 2002). *Ubuntu* is particularly of relevance to CE at RU, since it is based upon principles of reciprocity and building mutually beneficial relationships. Therefore, in this research one can argue that the CE representatives and volunteer managers who work together as part of the ECD Residence Programme are a part of a community. This becomes a form of 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998) since they build relationships and form bonds through their shared practice.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation is described as "a process of undoing coloniality" (Oyedemi, 2018, p. 5). It is described as a process as opposed to an event and is a recurring discourse in Africa, as the reality is that inequalities still exist due to unequal access to resources because of colonisation. Although colonisation came to an end, mostly in the 1960s, the effects of it remain and are manifested in both cultural and economic spheres. The end of colonisation did not translate to the end of the structural configurations of power. Race and whiteness in South Africa still stand at the centre of colonial structures that promote cultural superiority and economic domination (Oyedemi, 2018).

Community psychologists need to be aware of socio-political systems and theories, and how these affect those they seek to partner with. In critically acknowledging how history has shaped the current context, community psychologists must work towards supporting those previously marginalised to embrace and positively identify with their own cultural identities (Riemer et al., 2020). The goal of decolonisation therefore is to decentre Euro-American hegemony, and is a radical approach towards ending coloniality (Oyedemi, 2018).

European culture and ideas of producing knowledge, such as through formal education, were foregrounded and imposed on the colonised and indigenous knowledge creation and expression was relegated (Oyedemi, 2018). This led to a diminishing of the role and value of indigenous ideas and practices. A Eurocentric curriculum still prevails (Connell, 2017),

however formal education is only one of many diverse ways to acquire knowledge (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018). There exist many other opportunities, such as learning for community partners, that might improve peoples' knowledge and skills that can be used throughout life (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018).

HEIs in Africa have been criticised for replicating Western epistemology (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2017). South African knowledge production is currently still very Eurocentric in orientation (Oyedemi, 2018). Many of these Western theories are not directly applicable to the African context and are not suitable (Brock-Utne, 2017). Additionally, little has been done to address historical patterns of apartheid in the way that structures and systems work, instead these continue to be reproduced (Seepe, 2017).

A HEI in South Africa needs to be able to "engage with and reflect the identity of the society it is supposed to serve, and the knowledge it generates should be relevant and responsive to the needs of the people" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2017, p. 49). This means that knowledge that is produced and disseminated should be contextually relevant and should be rooted in African cultures (Brock-Unte, 2017). Through CE, democratic spaces of learning are created (Bazana 2019). Community partner voices are valued, opening participants up "to different bodies and traditions of knowledge and knowledge-making in new and exploratory ways" (Heleta, 2016, p. 2); towards a more decolonised education. This process is two-fold: consisting of the epistemic project and the personal project, since hegemonic Eurocentric views about knowledge have resulted in a creation of "a hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge and, thus, of superior and inferior people" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 214). This is the essence of the decolonisation project, which seeks to challenge not only hegemonic knowledge generation, but also psychological enslavement and a sense of unworthiness that was perpetuated through colonisation (Timmis, Mgqwashu, & Naidoo, 2019).

While the epistemic project is about knowledge creation and the valuing of all knowledge, the personal project is a rehumanising approach, which allows student and community partners to claim their space equally in being part of shaping knowledge. The personal project is important in dismantling cultural colonisation, which has been one of the most destructive aspects of colonisation as "it tends toward permanence in social understandings of self, social practices and knowledge creation" (Oyedemi, 2018, p. 4-5). Strides need to be made to reduce injustices in knowledge production (Heleta, 2016), through

foregrounding student and community knowledge and agency (Timmis et al., 2019). This makes HEIs "relevant to the material, historical and social realities of the communities in which universities operate" (Letsekha, 2013, p. 14). There is thus a valuing of different lived realities (Grant, Quinn, & Vorster, 2018). This is particularly relevant in South Africa, which has a history of exclusion and marginalization in education based on race (Oyedemi, 2018).

Increased collaborations between HEI and community partners leads to the reduction of barriers to transformative change (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015). CE encourages participants to have a broader understanding of what constitutes knowledge, valuing not just academic knowledge but also knowledge that resides within communities (Millican & Bourner, 2011). This is an important part of the decolonisation project, as all knowledge is equally valued. Through doing this, multiple stories and histories that shape Africa are acknowledged (Oyedemi, 2018).

Good CE programmes should provide structured opportunities for participants to critically reflect on and evaluate their experiences (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Facilitating a reflective space where people can speak freely about their experiences enables people to realise that they have valuable knowledge that they can impart to others (D'Arlach et al., 2009). Engaging in these reflective practices is also important for transformative learning (Davis et al., 2017). Honest dialogue allows participants to reflect upon their positionalities, potentially leading to shifts in power (Freire, 1970). In order to build effective partnerships, it is important for there to be joint planning of CE activities. Engaging in open dialogue and deliberation is important to begin the process of the sharing of power. This, however, does not mean that there will always be consensus without some form of disagreement in the process. What is important is to ensure that conducive environments are created where there can be healthy and effective robust engagement (Davis et al., 2017). This, Freire (1970) notes, leads to those who were initially oppressed gaining the awareness of and valuing their knowledge. It also leads to those who represent the group who engaged in oppression valuing the perspectives of the oppressed. Where inequalities exist and there is a power imbalance in a partnership, this may limit the integrity and the effectiveness of the partnership. The mutual sharing of power develops reciprocity (Davis et al., 2017).

Reciprocity encompasses recognising and valuing all knowledge that people contribute to a partnership (Davis et al., 2017). Reciprocity in CE creates a diverse group of experts;

acknowledging that all people have knowledge, skills, and capabilities. The benefits of having a diverse group of experts allows for there to be a variety of ideas about addressing local challenges collaboratively. Reciprocity is important for building networks and creating meaningful and long-term relationships between universities and the broader community (Lee et al., 2014). Additionally, it facilitates the transfer of knowledge, challenging unidirectional education, and advocates for multi-directional education where there is co-learning and the co-creation of knowledge (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2005; D'Arlach et al., 2009).

It is important to value community knowledge and to partner with communities in decision making. Failure to include community voices may lead to change that is unsustainable as there will be no community ownership (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015). Community partners need to be viewed as having knowledge, skills, and capabilities which are important for the co-creation of solutions to locally defined challenges (D'Arlach et al., 2009). Including community voices means acknowledging that there are multiple sources of knowledge. Knowledge does not just exist within the formal academy; valuable knowledge also exists outside of the university. Community knowledge is useful in addressing community problems (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015) and there is a need for this knowledge to be co-created *with* rather than *for* communities (D'Arlach et al., 2009). Providing a space for community voices to be heard allows for collaborative partnerships to be cultivated, where there is the co-construction of knowledge and all parties involved in the partnership may equally play the role of a teacher and a learner. This also allows all parties to be equal contributors of knowledge (Fitzgerald & Zientek, 2015). Everyone in the partnership is positioned as a co-teacher, co-learner, and a co-generator of knowledge; where everyone learns and develops (Lee et al., 2014). This positioning of both teacher and learner blurs traditionally defined roles (Holmes, 2015). Foregrounding the voices of communities and understanding perspectives from community partners is important since one of the goals of CE is to enable communities to improve their access to resources and their material conditions. Community partners need to have an equal say in co-defining local challenges and co-creating solutions (D'Arlach et al., 2009). This is an important way of decolonising scholarship through tracing multiple genealogies of knowledge and in so doing rethinking academic cultures (Oyedemi, 2018).

Within the ECD Residence Programme, community partners are encouraged to have a voice and to state all their views even if they may be contrary to what RUCE proposes. This is facilitated through numerous ways; for example, at the beginning of the year there is an annual strategic meeting where partners can set their own goals for the year. The emphasis here is to drive the community partner's agenda. Additionally, a MOU is signed each year between RUCE and each community partner, which outlines each party's rights and responsibilities in the context of the partnership. Mid-year, a reflection meeting is held between RUCE and all the community partners. During this meeting, community partners are encouraged to honestly evaluate the partnership and make suggestions should they want to introduce a change in the partner relationship for the second half of the year. At the end of the year, there is a final reflection meeting that is held where the year's activities and the partnership are jointly evaluated. Engaging in such activities is a humanising experience (D'Arlach et al., 2009), which may also lead to the breaking down of the *us* and *them* dichotomy leading to a shared *we* identity (Davis et al., 2017). It encourages reciprocity, engaging with people as equals (Lee et al., 2014). This kind of relationship needs to be openly and consciously negotiated by everyone in the partnership (Holmes, 2015).

Community engagement

Recognising that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play an important intellectual role and are an important economic resource to their communities, there has been a growing recognition about the importance of investing in community building (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Therefore, in South Africa, the White Paper of HE Transformation (1997) saw fit to make CE part of the HEIs' agenda (Bengu, 1997). This has led to HEIs moving away from the concept of an 'ivory tower' and becoming more socially responsive and involved in their communities, with recognition that communities within which HEIs exist provide a rich learning environment for students, as well as an opportunity to contribute to community development (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Bender (2008, p. 83) writes that "despite all the national documents and initiatives, in practice there is still a perception that community engagement and service are merely add-on, nice-to-have, philanthropic activities". However, as demonstrated by a study conducted by Keanery, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt (2013) in South Africa and Australia, CE needs to be embraced as a core function of the university in order to enable social change. This study found that through using participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) as an approach to CE activities, traditional

perspectives of community-university partnerships are disrupted. This is achieved through promoting meaningful collaboration and mutual learning, and the co-creation of contextually relevant knowledge.

Research using a case study based in universities in Africa by Mtawa et al. (2016) found that different HEIs conceptualise and operationalise CE in different ways. Different forms of CE range from philanthropic models to those that actively promote change and community empowerment (Preece, 2016). Bender (2008) proposes 3 conceptual models for understanding CE in HE. In the Silo model universities are seen as having three distinct functions: teaching and learning, research, and CE. These functions are pursued independently to each other, and CE is seen as a separate and voluntary activity. In the Intersecting model there is an acknowledgement that there exists some intersection between the three functions of the university. For example, intersection may exist between teaching and learning and CE, resulting in service-learning; and intersection may exist between research and community engagement, resulting in community-based research. However, where there is no intersection, separate activities exist such as volunteerism. The Infusion (cross-cutting model) argues that the university has two functions: teaching and learning, and research. In this model, CE is defined as:

> a fundamental idea and perspective infused in and integrated with teaching and learning, and research. In this model community engagement is informed by and conversely informs teaching and learning, and research. Teaching and learning, and research are enriched in the context of community engagement; and community engagement in turn is enriched through the knowledge base of teaching and learning, and research (p. 89).

In this third model, the university is regarded as a 'community-engaged university' where there exists an intentional balance between teaching, research, and engagement activities (Bender, 2008). This third model supports that notion that CE is moving towards being located as a knowledge function of the university as opposed to merely being seen as supporting communities (Mtawa et al., 2016).

Building on the conceptual models of CE outlined earlier, Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi and Herremans (2010) propose three types of CE activities. This proposal is made based on findings from a study they conducted, using a systematic review of over 200 academic and practitioner knowledge sources. These type of CE activities proposed by Bowen et al (2010)

are transactional, transitional, and transformational. In transactional engagement the relationship between the community partner and HEI is unidirectional and reflects one-way communication with occasional interaction, typically from the HEI to the community partner. Trust is also limited. In transitional engagement consultations and collaborations are incorporated into the engagement, however there is no commitment to a full partnership and the HEI still holds most of the power. There is no co-framing of priority issues, and while resources may be shared these remain in the control of the HEI. In this form of engagement trust is evolutionary, emerging because of repeated exchanges between the community partner and the HEI. Transformational engagement is an approach that reflects mutuality through having a two-way process that encompasses joint learning, co-management, and a shared control. Transformational engagement is framed as moving beyond talk into action and thus encompasses attentive listening, active dialogue, and reflexivity, with a focus on the potential for unequal power dynamics in the partnership. Trust assumes a relational form as it is developed through personal relationships and shared understandings (Bowen et al., 2010).

Building on this, a useful framework for understanding different approaches to CE is a continuum which includes consultation, consent, involvement, and participation. Consultation embraces interaction with communities (Lazarus et al., 2015). While it denotes the provision of information to community partners with the request for feedback, it does not presume that there will be a shift in what is done and how it is done (Eksteen et al., 2012). Consent focuses on getting approval from communities for an initiative (Lazarus et al., 2015). Involvement may incorporate community partners in the project (Lazarus et al, 2015), however it usually means that the HEI has decided on both the decision-making processes and implementation structures, with the community partner simply being encouraged to be involved without having power to decide on the suitability of these processes or structures (Eksteen et al., 2012). Participation entails community partners being involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the project. Drawing on a South African study conducted using university-affiliated participatory enactment of CE as a case example, Seedat (2012) asserts that participatory forms of engagement emphasise community knowledge, agency, control, and ownership which are all ideal outcomes of community-centred development. Participatory engagement entails an ongoing relationship between HEIs and community partners and emphasizes shared

ownership. In this form of engagement solutions are in local cultural, social, environmental, and organizational contexts (Eksteen et al., 2012).

Since the mid-1980s, discourse and practice around CE has shifted towards a more inclusive and reciprocal relationship between HEIs and the communities that they partner with (Bender, 2008). Further to this, in South Africa, particularly at RU, there has been a shift from seeing CE as the third pillar of HEIs (alongside teaching and learning, and research), to being integrated into both teaching and learning, and research (Preece, 2013a); infusing and enriching these activities with a sense of context, relevance and application (Bender, 2008).

CE needs to be a dynamic, participatory, and reflexive dialogical process that embraces the building and sustaining of authentic relationships. In a study conducted in two low-income neighbourhoods in South Africa, Eksteen et al (2012) established that CE is inclusive of marginalised voices and fosters social justice and citizenship. In another study amongst trainee psychologists in the Eastern Cape, principles of democratic citizenship are highlighted, and students' social awareness is encouraged (Akhurst & Odendaal, 2018). Such work needs to be grounded on the principles of justice, empowerment, critical consciousness, and self-determination (Eksteen at al. 2012).

CE can be defined as a process of bringing together different and often multiple stakeholders, to build relationships in collaborative ways with the goal of improving the collective well-being of all (Maurrasse, 2010). It is a process of knowledge exchange between HEIs and local communities, which is of mutual benefit (Mtawa, Fongwa & Wangenge-Ouma, 2016). Partnership-working in CE is characterised by mutual respect and participation in relation to the planning, management, and evaluation of collaborative activities (Eksteen et al., 2012).

CE has been found to support student learning and development. It heightens students' knowledge and understanding of their local communities. It also develops students' "skills, disposition, and habits to work with others in a democratic way towards the common good" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2010, p. 413). A research study conducted on a module taught collaboratively between the Psychology and Social Work departments in two HEIs in the province of the Western Cape in South Africa found that students develop the capacity to be

global citizens who contribute to the common good (Carolissen et al., 2010). Through CE students are prepared not merely for employment but to be responsible citizens through being civically engaged and socially responsible (Bender, 2008). CE has the potential for "transforming higher education in relation to societal needs, and for producing graduates with a sense of civic responsibility and an ability to apply the theory of their disciplines to local development issues" (Bender, 2008, p. 83). It is then hoped that such graduates will transfer such learnings into their workplaces and civic lives.

Outcomes for students who participate in CE include self-reported gains in civic responsibility, life skills, and academic development (Bringle & Hatcher, 2010). According to Gugerty and Swezey (1996) CE activities as learning opportunities for students need to include:

1. The location of the activities in the local community,
2. Students' interactions with community partners being based on mutual goals and democratic processes, forming reciprocal relationships, and
3. Structured reflection sessions.

For community engagement to be educational for students, students should be challenged to continuously reflect on their engagement (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). South African authors Gilbert and Sliep (2009) encourage moving beyond this act of self-reflexivity to reflexivity within relationships between people. This supports the idea of inviting community partners to facilitate and/or participate in these reflection sessions, legitimising their role as educators in the learning process (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). This type of reflexivity creates an opportunity of coming to new understandings and generating new social practices; a process of working collaboratively to transform current practices. In addition, there needs to be a progressive move from reflection to acting on the learning from this reflecting; understanding reflexivity as a relational process that builds engagement (Gilbert & Sliep, 2009).

Mintz and Hesser (1996) propose four critical elements that lend themselves to thoughtful CE. These are:

1. Orientation: important first steps in community engagement for both community partners and students. It is important to provide sufficient information from the onset about the terms of engagement.

2. Community voice: it is important to incorporate this as it is essential in building bridges, making change, problem solving, and to combat exploitation or differing expectations, etc.
3. Meaningful action: all engagement needs to be necessary and of value to both the community partner and the students. Lazarus et al (2015), reflecting on a study they conducted in a low-income community in the Western Cape in South Africa, add that collaborative community asset mapping and action planning is crucial in paving a way for meaningful action.
4. Reflection: a crucial component of community engagement, as it places the experiences into a broader context (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

In designing CE activities as learning opportunities for students, RUCE employs the three strategies that Gugerty and Swezey (1996) outline, by ensuring that CE activities are located in Makhanda, are based on mutually identified goals with community partners, and regular reflection sessions are part of the structured programme. In addition, RUCE includes the four critical elements that lend to thoughtful CE, as outlined by Mintz and Hesser (1996), by ensuring that all student volunteers are trained on CE principles before engaging in any activities, the voices of community partners are incorporated in the design of the activities as well as the training sessions, and activities are mutually beneficial making use of ABCD.

Drawing on Bender's (2008) theories, D. Hornby (personal communication, January 5, 2016) notes that the aim at Rhodes University is to infuse community engagement across the university, supporting the recommendation that it should be "institutionally embedded and cross cutting with teaching and research" (Preece, 2013a, p. 270). Therefore, while one could say that RU currently appears to use more of the Intersecting model, there are strides being made to move towards the Infusion model.

In addition to this, RUCE aims to engage in transformational engagement (Bowen et al., 2010) with community partners, in building mutually beneficial partnerships where knowledge and resources are shared equitably. A model of co-management is proposed, where there is joint planning, action, and reflection (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020a). This kind of relationship encourages a participation approach, where there is an emphasis on "community knowledge, agency, control and ownership, and power

differentials." (Lazarus et al., 2015). Such approaches thus aim towards all participants experiencing some form of transformation.

Partnerships in community engagement

The following section covers important principles that should be characteristic of CE partnerships. These include engaging in participatory ways, amplifying the voices of community partners, understanding community partner contexts, collaboration and reciprocity, effective communication, mutuality, an awareness of power differentials, and building community capacity.

South Africa has a history of colonisation and apartheid. These legacies necessitate that we engage in participatory ways to shift hierarchies of power, with an aim of decolonising hegemonic Eurocentric views that are still prevalent, thus addressing dominant power relations (Lazarus et al., 2015). This calls for partnerships in CE to be transformative of both people, systems, and structures; with community relationships being of central importance in CE approaches (Eksteeen et al., 2012).

Amplifying the voices of community partners

HEIs are starting to recognise that authentic partnerships with local communities are crucial for social change (Wood, 2016). However, achieving these authentic partnerships is difficult, for various reasons. Voices of community partners are largely missing from the literature, although those of HEIs from English-speaking contexts have been widely documented. For true partnership to be realised, community partner voices need to be amplified (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). Bortolin (2011) conducted a study where they analysed examples of the word 'community' from 25 of the articles published in the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*. This study concluded that CE discourse communities predominantly produce scholarship that is written for and by scholars, and in the process marginalise the very communities which they seek to serve. While there exists extensive literature on institutional CE within HE, perspectives from communities remains an underdeveloped area of study (Barrera, 2015). Additionally, forms of knowledge that have been produced have had insignificant positive impacts on the lives of people in such communities, as has been found in a study conducted by Wood (2016) in

a socio-economically challenged community in South Africa. There is a concern that community voice is less often heard (Preece, 2016). In an earlier South African study conducted by Preece and Manicom (2015) it was found that maximising mutual benefit is important, and that this can be done through building in a feedback loop where community partners are invited to participate. This creates opportunities for shared ownership, with an acknowledgment that knowledge creation is not confined to academia. It is therefore important to undertake research that seeks to understand CE partnerships from a community partner perspective, and that such research is co-designed and more collaborative, for example forms of Action Research, so that communities can benefit more from it.

Understanding community partner contexts

In building a meaningful relationship, it is important for HEIs to learn about the communities in which they are situated. This involves learning about the community's history and understanding the community's rich traditions and values, and how these contribute to and influence lives in the community (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). It is important to not just understand, but to also respect the historical and current dynamics of communities (Lazarus et al., 2015). HEIs also need to understand fully the community dynamics, with the willingness to adapt and develop structures and processes with the aim of making them more relevant to the communities they seek to partner with (Bender, 2008).

Community partners must have the freedom to decide what is best for them, drawing on their lived realities (Wood, 2016). Additionally, as has been demonstrated in a study conducted in South Africa on two Master's-level courses in community psychology by Akhurst and Odendaal (2018), community partners should be encouraged to use their experiences in creating more participatory forms of engagement. The word 'engagement' implies that a dialogue is encouraged between HEIs and community partners (Bender, 2008). HEIs need to view themselves as being *in* the community, to understand that they need to work *with* community partners in addressing issues of mutual concern in a collaborative manner (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Therefore, they need to be able to align their academic objectives with the community's priorities (Lazarus et al., 2015). CE programmes resulting from these partnerships need to be community-based, rather than just community placed (Wood, 2016) with community participation being foregrounded to encourage more transformative CE (Lazarus et al., 2015). This is a move away from community consultation

to involvement, participation and ultimately community ownership (Eksteen et al., 2012). Such approaches then have the potential to enable sustainability of the activities (an important community psychology consideration).

While socio-economic challenges are often addressed when a partnership is formed between HEIs and communities, it is important to note that operational challenges might hamper the development of these partnerships (Machimana et al., 2018). This South African study identified these social challenges to include rural school adversities, financial challenges, geographic and social challenges. Financial challenges were found to constrain partners' outcomes, such as education attainment; with social challenges including the use of drugs, a high prevalence of teenage pregnancy, and child-headed households in the rural community. As this rural community was geographically isolated from the HEI, this became a risk factor in the partnership. This South African study further identified operational challenges to include communication barriers, a big workload, constraints on time, having an unclear scope, not providing feedback consistently, and conflicting expectations from the partners. It was found that cultural diversity between the community partners and HEI affected effective communication, with the problem being exacerbated by members of the HEI being unable to speak the local language. Competing responsibilities that community partners had meant time constraints on the partnership, and not having regular feedback sessions impeded on the progress made in the interventions.

One should focus on the relationship development process to encourage sustainable learning and development that addresses entrenched social and structural inequalities (Wood, 2016). In this South African study, Wood (2016) found that it is important for HEI partners to be aware of the social and structural inequalities shaping the lived realities of community partners. This study proposes that partnering with local Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) promotes sustainable change, since these organisations remain in the community even after the HEI partnership has come to an end. In addition, this study proposes using a PALAR process to expand the capabilities of community partners towards the attainment of skills needed to address social and structural barriers. The removal of these barriers leads to goal attainment for community partners.

Collaboration and reciprocity

Good CE partnerships are centred around collaboration and reciprocity (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Developing effective community partnerships means that HEIs need to realise that they must work *with* as opposed to work *for* individuals and communities, thus also mitigating the risks of patronizing community partners (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Thus, appropriate structures and processes that promote accountability and optimal community participation and ownership need to be established. This was reflected in the SCRATCHMAPS project in a low-income community marked by high levels of violence in the Western Cape, South Africa (Lazarus et al., 2015).

From a HEI perspective "...communities can and should be hubs for discovering new knowledge, generating, and testing theories, translating research into action, and sharing innovations" (Seifer, 2010, p. 199). This means that spaces existing outside of what is considered formal academia should not only be embraced, but also supported as intellectual spaces. Community partners have an important role to play in student learning, through providing students with a larger worldview through their own insights and voices (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

The ideas above were illustrated in Sandy and Holland's (2006) research conducted in the USA, which used focus group discussions to explore the experiences of community partners, found that community partners emphasised the importance of relationship building in CE and cultivating a relationship with the institution extending beyond the specific CE activity. In expressing their desire to have more meaningful engagements with HEIs, community partners wanted to be recognised as co-educators of students through being integrally involved in the planning of CE activities and the ongoing monitoring of the activities. Of equal importance was having continued conversations about the development of the partnership. Additionally, a South African study by Machimana, Sefotho, Ebersöhn, and Shultz (2020) on experiences of community partners who worked with a HEI on a CE intervention indicated that CE has the potential to facilitate social justice and mobilise the use of community resources for greater good. Results from this study indicate that community partners were not lacking assets, however, were not aware of the assets that they had. Thus, engaging in partnership with the HEI resulted in awareness raising on the invaluable local resources that the community partners had.

CE in HE contributes to social justice through drawing on knowledge from diverse community engagement partners. When used intentionally, this knowledge may create transformative partnerships between HEIs and community partners (Machimana, Sefotho & Ebersöhn, 2018). One of the strengths of CE is that it brings together people who have varied experiences, aiming to collectively generate questions and seek solutions, through having a shared common ground (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). As a summary of these important points, Bender (2008, p. 91) writes that:

> Engagement is the partnership between a university's knowledge and resources with those of the public service and private sectors so as to enrich scholarship, research and innovation; enhance the curriculum and be curriculum responsive, enhance learning and teaching; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic (social) responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

Partnerships between HEIs and local communities benefit a variety of stakeholder groups; communities, students, departments and/or faculties, and universities (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). Good partnerships have the potential to impact people's daily lives through making deep community change (Pasque, 2010), with communities benefiting through building their capacity (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). HEIs partner with local communities to jointly improve their access to resources and opportunities (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003). Students benefit through learning in transformative ways and developing their values in relation to social justice issues. Departments and/or faculty benefit through transformational learning and new areas of scholarship that is more relevant and responsive (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). Therefore, for HEIs, collaborating with local communities should go beyond positive public relations stories, essentially, they need to have an emphasis on commitment and accountability over charity (Barrera, 2015). HEIs should aim to contribute to social justice through CE partnerships through constructing and transferring new knowledge, as well as through developing responsible global citizens (Machimana et al., 2018).

For this collaboration to be successful, it needs to be built on a solid working foundation over time (Strand, et al., 2003). For sustained change to take place, partnerships need to not only be developed over time, but also institutionalised. This is important for continuity

(Community Partner Summit Group, 2010) and may thus require staff investment to ensure continuity. In building an effective community partnership, it is important for all parties to respect the dignity and self-worth of others and be able to find common ground.

Ethically, there needs to be a commitment to the principle of doing no harm and an understanding of power dynamics that maintain oppression and injustice (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Community capacity building and social justice need to be explicit goals in partnerships (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). HEIs need to care about the lives of community partners beyond the development of their technical skills (Wood, 2016). There needs to be a shift away from capacity building as 'training' of community partners by HEIs and a move towards a partnership valuing equal contributions where all partners learn together, offering different assets. This approach requires genuine respect for all partners, and an acknowledgement of and engagement with different knowledge systems to prevent academic dominance (Lazarus et al., 2015).

Working from a social justice approach, HEIs partner with communities who have been previously disadvantaged and marginalized, and thus have access to fewer opportunities and resources; HEIs and communities work in partnership to collaboratively improve this access (Strand et al., 2003). Thus, pursuing transformational solutions is integral for the emancipation of disenfranchised communities, as was found in a study conducted by Machimana et al (2018) on experiences of HE and rural school partners in a South African HEI. This study (Machimana et al, 2018) found that promoting reflexivity was integral to promoting socio-cultural adeptness. Efforts of social change in a partnership will not succeed if issues of power and diversity (not only within the partnership, however within the communities) are not directly dealt with (Pasque, 2010).

Collaboration can be defined as creating a shared vision working together towards a common goal through sharing roles and responsibilities, power, and accountability, building a mutually beneficial relationship (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). It is important to note that partnerships have complex dynamics, which are like those of interpersonal relationships (Pasque, 2010). In a collaborative relationship, all partners each bring different expectations, which need to be acknowledged and negotiated on the outset (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). These expectations should be clarified through a partnership agreement, which should be reviewed periodically to prevent a breakdown in the partnership relationship

(Machimana et al., 2018). All partners bring assets to the partnership, which may be in the form of certain skills and knowledge. For genuine collaboration to occur, all partners need to develop a trusting environment, where there is a shared goal and shared responsibilities and authority. To achieve this, there needs to be regular engagement and an exchange of information, sharing resources and alternating activities while enhancing one another's capacities. This results in a foundation of trust, in a relationship that is both inclusive and reciprocal (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). For genuine partnerships to exist in an integrative manner, there needs to be room created for multiple voices and perspectives from all members of the partnership to come through, and Pasque (2010) suggests that this should take place in multiple venues; both in community as well as in HEIs venues. Successful collaborative relationships are built over time, on the foundation of a working relationship (Strand et al., 2003). For partnerships to work, they need to be "developed and implemented in a way that is transparent, equitable, sustainable, and accountable to both community and academic partners" (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010, p. 208).

Effective communication

Communication, both informal and formal, is important for a reciprocal relationship. Both community partners and members of HEIs need to be open to travelling to each other's workplaces, to gain an understanding of the environment and the nature of each other's work (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). What works in a partnership is when there is an ongoing two-way engagement process, which brings about the understanding of each other's contexts and realities. Partnerships will fail if there is no acknowledgement of this, and each party insists on their own needs being met, without taking into consideration the realities of the situation of the other party (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). From the outset, CE programmes need to be designed in a way that they benefit both communities and HEIs. Each partner needs to be aware of the others' needs and agree on respecting their needs throughout the partnership. A mission statement is jointly developed, outlining major partnership activities, a commitment to programme implementation, and a commitment to sustainability (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Participation in CE projects will only be useful to partners if it helps them to improve their lives, bearing in mind that both partners will have differing needs (Wood, 2016). Drawing on a study conducted in the North West in South Africa, Wood (2016) asserts that for this development to be sustained there needs to be a commitment made by HEIs to contribute to community partners' well-being and freedom.

Mutuality

The belief that both HEIs and communities have something to share is a prerequisite for reciprocal relationship building. Both parties need to feel equally valued. To achieve this reciprocity, programmes need to be built on community assets, and address community needs as defined by local communities (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). For expectations and assets to be balanced, in trying to establish a mutually beneficial relationship, the nature of the power vested in each partner needs to be actively articulated (Mintz and Hesser, 1996). This means HEIs should refrain from working from a top-down approach, transmitting knowledge, and creating dependency, instead community partners should be capacitated to work towards more equitable ways (Machimana et al., 2018).

An awareness of power differentials

CE has multi-layered complexities, including power relations. Power and knowledge are interdependent (Foucault, 1980). "Power and knowledge are associated with authority to know, and circulated through agents of power (university academics, students, community members)" (Preece, 2016, p. 106). This power relationship is insufficiently analysed in relation to CE, thus the pedagogical goal of CE activities should be "to raise awareness of these power differentials and the need to foster independence rather than dependence" (Preece, 2016, p. 108 - 109). An exploration of power dynamics, in a South African study conducted by Preece (2016) suggested a possibility in stimulating new understandings amongst students during a short period of time.

Power differentials may entrench systems of oppression and unequal relationships, and therefore it is important to advocate for participatory forms of engagement (Seedat, 2012). Power should be seen as constantly circulating with no fixed end point, as both HEIs and community partners will have power at some point of the relationship. For example, community partners will have contextual knowledge, and should this not be shared it denies the HEI an opportunity to learn. Likewise, HEIs come with pedagogical and theoretical perspectives and should these not be shared with community partners, the opportunity to learn is denied. Power is thus omnipresent, meaning that everyone is always implicated in the workings of power. Power is exercised continually in interpersonal relationships, even

though the people involved might not always be aware of it nor acknowledge it. Practices that supposedly equalise power relations are subject to those very power relations. Rather than seeing community partners as passive and powerless beneficiaries of CE activities, it is important to examine how they are already exercising power and look carefully at how such power operates (Osman & Attwood, 2007).

There are various factors that motivate communities to partner with HEIs. The most obvious motivating factor is where the community partner needs assistance and the HEI is seen as having valuable resources, such as knowledge, access to decision makers, and possibly also money that the community partner can access. This may cause a power imbalance where the community partner is seen as the beneficiary and the institution is seen as the benefactor, as was found in a study conducted by Barrera (2015) on two CE programmes in a HEI in the United States. The positionality of HEIs may further entrench power differentials due to people's perceptions and positioning (Lazarus et al., 2015), therefore partnerships should not be formed merely because of a need to access resources that the other party has. It is important that there are shared goals (Barrera, 2015). Enabling communities to take responsibility for decision-making steers them away from developing a relationship based on dependency (Preece, 2016). In an earlier study conducted by Preece and Manicom (2015) on a CE project, which was a partnership between the University of Free State and the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa, it was highlighted that students' participation in CE had to be on the community partners' terms; enforcing a sense of ownership from the community partner that should not be undermined.

CE needs to take on a collaborative partnership approach; where there is inclusive participation, mutual benefits, and equitable power-sharing. Principles of self-determination and justice need to be upheld (Lazarus et al., 2015). If decision making in partnerships is unilateral, and there is inequitable distribution of power, resources or a lack of commitment, the partnership will not work (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). Implementing change is not the responsibility of one partner, however it should be a collaborative effort (Machimana et al., 2018). This South African study by Machimana et al. (2018) found this to be challenging however, due to the unequal power relations that exist between HEIs and community partners. Thus, the authors adopted the view of being agents for advancing social justice through working in collaborative ways with community partners.

Communities need to be at the centre of engagement and learning, to achieve social justice and effective partnerships, and build community capacity (Seifer, 2010). HEIs are perceived to hold a position of greater power, therefore in partnering with communities it is important to adopt "the view of being an agent for advancing social justice working in collaboration with all the partners involved" (Machimana, 2018, p. 179). Social justice, for the purposes of this research, is defined as the equitable distribution of power and resources in society (Carolissen et al., 2010). Seedat (2012, p. 490) adds that

> From a critical perspective community engagement therefore goes further than including marginalized voices and engendering community participation and control in the design, implementation and assessment of development initiatives. Informed by counter-hegemonic discourses and methodologies, critical enactments are mindful of the potential to exercise power unequally and committed to destabilizing power relationships. Critical enactments aim for liberatory forms of community agency.

It is important to not regard communities as merely teaching or research opportunities, as this implies and reinforces power relations and perpetuates a hierarchy, which creates harm and causes distrust in communities. HEIs need to be aware of hierarchies of power which may create myths about communities and HEIs alike. One of these myths, believed by both HEIs and community partners, is that people associated with HEIs have superior knowledge, assuming that they know better how to solve local challenges, without considering the knowledge and expertise of local communities. Another myth, linked to this, is that a rigid hierarchy of knowledge exists, with lecturers being on top the hierarchy, students second, and community partners knowing the least. In contrast, community partners are the best positioned to know local assets and challenges and may have several ideas of how to address these challenges (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

Drawing on the ideas of Gugerty and Swezey (1996) above, a Californian study conducted by Jorge (2003) found that some students involved in service-learning continued contact with community partners that they had worked with, during their period of study, as well as after their period of study had come to an end. This study also found that due to the mutually beneficial relationship (Bender, 2008) that the community partners had built with the HEI, they were able to build capacity to effect small-scale social change and community development. The design of the service-learning programme was such that it provided a

space for people of different socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds to interact in mutually beneficial ways. Community partners involved in this programme had opportunities to interact with the students through engaging in various on-campus activities. This introduced the community partners to experiences that may have otherwise have not had. When the programme started, community partners were invited to contribute to its conceptualisation through bringing in their own knowledge. However, in the beginning, often the community partners looked on the HEI as 'experts' to give input. As the relationship developed the community partners gained more confidence to contribute their own ideas. The community partners realised that the programme was aimed at both the students' and their own learning, where an exchange of information happened. The community partners brought with them experiential knowledge, and the students brought with them knowledge that they had learnt from textbooks. This ensured that both parties benefited from the engagement.

HEIs often do not value community knowledge and expertise (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). Community partners must be acknowledged as experts and thus ensure that programmes are relevant and appropriate to the identified community priorities and needs. The Ukuphepha Child Study Community Engagement Model (UCSEM) located in vulnerable communities in Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, is an example of a programme developed in consultation with and participation from community partners (Eksteen et al., 2012). Exclusion of community partners from attempts to address local challenges in a collaborative way stems from the failure of HEIs viewing themselves as being a part of their communities. Shared learning is important, and community partners are important stakeholders in knowledge generation and dissemination (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). If people are to be involved in shaping their own development, it is more likely to be more relevant and sustainable (Osman & Attwood, 2007). For a partnership to work, there needs to be an acknowledgement that knowledge from HEIs is not more credible than knowledge from communities, and that knowledge from communities is not only credible but also invaluable to achieving successful partnerships (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). This is something that is really challenging to both partners, and power relations need to be negotiated in situations where university knowledge has 'greater legitimacy' over community knowledge (Preece, 2016).

Building community capacity

One of the long-term goals in a collaborative partnership may be the potential of further developing capacities of communities and enhancing their roles as teachers in community development. This can be seen in the Trenton Centre for Campus-Community partnerships where, after two years of the consortium being established, a series of capacity-building workshops was developed; allowing community partners an opportunity to offer seminars and training sessions (Strand et al., 2003). In a reciprocal relationship, the assumption is that all partners take on the roles of both learner and teacher; and they learn from and teach one another. The role of HEIs is to listen to and learn from community partners, collaborating with them in building reciprocal relationships to best address local challenges together (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). In a reciprocal relationship, it is understood that students learn not just from the lecturer, but also from their peers and their community partners. Secondly, lecturers also learn from their peers, their students, as well as their community partners. This then stresses the importance of capacities and assets of all partners in CE (Mintz & Hesser, 1996) as well as respectful listening and learning. For lecturers to be in the role of a learner, and community partners to be in the role of experts and teachers is an important role reversal. This is however not easy. Partnerships work best when they are structured in such a way that skills of community partners are developed; and do not work when HEIs see communities only as research subjects, and not participants, thus not involving community partners and fully engaging in meaningful ways with them (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010).

Partners in CE need to ask themselves whether the partnership is truly collaborative and whether reciprocity guides all aspects of the engagement. Effective engagement ensures that all partners are engaged in responsible and challenging actions for the common good (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Drawing on the key issues raised by Mintz and Hesser (1996) and Gugerty and Swezey (1996) above, a South African study conducted by O'Brien (2009) found that where institutions drive and monitor the activities, and manage the funds, they hold the primary responsibility of the project. This is translated in them being afforded considerable power in what is deemed to be a 'partnership'. This study therefore asserts the importance of sharing responsibilities in trying to build more equitable partnerships. This study also

highlighted the importance of recognising community partner organisations as learning sites to be important in the altering of power relations.

To summarize the main points made in this sub-section, it is useful to consider Fitzgerald et al. (2010) who propose four key concepts that should underpin HEIs' approach to community partnership development:

1. Community embeddedness – community engagement programmes need to be embedded in the local community.
2. Asset-based solutions – building on the strengths and assets of community partners.
3. Building community capacity. Capacity building requires for the community partners to be involved in developing community programmes and that they feel the benefits.
4. Partnering with collaborative networks – building networks in the community that are both collaborative and sustainable.

For effective partnerships to emerge, the following process components must be evident: there needs to be respect that is demonstrated towards community resources, there needs to be a structure of regular communication, and there needs to be a development of shared goals (Barrera, 2015). A partnership model emerges when communities and HEIs seek to intentionally develop one another by joining resources to meet each other's needs, paying attention to both partners' assets and needs. A collaboration model means that partners become interdependent in important ways and agree on a common agenda to address relevant social issues. What is distinctive in such approaches is that the HEI becomes a valuable contributor to the community development process, through having a sustained presence in the community (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Community partners then participate more fully in the engagement process and have a say in the design, implementation, and evaluation of CE programmes (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). As collaborative partnerships develop, the sharing of resources occurs (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the ethic of *ubuntu* and has considered the effects of colonisation and the needs to word towards decolonisation in the context of HE. It attempts to show a

link between these two concepts and the value of CE in HE. It looks at how CE activities that are designed by taking into account ways in which the principles outlined by Gugerty and Swezey (1996) and Mintz and Hesser (1996) may encompass ethics of *ubuntu* and have the potential to contribute to the decolonisation of HE. Elements of successful partnership building have been considered, which have been illustrated by some examples. The following chapter will map out the methods employed in conducting this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used in conducting this research, to answer the research questions. This chapter starts off by outlining the theoretical framework that this research is situated in, then outlines the ethical considerations used. The research designed is explained, followed by a description of the multiple case study approach and the methods used to collect data as part of this approach. The pragmatics of data collection, transcription, and analysis are explored, followed by a section detailing the trustworthiness of this research. The chapter ends with a reflection, which outlines my position in relation to this research.

The research question was:

- What are the students' as well as the partners' experiences of building and managing partner relationships (the co-management of community engagement activities)?

Further research questions were:

- How do students and partners experience jointly planning, executing, and reflecting on community engagement activities, in which they are involved together?
- What are the emerging insights and issues over time?

The main aim of the research questions was not to inform changes in practice over time, but rather to provide a space to reflect on these practices.

Social constructivism

Guided by the central idea of constructivism that you do not learn from your experience, but rather from reflecting on that experience (Pitsoe, 2007), this reflective multiple-case study research uses a social constructivist approach to understand partner relationships within the context of CE in HE. Social constructivism emphasises the social construction of knowledge through interaction with others (Moyo & Perumal, 2019).

Social constructivism is closely related to transformative learning, and is about how people make meaning (Atwater, 1996) from interpreting their own experiences (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018). It is concerned with the contributions of social interactions, placing a high value on the context of these. This means that the way that people communicate reflects their cultural

perspectives (Atwater, 1996) and knowledge is thus seen as being socially constructed (Moyo & Perumal, 2019). People construct meaning and build on this meaning through drawing on the knowledge that they have already acquired. This knowledge is based on previous experiences and how these experiences are internalised by being organised into knowledge structures. An understanding of the world is constructed through interpreting these experiences (Pitsoe, 2007).

Social constructivism has multiple roots, which are based on psychologists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's research. Piaget's research, understood to be based on cognitive constructivism, defined acquiring knowledge as a process of accommodation, assimilation, and equilibration. Accommodation is a process of creating new schemas to account for a new experience. Assimilation involves incorporating new experiences into old experiences. Equilibration is an attempt to bring about a state of equilibrium. Piaget argued that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences, which are internalised cognitively in the form of schemas (Hằng, Meijer, Bulte & Pilot, 2015). Vygotsky, considered to be the most influential theorist in the field of constructivism (Pitseo, 2007), disagreed with Piaget's notion that learning could be separated from its social context. Instead, Vygotsky advocated for the importance of context and cultural influences in forming understanding: meaning that learning is seen as a social construct, rather than a purely individual process, which is mediated by language via social discourse. Interactions with others are thus primary, leading to internalisation of cognitive processes that have first been constructed in a social context (Hằng et al., 2015). Cognitive change can only take place when new information is processed. Further to this, Vygotsky noted that knowledge cannot be objective, it is co-constructed through interaction with others. Social interaction and negotiation are seen as important and knowledge is understood to be inherently social, being embedded in a particular cultural setting. It is thus seen as a human construction (Pitsoe, 2007).

Schreiber and Tomm-Bonder (2015, p. 657) state that "Constructivism has its roots in symbolic interactionism and contains an emphasis on human agency in which people act, interact, negotiate and renegotiate meanings, thus researcher and researched are together in a cycle of meaning-making". This means that social aspects are foundational in the knowledge construction process (Hằng et al., 2015). Reality is thus understood to be created by interpretation and discursive practices, through which people form and modify meanings.

The goal of research in social constructivism is to understand participants' views (Creswell, 2007). In social constructivist research "people are seen to actively create their worlds of meaning, based on their understandings and the actions and interactions that result" (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015, p. 657). This means that people develop subjective meanings, that are varied and multiple, in understanding their experiences. These meanings are negotiated socially through interacting with others. They are also negotiated historically and culturally through individuals' cultural norms (Creswell, 2007).

In constructivism, research reciprocity is used to try to shift the power imbalance. This is done through being non-judgemental and listening closely to what participants have to say, so that the findings are an accurate representation of what they say; to ensure that participants can recognise their voices (Schreiber & Tomm-Bonde, 2015). Language and dialogue are thus critical elements in the processes (Singh, 2011).

A framework of social constructivism was used for this research, to investigate the evolving development and the meanings attached to partner relationships, particularly for community partners. These partner relationships are between CE representatives at RU and community partners who are registered with the RUCE office. The aim was to investigate how power (Donaldson & Daughtery, 2011) is negotiated between the CE representatives and the community partners (Mitchell, 2008), and how the CE representatives and community partners find their 'voices' in this context (Akhurst, 2016). Social constructivism provided an opportunity to explore the developing community partnerships in this specific context as they have evolved over time.

Ethical considerations

This research was granted ethical clearance by the relevant ethics committee (PSY2017/52) and it adhered to an ethical code of conduct as outlined in the *ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct* (American Psychological Association, 2017). Please see Appendix 4 for the ethical approval letter. Additionally, the data reported in this research have been reported with due care to produce an accurate report that is free of plagiarism (McBride, 2013).

Two fundamental ethics questions are “what are morally acceptable research topics, and what are morally acceptable methods to research a particular topic?” (Goddard & Melville, 2001, p. 108). This means that one needs to act in an ethical manner in choosing a research topic and in choosing methods to answer the research question. Central to ethical considerations is doing no harm, this is both physical and psychological harm (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Three additional major principles and responsibilities of researchers are beneficence, respect for participants, and justice (McBride, 2013).

Beneficence means ensuring that as a researcher you maximise benefits for the participants and minimise risk (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). Benefits need to outweigh risk, and participants need to be treated humanely (McBride, 2013). The researcher also has an obligation to ensure that considerations are extended beyond the research participant and should take societal potential loss of benefits into account. Beneficence is a mandate to promote good, as the researcher. Therefore, where there may be a lack of explicit benefits for the participants there need to be societal benefits, and every effort should be made to protect the participants from risk of harm (Ross, Iguchi & Panicker, 2018).

Respect for participants refers to ensuring that participation in the research is voluntary and that informed consent is given by the participants (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). This also means giving participants an opportunity to ask questions and making them aware that they have a right to withdraw from the research (McBride, 2013). Respect for participants recognises that participants are autonomous individuals, who have a right to self-determination. This principle also extends to those who may be capable of less self-determination due to having vulnerabilities (Ross et al., 2018).

Justice means ensuring that there is a fair distribution of research benefits (Fisher & Anushko, 2008) and the burdens of research (Ross et al., 2018). Additionally, the selection of participants needs to be fair with no participants being unfairly selected (McBride, 2013). Research participants need to be recruited based on the purposes and anticipated outcomes of the research. The researcher needs to pay careful attention to the rationale of exclusive selection of participants from certain groups (Ross et al., 2018).

Informed consent needs to be given even when there is no perceived harm resulting from the research (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Informed consent includes informing the participants about the aims and the research and what their participation will entail (McBride, 2013). Participants gave informed consent to participate in this research and there was no deception (Dane, 1990).

Before filling in a consent form (McBride, 2013) participants were provided with all the necessary information pertaining to the research so that they could make a well-informed decision on whether to participate or not (Dane, 1990). This information consisted of the potential benefits of participating, as well as the potential risks (McBride, 2013). The potential benefits were learning something new about themselves and other participants, fostering good relationships amongst the participants, and the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the ECD Residence Programme. Other potential benefits included improving the programme that they were a part of. The potential risks were being feeling offended or embarrassed. The information to participants and consent forms can be found in Appendices 5 & 6.

Participants were also informed that they had a right to withdraw their consent (McBride, 2013; Dane, 1990) at any stage of the research process, if they felt that they had concerns that could not be addressed and were encouraged to bring any concerns that they had to the attention of the researcher. Additionally, participants were provided with information on how to get further professional support should the need arise, due to being involved in the research process. Fortunately, none of the participants needed this.

Voluntary participation and informed consent ensured self-determination (Dane, 1990). Participation in this research was voluntary, which means that there was no coercion and participants were aware of what the research process entailed (Dane, 1990; McBride, 2013). Participants were informed that choosing to not participate in the research would not affect them negatively.

Participants were not incentivised for participating in this research (McBride, 2013). Light refreshments were provided for the focus group discussions and participants were thanked for their time at the end of the data collection process. Costs that participants incurred

because of participating in the research were reimbursed. These costs were related to traveling to the interview venue (Fisher & Anushko, 2008).

The aim was to maintain confidentiality in this research, in that only the researcher should be aware of the participant's identities (Dane, 1990). However, as the researcher I struggled with the idea of maintaining anonymity, because as Parker (2005, p. 18) writes "one of the effects of the attempt to conceal a participant's identity is that they are thereby denied the very voice in the research that might originally have been claimed as its aim". This was particularly true for this research, as literature show that the voices of community partners have largely been marginalised (Akhurst, 2016), and therefore one of the aims of this research was to amplify community partner voices. It was thus important in this research to not opt for a one-size fits all approach with regards to confidentiality and anonymity, and to rather negotiate with individual participants what they wanted out of the research (Lovell & Akhurst, 2018). As it turned out, all the participants wished to remain anonymous, thus all the research findings have been anonymised by using pseudonyms and codes.

Research design

Mkabela (2015, p. 285) writes that "psychological research methods respect communities' cultural beliefs…". Community psychology emphasises the importance of conducting research that is relevant, responsive, and useful to community interests, and has practical benefits for communities. Research in community psychology aims to challenge existing skewed power relationships in communities, while constructing knowledge that is useful in promoting community well-being (Swart & Bowman, 2013). Thus, the aim of this research was to provide the community that I was working with (i.e., the participants of the ECD Residence Programme who were part of this research) with information that is useful and would meet their needs. This was done through providing a reflective space in the interviews and focus group discussions, hoping that this would be beneficial to enhance their insights. Interviewing the participants in the early stages of designing the ECD Residence Programme might bring about changes in not only the programme structure, but also the lives of the participants as they will get a chance to learn through the reflection.

In doing this kind of research it is important to take a social justice approach, being accountable to research participants. Values and principles that were upheld during the

research process included those of self-determination, participation, collaboration, empowerment and conscientisation (Swart & Bowman, 2013). In community psychology research, community partners are never seen as subjects, but as participants and in addition to this, researchers cannot strive to be neutral but are seen as an active participant in the research process. Researchers take on a particular set of principles, values, and political positions throughout the research process. Thus, embracing reflexivity (Gilbert & Slien, 2009) was key in this type of research, and adopting a critical stance to my own engagement, being critical of positioning and practices as a researcher. Embracing criticality and self-reflexivity ensures that as the researcher one does not reproduce and/or reinforce patterns of inequalities, but rather hopes to challenge social injustice.

It is important to have a reflexive stance in research as this is both ethical and accountable (Lichtman, 2014). Griffiths (2009, p. 17) defines reflexivity as

> an explicit self-consciousness about the researcher's (or research teams' and/or the research funders') social, political and value positions, in relation to how these might have influenced the design, execution and interpretation of the theory, data and conclusions.

Social constructivism acknowledges that a researcher's own experiences may shape interpretation (Creswell, 2007). In trying to be reflexive as a researcher, I kept a reflexive journal where I recorded all my reflections, to try and make my assumptions more explicit (Lichtman, 2014). Some of these reflections are detailed in the reflection section to be found later in this chapter.

Reflective multiple case studies

This research used a reflective multiple case study approach. It was purposely designed to be reflective, premised on the idea that "human being are active beings, capable of reflection on their conditions and themselves" (Machimana et al., 2018, p. 178). It is important that participation in a research project is a learning opportunity for all; where the researcher learns something about the phenomenon under investigation and the participants learn something about themselves (Dane, 1990).

A case is a bounded system, which may be simple or complex. It is both the process and the product of inquiry (Stake, 2000). Case study research is used as a methodology when the

researcher wants to cover contextual information that they believe is important to the phenomenon of study (Creswell, 2007). A case study structure includes defining the problem or purpose, providing a context to the case, describing the issues through using multiple sources of information to provide a detailed description, and concludes with lessons that are learned from the case. It is a good idea to open the case study with a narrative vignette to draw the reader in and include a reflective epilogue at the end of the case, to bring the researcher's personal experiences into the discussion (Creswell, 2007). Case studies can be simple descriptions, be used to generate theory, or may be analytical in nature where they form the basis of cross-case comparisons. They can be explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive in nature.

The case study approach is a good approach to use when the researcher seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of a case (Creswell, 2007). A multiple case study design is a study that consists of more than one case (Yin, 2009). Typically, researchers do not choose more than four or five cases. In multiple case studies one issue is investigated, however multiple cases are constructed and analysed to illustrate this further (Creswell, 2007). It is beneficial to use multiple case studies, as the evidence is considered as more robust and compelling, as opposed to a single case study deign (Yin, 2009).

Each single case consists of an entire study, with conclusions that are considered for other cases within the multiple case study design. This individual case should consider why a certain proposition was or was not demonstrated, and then across the cases a conclusion needs to be drawn on why certain cases were predicated to yield certain conclusions, while others, (if this is the case) yielded contradictory results. The summary report focuses on conclusions drawn from both individual cases as well as all the cases combined (Yin, 2009).

The type of case study that this research focuses on is an instrumental case study. This is used to provide insight into an issue, and in the case of this research, the experiences of building and managing partner relationships within the context of CE. Using an instrumental case study design allows for facilitating an understanding of the research question, by looking at it in-depth (Stake, 2000). However, one needs to note that it may prove difficult to generalise from one case to the next, because contexts of cases differ (Creswell, 2007).

For this research, I believe that the way that the ECD Residence Programme is structured specifically for the RU and Makhanda context contributes to how partnerships work in CE. The case studies that were used in this research are exploratory in nature, with the aim that they would be analytical as well as generate recommendations, thus answering the research question and providing insight. Since a multiple case study was employed, this research consisted of four cases. Each ECD centre is the subject of one case study, however the four different ECD centres together make up a multiple case study design, following a replication design.

Typically, data collection in case study research is extensive (Creswell, 2007). A good case study makes use of various sources (Yin, 2009). For this research, the primary focus was on one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and the informal observations I made as an employee at RUCE. The aim was to also consult written reports. One-on-one interviews were done with all participants, which were followed by a focus group discussion with all participants. This process was then repeated after a period of six months had elapsed, to track whether there had been a change in the relationships. I also made informal observations as an employee at RUCE. Unfortunately, the written reports were not consulted. This is explored further below.

Interviews

One of the most important sources of information in case study research is the one-on-one interview. Interviews are guided conversations (Yin, 2009). Interviews are useful as they allow participants to provide historical information to the researcher. Semi-structured interviews are aimed at eliciting both factual and attitudinal information (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). This type of interview allows the researcher flexibility to adapt the formulation of questions as well as the terminology used to allow the interviewee to better understand the question (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Semi-structured interviews also allow for the researcher to use probes and ask follow-up questions to gain clarity and elaboration. The researcher thus follows an interview schedule (see Appendix 7), but does not do so slavishly, rather encouraging the sharing of information to occur more naturally; but then checking that all questions have been covered by the end of the interaction.

Within in-depth interviews there is an opportunity for deeper exploration, exploring both facts and opinions (Yin, 2009). The advantage of using an interview, over a questionnaire for example, is the opportunity to be able to ask for clarification where needed and ask for elaboration (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Key interviewees are often important for the success of the case study, as they can provide access to other sources of information (Yin, 2009). One however should caution against overreliance on one key informant, as they may have interpersonal influence over you.

For one-on-one interviews, researchers need participants who are open to sharing their ideas, and do not hesitate to speak, as shy interviewees may not provide rich information. This means that the researcher needs to choose an interview venue where the interviewee will be most comfortable and be skilled in probing participants who may be shy (Creswell, 2007; McNeill & Chapman, 2005). While follow up probes are useful in getting more information (Turner, 2010), it is important that researchers do not direct the interviewee's responses through the way that they phrase questions and through the tone of their voice (Goddard & Melville, 2001). Additionally, one needs to be "very aware of the ways in which knowledge and power might influence research activities" (Lovell & Akhurst, 2017, p. 5). This last quote was relevant to my positioning as an employee of RUCE.

In using a social constructivist approach, the researcher ensures that questions are open-ended and broad to allow participants to construct their own meanings (Creswell, 2007). Having open-ended questions allows the participants to contribute as much detail as they wish, fully expressing their viewpoints and experiences. This aims to yield rich and descriptive data (Turner, 2010).

A disadvantage of the interview is that information is usually provided in an 'unnatural setting', where a researcher's presence may bias the responses of the interviewee. Additionally, not all interviewees are articulate (Creswell, 2003). While the interview provides useful information, one needs to consider this a verbal report that may be subjected to problems such as bias, or inaccurate recall. A way around this, is to corroborate information received from the interview, with other sources of information. Being interested in the interviewee's opinions on issues may not warrant further corroboration however, though it might prove useful to investigate whether the opinions are a dominant theme amongst different interviewees, by comparing these to those of others (Yin, 2009).

Particularly for this research, I made use of focus group discussions as a platform to explore this aspect.

Another disadvantage to interviewing people that you have a shared understanding with may be that participants may not always elaborate on what they perceive to be shared knowledge and they may tend to give short answers. To try and overcome this I used probes in order to get a fuller understanding of what they wanted to share (Welman et al., 2005).

For this research semi-structured interviews (Welman et al., 2005) were utilised, which make them more fluid than rigid. The interview schedules can be found in Appendix 7. While the interviews for this research were semi-structured, they were also in-depth. All interviews for this research were audio recorded, to provide accurate information (Yin, 2009).

For the purposes of this research, all participants were asked to indicate a time and venue that was most convenient for them, so that they could relax during the interview, which meant that they were more likely to be open to a rich conversation. I had also built some rapport with all the participants prior to interviewing them, so that they hopefully felt free and comfortable to share their views with me.

Due to my positionality, I had to guard the way I phrased my questions and the tone that I used (Goddard & Melville, 2001) to ensure that participants felt comfortable with being honest in their responses. This is because, as McNeill and Chapman (2005) write, the 'status' of a researcher may be potentially threatening to the participant. In this case, as an employee in the RUCE office, interviewees may have initially been wary of being completely honest and they might also have wanted to please me. To try and mitigate against this at the onset I assured the participants that this research was not being conducted on behalf of RUCE, however instead I was conducting it independently as a PhD student in the Psychology Department. I also assured them that whatever they said would not jeopardise their relationship with RUCE. However, also highlighting that I am a PhD student put me in a position of 'power', as my participants could have easily perceived themselves as less knowledgeable than me because of my status. Community partners who were part of this research had a matric qualification, with some having a post-matric qualification in ECD. A matric qualification is an exit-level qualification obtained in high school. Students who were

part of this research were doing undergraduate studies. Therefore, my status as a PhD student may have intimidated my participants, and I had to be careful to not marginalise them.

Interviewees may sometimes tend to give positive responses, not always painting the whole picture (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). I noticed that this was the case in the first round of interviews, that participants were not always readily critical and could provide limited constructive criticism. Therefore, in the follow-up interviews, I re-assured participants that they could be fully honest and need not think that I only wanted to hear positive things. I emphasised that being honest meant that the programme could be potentially improved for the better, and I assured them that in my feedback to RUCE I would maintain confidentiality. As a result, in the second round of interviews participants were more open about being critical of the programme and of their relationships with RUCE.

In this research I tried to establish a trusting relationship with the research participants in order to ensure that a conflict of interest did not arise (Fisher & Anushko, 2008). One of the ways I did this was through no longer being involved in the coordination of the ECD Residence Programme, so that in taking on the role of the researcher I was hoping to make participants feel more comfortable to be honest and critical about their experiences. Although at the time of conducting this research I was an employee in the RUCE division, this research was conducted independently and there was no conflict of interest that arose.

Focus groups

Focus groups may be described as in-depth group interviews (Welman et al., 2005). They are used to get in-depth information regarding the research topic to amplify understanding (Morgan, 1996). The purpose is to elicit participants' ideas, attitudes, and feelings (Vaughn et al., 1996) and to explore why certain opinions have been formed (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). A focus group discussion typically consists of six to ten participants and is facilitated by the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The group is usually homogenous (Vaughn et al., 1996). Focus group discussions are beneficial as the collective interaction may generalise more views than one-on-one interviews may yield (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In focus group discussions participants are encouraged to speak and respond to one another rather than the researcher, with the aim of this being to allow participants to explore their own opinions and experiences using their own words (McNeill & Chapman, 2005). This

type of interaction may lead to participants forming new opinions and furthering their understanding through interacting with one another (Vaughn et al., 1996). The aim of a focus group discussion is not to bring about consensus, rather it is to allow different views to be heard on a specific topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Welman et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 1996).

One of the strengths of a focus group is that it provides insight (Morgan, 1996). Additionally, another advantage of a focus group discussion is that through participants sharing their opinions, this may lead to new ideas being considered (Welman et al., 2005). A potential disadvantage to focus group discussions as noted by Welman et al. (2005) is that participants may not feel that they can freely express their opinions due to being intimidated by the presence of other participants.

The researcher's role is to introduce the topic and facilitate the discussion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, researchers need to ensure that they take care in encouraging all participants to contribute equally to the conversation and monitor those who dominate while carefully bringing into the conversation those who are silent (Creswell, 2007). This should be done in a non-directive way, with the aim of encouraging a variety of viewpoints (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The aim of focus group discussions is not to replace one-on-one interviews, but rather to obtain richer information that might not have been obtained in a one-on-one interview (Welman et al., 2005). It is also to probe participants' emotional responses to the topic (Vaughn et al., 1996). Another aim of conducting a focus group discussion is to elicit different responses from participants (Welman et al., 2005).

Focus group discussions are an important source of data collection, especially when the interaction amongst participants yields rich information (Creswell, 2007). For this research, the focus group discussion consisted of a total of eight participants who were all part of the research. Two focus group discussions were conducted during data collection for this research. The interview schedules for these can be found in Appendix 8. To ensure that participants felt free to participate fully in the discussions, rapport was built between them before the research commenced during the ECD Residence Programme training. Additionally, at the onset of the discussion I reminded all participants that what was being

discussed was to remain confidential (Dane, 1990) and that people should not fear being judged for expressing their opinions. At the beginning of the focus group discussion participants did seem shy and did not engage as much as I hoped they would, and therefore I used prompts and asked for elaborations (Welman et al., 2005) to encourage the discussion. By the end of the discussion, all participants were participating more actively without needing to be prompted. This was especially useful for this research, as the aim was to provide a reflective space for the participants.

Observations

There are different types of observations, and for this research the plan was for the researcher to engage in participant observation, meaning actively engaging in the activities of the research participants while also observing their interactions. An advantage of doing observations is that as a researcher one has first-hand experience with the participants in the research and has an opportunity to record information as it comes to light. Additionally, observation may shed some light on some issues. However, one of the disadvantages of using observations is that it can be intrusive for the participants (Creswell, 2003). As an employee at RUCE I had the opportunity to make some observations of how the programme progressed. These observations are detailed at the end of Chapter 6 in this thesis.

Reports

An important use for documents, such as written reports, is to corroborate evidence from other sources (Yin, 2009). However, these should be used carefully and not taken as literal recordings, and it is important to always remember that they are written for a specific audience or purpose (Creswell, 2003). When these are used, it is important to ascertain under which circumstances these were produced, by whom and to determine the accuracy of them. Documents are of great value, as they may also present clues that may warrant further investigation (Yin, 2009).

The plan for this research was to consult reports that were written for the purposes of reporting on progress made on the yearly goals, for evaluation purposes. Unfortunately, during the time of conducting this research no reports were submitted by participants, as the

new coordinator no longer made it a requirement of the programme. Therefore, this method of data collection could not be used.

Sampling

The goal of research in Psychology is to understand experiences and behaviour that applies to a certain sampled group of individuals (McBride, 2013). The goal of sampling is to choose participants who may be representative of the whole population. Sampling for this research was purposive in nature, which means that it was not random and participants in this study were chosen specifically as they are a subset of the population (Dane 1990). A total of four ECD centres, who are participants in the ECD Residence Programme, were approached to participate in the study. Three of these centres had been in the programme since its inception (i.e., in 2016) and one had recently joined the programme (i.e., a year before the commencement of the data collection). The reason for this selection was to see whether ECD centres who had been in the programme longer experience it differently to those who have recently joined, as they are differently positioned to maximise variation. In addition, two of these centres had demonstrated a good working relationship with their student partners, and two had demonstrated not having succeeded as much in this regard in the previous year. Again, this was to check on the varied experiences of the ECD Residence Programme, as the sampled centres were differently positioned. Creswell (2007) refers to this as purposeful maximal sampling.

The community partners who are part of the ECD Residence Programme are typically black, middle-aged women. The majority have a matric qualification, with some also having completed a post-matric qualification in ECD. They are all residents in the various townships around Makhanda. In contrast, both male and female students are part of this programme. They are usually in their second or third year of undergraduate study at Rhodes University, and come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. This programme allows students to have contact with community partners and access to local knowledge in ways they would not normally have.

Sampling was done in a way that two conditions, which are the time spent in the programme and the quality of relationships developed in the programme, might differ across the selected participants: striving to maximise diversity (Creswell, 2007). This was to see whether the

same or different conclusions are drawn across the selected participants. This is because although the participants were differently positioned in the programme, they may experience the programme and partnership in similar ways. If the different cases produce similar results, there is literal replication across the multiple cases studied, however if they produce contrasting results for anticipatable reasons, for example because they are differently positioned, this results in a theoretical replication (Yin, 2009).

Pragmatics of data collection, transcription, and analysis

Information was gathered using one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. All interviewees were presented with the option of conducting the interviews in isiXhosa (the predominant local language in which I am fluent) or English, to ensure that they were comfortable with the language used and were able to articulate themselves well. All interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded using digital means, to provide accurate information.

All interviews and focus group discussions were manually transcribed. Transcription of this research was done verbatim as this highlights nuances and facilitates meaning making for the reader (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Play-script style was used in transcribing the interviews (King & Horrocks, 2010), meaning that naturalised transcription was used to enable as much detail as possible (Oliver, Serovich & Masson, 2005). Where interviews were conducted in isiXhosa, they were first transcribed in isiXhosa and then translated into English. This is called cross-language translation, where one translates from the source language, isiXhosa, to the target language for the writing up of the research, English. This was done in a careful manner to ensure that the nuances were captured. Semantic and content equivalence was given priority over word-for-word translation, considering the overall meaning in the translation process (Al-Amer, Ramjan, Glew, Darwish & Salamonson, 2014). As I have good command of both languages and I am acquainted with the values and cultures of the research participants, I conducted the translation myself.

Data analysis in case study research entails presenting a detailed description of the setting of the case, and the case itself (Creswell, 2007). Analysing case study information is one of the most difficult things to do, as this is an area of study that is least developed. Much of the analysis depends on the researcher being able to think carefully, and present all information

sufficiently, while considering alternative interpretations to the conclusions made (Yin, 2009). When multiple cases are chosen, typically one first conducts a within-case analysis as they provide a detailed description of each case and themes. This is followed by a cross-case analysis as well as an interpretation of the meaning of the case (Creswell, 2007).

Analysis for this research followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, which are regarded as a foundational to analysis in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is defined as a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting on themes that appear in your data. Further to this, thematic analysis provides a rich description of the findings and interprets various aspects of your research area. This form of analysis is beneficial to use due to its flexibility.

Themes may be identified in an inductive, 'bottom-up' way which means that the researcher codes the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame. However, themes may also be identified in a theoretical, 'top-down' way which means that the analysis is driven by the researcher's analytic or theoretical interest in the research area (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the case of this research, I used a theoretical, 'top-down' approach.

In qualitative research, data analysis consists of sorting the information, coding it into themes, and finally representing it through a discussion. Data analysis in case study research entails presenting a detailed description of the setting of the case, and the case itself (Creswell, 2007). Continuously immersing oneself in the data is a critical part of analysis (Lichtman, 2014).

The six phases of thematic analysis that Braun and Clarke (2006) propose should not be taken as linear: the process is recursive which demands that the researcher moves back and forth as needed throughout the phases. Data analysis in qualitative research is not a linear process, but rather is a circular one that produces a descriptive narrative (Creswell, 2007). These six phases are: familiarising yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Familiarising oneself with the data entails complete immersion in the data, ensuring close knowledge. It is therefore advised that the data is first read through before the coding process

begins. It is also advisable to write down notes on initial thoughts during this stage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When analysing data, Creswell (2007) proposes entire reading of transcripts several times, getting a good idea of the whole before breaking it into smaller segments. While reading, it is important to make notes in the margins, as thoughts occur. These initial notes serve as a description that will play an important role in the final analysis. During this process, codes develop that can be exact words used by participants (*in vivo* codes), or code names drawn from the Social Sciences discipline or codes names that the researcher feels best fit the description. These code names can represent information that the researcher expected to find, did not expect to find, or is conceptually interesting.

The second phase begins once researchers have fully immersed themselves in the data and developing initial ideas. Phase three of the analysis process entails searching for themes. During this phase analysis is refocused at the broader level of themes, which means sorting all the different codes into potential themes. During this phase one considers how different codes may combine to make up an overarching theme. This phase ends with a collection of themes, sub-themes, and the extracts that have been coded in relation to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase four involves refining the already identified themes. This entails two processes; firstly, a review at the level of coded data to ensure that themes appear in a coherent pattern. Once this process is complete one considers individual themes in relation to the data while simultaneously considering whether the thematic map accurately reflects the meanings evident in the entire set of data that one is working with. Once phase four is complete there is a clearer understanding of what themes are there, how they fit in together and the overall story they tell (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five of the thematic analysis process is about further refining and defining the themes that will be presented for the analysis and analysing the data within them. This means defining the essence of what each theme is about and determining which aspect of the data it captures. At this stage one conducts and writes a detailed analysis of each theme, considering how the story the theme tells fits into the broader story about the data in relation to the research questions. As part of this one identifies whether any sub-themes exist within the theme. The names of the themes need to give the reader a clear indication of what the theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase six is the final analysis and write up of the research report. This write up needs to include data extracts and provide a concise and coherent yet interesting story that the data tells within and across the themes. This narrative goes beyond the simple description of the data and makes an argument in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When doing an analysis of case studies, one needs to consider four points. Firstly, there needs to be a demonstration that all information has been considered when drawing up conclusions. Secondly, should there be alternative interpretations, the analysis needs to address these. Thirdly, the most important aspect of the findings should be addressed in the analysis. And lastly, prior knowledge should be used in the case study, demonstrating an awareness of current thinking around the case study topic (Yin, 2009).

A strategy that was employed in this research is cross-case analysis, as this is used specifically for analysing multiple case studies (Creswell, 2007). With this technique, each case is treated individually, as a separate study (Yin, 2009). The analysis of all the four partner groupings, consisting of both the CE representatives and the community partners, selected for this research will enable the study to draw cross-case conclusions.

Analysis in this research was done in a theoretical way, which means that coding was done for a specific research question. This type of analysis requires that the researcher engages with the literature prior to doing the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After gaining a sense of the main themes of the findings, I conducted a further literature review "to establish the relationship between the results and existing knowledge" (Machimana et al., 2018, p. 182) and use the research question as a theoretical lens (Kearney et al., 2013). My own notes and reflections served an important component of data analysis. This is because the case studies might be complex, requiring details of the real-life context, which the researcher can provide through a rich description. Developing a rich description in response to the research question, is an important part of the analysis (Kearney et al., 2013). Although I primarily did all the thematic analysis, this was done in conjunction with my supervisor. My supervisor verified agreement with what I had extracted.

Trustworthiness

Case study data collection has a major strength in that different sources of information are made use of. The use of multiple sources of information in case study research provides an opportunity for the researcher to triangulate (Stake, 2000) and corroborate information. When information is triangulated, conclusions drawn are supported by more than one source of information (Yin, 2009). The different data collection methods should support one another, thus providing a rich understanding of findings. This means that conclusions drawn are likely to be more accurate and convincing when different sources of information are accessed.

Self-reflection is also important, as it contributes to the validation of the work, and writing in qualitative research is a co-construction, representing an interactive process between the researcher and the participants' accounts. How one writes reflects one's own interpretation, based on personal politics that may be cultural, social, and include gender and class, which one brings into the research process. Therefore, it is important for qualitative researchers to acknowledge this, as they shape the writing that emerges (Creswell, 2007).

The emphasis on studies in qualitative research is on the understanding of certain phenomena as they occur in their natural environments, and therefore concepts such as reliability and validity, as used in quantitative research are not useful in understanding the quality of qualitative research. Therefore, in qualitative research we use terms such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability; when the research is assessed as having achieved all of these, we can say that it is trustworthy (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to "how much trust can be given to the research process and the findings" (Bless et al., 2013, p. 236). Trustworthiness is about evaluating the quality of qualitative research (Bless et al., 2013), for example by assessing the degree of openness and clarity of the explanations provided.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is linked to internal validity in quantitative research. It tries to establish that the findings are an accurate reflection of the phenomenon under study. A study that has high credibility means that the researcher has shown that the research

questions, research design, and data collection and analysis strategies are appropriate. These need to be linked to the current literature in the field (Bless et al., 2013).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is like reliability in quantitative research. To ensure dependability of a study, researcher need to ensure that they thoroughly describe and follow a thoughtful research strategy (Bless et al., 2013). This means that a chain of evidence needs to be maintained in writing up the case studies so that the reader, who is an external observer of the case, can follow it from the initial research questions to the final conclusions made (Yin, 2009).

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research can be compared to external validity in quantitative research. Transferability means the extent to which research results may apply in other similar conditions. For transferability to occur, a researcher needs to clearly describe the context in which the data was collected, their role as a researcher, as well as their relationship to the research participants. This allows for other researchers, interested in conducting a similar study, to compare and assess similarities and differences (Bless et al., 2013).

Confirmability

In establishing the value of data, a qualitative researcher looks for confirmability (Creswell, 2007). Confirmability is like replicability and requires that other researchers who undertake the same research methodology in similar contexts obtain similar findings. This means that the researcher will need to give a critical appraisal of the methodology they have used. Social Science research endeavours to continuously produce new studies that repeat, elaborate, challenge, or defend old studies that have been done; this is only possibly if a study is high in confirmability (Bless et al., 2013).

There are many ways to increase the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, however for this research two of these were used; concurrent data collection and analysis, and triangulation (Bless et al., 2013).

Concurrent data collection and analysis refers to the importance of analysing data as it is being collected. This is to give the researcher an opportunity to refine their data collection approach, because of having engaged with the emerging results (Bless et al., 2013). Preliminary analysis is important in guiding the researcher in their data collection as moving back and forth between the data collection and analysis strengthens the study (Lichtman, 2014). For this research, during the six-month period between the initial round of interviews and focus group discussion, I did an initial analysis. What emerged from these initial findings were that the responses of the participants were quite positive and not always critical in relation to the research question. This, I felt, was not a full reflection of relationship-building in CE. CE can be quite messy, and contestations may exist in the partner relationships. Therefore, in being critical as the researcher, I found it important to probe more in the follow up interviews and focus group discussion on what these could be.

The purpose of using triangulation, is to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research, to demonstrate that the results are independent of the methodology employed in the research. When the results obtained are complimentary, through using more than one data set, then one can be confident in the trustworthiness of the research (Bless et al., 2013). There are different types of triangulation, however for this research, methodological triangulation was used. This refers to using different methods of data collection (Bless et al., 2013). For this research, data obtained from one-on-one in-depth interviews was compared to data obtained from focus group discussions and was found to be complimentary.

Reflection

The following section is a reflection on my position in relation to this research. It is also reflexive of my positioning and investment in the programme.

Due to changes at RUCE my responsibilities changed, which led to me no longer coordinating the ECD Residence Programme from the beginning of 2018. This had an impact on my role as a researcher, meaning that as I was no longer intimately involved in the coordination of the programme I could try and take on a less invested role in the research process. The impact was that although I knew the participants and had formed a relationship with them through working with them on the programme, I was no longer in direct contact

with them through being involved in the programme and had much less influence on the day-to-day decision-making that might affect them. During this time the research proposal and the ethical clearance processes had already been finalised, however the data collection process had not yet started.

Although I was not longer directly involved with the programme, the researching did however become a double-edged sword. I had to carefully navigate my insider/outsider status, which came with relational dimensions (Akhurst, van der Riet & Sofika, 2018). Familiarity with the participants meant that they could feel relaxed with me, being motivated to assist and willing to chat; however, I wondered whether they worried about being too critical as they knew that I still worked at RUCE. Feedback that I received after sharing my initial findings from the first round of interviews and focus group discussion with colleagues in a seminar in the Psychology Department was that the findings appeared to be overly positive, not showing the nuance and complexity that potentially exists in CE relationships. This confirmed my thoughts of my participants being worried about being fully transparent. I then ensured that in the follow up interviews and focus group discussion I would remind participants that I was undertaking this research in my personal capacity and it would not affect the current relationship that they had with RUCE. I also made a note to prompt participants to give further information and create a space where they would feel comfortable to give constructive criticism.

Due to my positionality, it was important to have ongoing ethical awareness (Akhurst et al., 2018). I made the following journal entry on 28 April 2017, which I believe speaks to this:

> *Reading an article and having to acknowledge that power relations between myself and my participants are unequal – even though I might try to bridge this gap. I need to acknowledge this and reflect on it at various points, because I believe the nature of the relationship is fluid in that I might have power in one instance, but in another they may power, which might make me vulnerable. If I feel vulnerable, what does this say about me? About how I view myself? About how I view my participants? About how I view our relationship? Are they feeling vulnerable when I have the power? Maybe!*

Linking this reflection to what I have stated above, I can say that perhaps at certain points my participants may have felt vulnerable, in particular the community partners. Although I had managed to build a relationship with the community partners through working with

them in previous years, the reality was that I was coming in as a PhD student when most of them did not have post-matric qualifications. That alone could be intimidating. Secondly, the reality was that I still worked at RUCE and although I could reassure them that what they said would be kept confidential and would not affect their relationship with RUCE going forward, they may have at times not been fully trusting of this.

During the second round of interviews and focus group discussion participants seemed to be more forthcoming and critical of the programme. I did however notice that the criticality mostly came from the students and, upon reflecting on this, I suspected that this could potentially be because of two reasons. Firstly, while there existed inequitable power relations between myself and the students, due to the ways we were differently positioned, perhaps the students felt less threatened about being critical due to occupying a space within the same university context that I was. They may also have been more relaxed about being critical, given their roles and knowledge base. Secondly, the second round of interviews and the focus group discussion happened during a time when the year was coming to an end and the programme was ending. Therefore, perhaps the students felt that they could be critical as they were not going to be involved in the programme in the following year and therefore would not be directly affected by anything that arose because of the research findings.

While undertaking this research I co-authored a journal article with my supervisor on the initial findings of this research (Bobo & Akhurst, 2019). The first page of this article can be found in Appendix 9. This article tried to make sense of the findings from the initial round of interviews and first focus group discussion, looking at the themes emerging from these. What I have learnt in hindsight when considering this article is how there can be a shift in the conclusions that a person draws from a study, based on the results that they analyse.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at the methods that were used in undertaking this research, detailing them. It also provides a reflection of my positionality and a link to an article that was published from the initial findings of this research. With this is mind, the reader is introduced to the four ECD partner groups that were part of this research in the following findings chapter. The findings in the following chapter are introduced through providing descriptive

information of each partner group, the goals that they had set during the year that this research was undertaken, and how each partnership unfolded during that year.

Chapter 5: Findings 1

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the four case studies that are the unit of analysis for this research. The way in which these four case studies were chosen for this research has been described in the methodology chapter. A total of eight participants (four pairs of two per site) participated in this research; four of them being RU student CE representatives (represented as CE 1, CE 2, CE 3, and CE 4) and four being community partners, who are the volunteer managers at each community partner organisation (represented as CP 1, CP 2, CP 3, and CP 4). These CE representatives and volunteer managers all worked together as part of small teams in the ECD Residence Programme.

Two rounds of one-on-one interviews (I 1 and I 2) were completed with each participant and two joint focus group discussions (FG 1 and FG 2) were attended by the participants, with a gap of about six months before each of the first and second instances. An initial round of one-on-one interviews was conducted in March, followed by a joint focus group discussion. These interviews and the focus group discussion were conducted shortly after the CE representatives and volunteer managers had completed training on principles underpinning CE at RU, and the S@M programme. At this stage, the CE representatives and volunteer managers were establishing their relationships and had agreed on the three goals that they would jointly work towards for the year. Follow up one-on-one interviews and a final joint focus group discussion were subsequently conducted after a period of six months had elapsed, in the month of September. During the intervening time relationships based upon working together had developed and the S@M project planning cycle was ending. This was at a time when CE representatives and volunteer managers were starting to reflect on the progress made on the three goals that they had set at the beginning of the year.

It is typical for volunteer managers (also referred to as community partners) to work with an average of 3 – 5 CE representatives (also referred to as student volunteers) who are part of the partnership, depending on the size of the hall of residence that they are partnered with. For the purposes of this research only one CE representative per hall was part of the research. These CE representatives were asked to participate in this research based on being the main coordinator amongst their peers in their hall. Participation was voluntary, with each of them signing an informed consent form, once the research and their participation in it was clearly explained to them, and they had read and completed the necessary forms. These forms are

outlined in the Methodology chapter. Where names of people and organisations are referred to in the findings that follow, they have been replaced using pseudonyms.

Case Study 1

CP 1 works at an ECD centre that was established in 2002 by a Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. This Bishop noticed that the young children from this area in Makhanda did not go to school, and some were victims of rape and abuse. This Bishop therefore mobilised the local church to establish this ECD centre. The volunteer manager, who is part of this centre, started working there in 2004, initially being employed as a Community Development Practitioner. At the time that she joined this centre she had been working for four years in a Multipurpose Centre in the same area.

CP 1's relationship with RUCE is longstanding as she was trained as a Community Development Practitioner through RUCE. CP 1 became a volunteer manager after being nominated by her colleagues. Her colleagues felt that due to her experience of attending meetings and interacting with diverse people, she had acquired skills to work with RU student volunteers. Additionally, she was chosen for her skills of being able to communicate in the English language. She was happy to take on this role as she felt that she was well positioned to work well with the student volunteers.

CE 1, like her volunteer manager, was nominated by her residence peers to take up the role of being a CE representative. She explains that she was particularly keen to take up this role as she personally wanted to be more involved in CE, as well as to encourage fellow residence mates to be involved. She explained:

> *From what I saw last year with our CE representative, I feel there was not enough information given to me, given that I was in first year. So, I had no idea what CE was…so, my responsibility this year was to make sure that the first years [students] understand what it is* (CE 1, I 1).

Before taking up the role to be her residence CE representative, CE 1 had very limited experience in CE beyond participating in a few events. She explained that this was due to her being unsure of what CE really was.

CP 1 was partnered with a hall that consisted of five residences, three housing females and two housing males. CP 1 thus worked with a total of 5 CE representatives. The goals of the CP 1 and CE 1 partnership for the year were: to improve the literacy skills of the learners in the ECD centre, to fundraise for the ECD centre as there had been a robbery earlier in the year, and to host the centre's anniversary celebrations in the month of September. The fundraising is crucial for the ECD centres as they receive irregular and insubstantial grants for operational matters from the government's Department of Social Development (DSD).

The most important goal was identified as the fundraising for the centre, as a lot of resources were stolen during the robbery that had happened the previous year, which negatively impacted the plans that the centre staff had for the centre. CP 1 elaborated:

> *Then it took us many steps back in that way, we could not go through with the goals that we had in 2018, because the biggest thing I wanted was that we try to bring the toilets closer. The children's toilets are far, so we are struggling when it is raining. And then to finish this, the paving, because it makes the school untidy* (CP 1, I 2).

The volunteer manager explained that they had plans to renovate the pre-school with the two focus areas being to bring the children's ablution facilities closer to the building and paving the grounds of the pre-school. The ablution facilities are currently on the periphery of the school yard, which is quite a walking distance for the young learners and proves inconvenient when it rains as they must walk in the rain. The volunteer manager also wanted to pave the school grounds so that they look neat. Unfortunately, due to the robbery these renovation plans had to be put on hold, as the funds needed to be redirected and used to buy and repair what was lost during the robbery (and the centre was not insured to cover any losses).

The robbery also negatively impacted on how the centre ran its daily activities. CP 1 explained:

> *What we were facing, the challenge is that we needed to replace the things that were stolen because we could not dish up food for them because the dishes have been stolen, and we only had a few left. The pots are gone, we cannot cook for them. I mean a lot of things, the programme couldn't go accordingly because the toys, their educational toys have been stolen you see* (CP 1, I 2).

Losing the pots, cutlery and crockery meant that food could not be adequately provided for the learners as part of the pre-school's feeding programme. This feeding programme exists

due to the high rates of poverty in Makhanda. For some of the learners, the meal they get as part of this feeding programme is the only nutritious meal they get for the day, making this programme important. Losing the educational toys also meant that the learning was disrupted as there were not enough resources to facilitate this.

At the follow-up sessions, the partner and CE representative acknowledge that the plans they made at the beginning of the year unfortunately did not materialise fully. While the students were enthusiastic about achieving the goals set, their enthusiasm did not translate into substantive progress being made towards achieving the goals. There was a lot of discussion, but limited execution. CE 1 attributes the inability to achieve any of the goals set to having too many ideas at one go and having big goals that seemed to be unmanageable and unrealistic. She elaborated:

> *I think if we started small and not be ambitious and do something big, because at the end we didn't do anything big, because at the end we couldn't do anything, because we couldn't handle it. So, yes, I think that would have been the best thing* (CE 1, I 2).

The CE representative was disappointed at not having achieved the goals that were set; however, she saw this as a learning opportunity for her and her team for future endeavours; the main takeaway for her being to be careful not to 'bite off more than one can chew'. In negotiating plans for the year, it may be necessary for facilitators at training to help partner groups reflect on what is realistic.

Although the goals themselves were not achieved, small progress was made towards achieving the second goal of fundraising for the centre. CP 1 explained:

> *We are trying, for example we did this with students, and we ran a raffle, although it did not go well. That means there is something that we have done even if it is not money, it is not a big amount, but we have something* (CP 1, I 2).

As part of the fundraising efforts for the centre, the students and the community partner sold raffle tickets to the RU and broader Makhanda community to try and generate some funds. Unfortunately, they did not generate as much money as they hoped they would. Perhaps partner groups need assistance with effective and less effective ways to fundraise.

Despite being unable to make substantive progress on the goals that they had set for the year, CE 1 and CP 1 worked together on other projects and programmes throughout the year. One

of the programmes they partnered on was *Trading Live for Nelson Mandela Week* (also referred to as *Trading Live*). *Trading Live* is a week-long programme that RUCE coordinated annually in July in honour of 67 minutes for Nelson Mandela Day. For *Trading Live* they were involved in two activities. The first activity was organised for the purposes of having a more formal face-to-face meeting, since they had not had a chance to meet due to clashing time schedules, distance, and logistics of being in different parts of the city. CP 1 explained:

> *For instance, we had this, during Trading Live, we had a mountain drive. So, that is when we had a chance to sit down and talk because we felt like we were struggling to meet* (CP 1, I 2).

Prior to this opportunity to meet most of the communication was done via WhatsApp. Therefore, it was important to have this opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation and to collectively decide on a way forward.

In addition to this activity they also partnered, as part of *Trading Live*, to do a clean-up in another local ECD centre in the same area. This other ECD centre was also part of the ECD Residence Programme. The clean-up was initiated by CP 1 and her CE representatives upon hearing at a S@M meeting that the centre needed assistance with cleaning-up the yard. CP 1 and her student volunteers felt it important to share the resources that their centre had, in this case the workers who are part of a local community cleaning programme who clean their yard, with another centre in the Makhanda community who did not have access to these resources. CP 1 and her students requested a donation of paint from Makhanda residents and organised for the community cleaners to cut the grass and paint the walls at this other centre.

Another activity that was completed by the students was the creation of big letters of the alphabet in the form of posters, for the classroom décor. Unfortunately, CP 1 could not join the student volunteers on this day due to having another commitment at the same time, however the activity still went ahead. She explained:

> *What they did is that they sat outside and did the alphabets, because we had a challenge here at the school, we did not have alphabets. So, they did them. Although they have not yet handed them over to me, they completed them and then sent me a picture showing me that "we have done them" but now they need a chance to come and put them up* (CP 1, I 2).

She had arranged for the students to meet her at the centre, thinking that she would have enough time for both commitments, however this was not the case. The students tried to make the best out of the situation, continuing with what they had planned outside, despite not having access into the centre. A new date was set to hand over the materials, when the students could also spend some time interacting with the children.

Although she started with good intentions, CE 1 explained that she experienced a lot of challenges in her role as a hall CE representative, that she had not anticipated she would encounter when she enthusiastically first took on the role. As a result, a lot of things that were planned with her community partner did not go according to their plans. She explained:

> *Being in this university setting, I found more challenges than there were successes in the sense that I was the hall representative, so we had to work as a team. And we had goals that we had to achieve, and we have things that we needed to do, and it just felt like we kept saying things that we need to do but when it came to execution you find yourself alone there and you're like "what must happen now?"* (CE 1, I 2).

CE 1 thus found her position to be challenging, as she felt that she did not have the support from the rest of the representatives in the hall to execute the ideas that they had for the year. While there was ample communication amongst them, this did not always result in teamwork, and CE 1 often felt that she was the only one driving the agenda, which seemed to be a big responsibility. This resulted in her feeling personally responsible for the success of the project.

Despite these challenges CP 1 and CE 1 established a relationship characterised by open communication. They mostly communicated through WhatsApp where ideas were shared. CP 1 explained that for her it was a partnership, where she did not merely dictate what she wished could be done, but she made suggestions that they discussed either on WhatsApp or during a meeting. During this discussion, the student volunteers also voiced their opinions and came up with their own suggestions. She explained:

> *I can say that the relationship or the partnership is healthy* (CP 1, I 1).

Being able to communicate openly with one another strengthened the relationship. Once decisions had been made on what tasks needed to be executed each person became involved and had a role to play. CP 1 explained:

Everyone becomes involved, there is nobody that is told "no, you won't do anything" (CP 1, I 1).

This illustrates that the relationship was evolving to become more equitable, where everyone had something to contribute towards achieving the goals, ensuring mutuality in the partnership.

CP 1 tried to build a relationship with the students that she worked with, which extended beyond the boundaries of the formal relationship that they had built through CE. She explained further by stating:

That is why on Saturday I said in my speech that they must feel free to come to us and talk, because sometimes a student will come to you almost all year, however they have a big issue that they are facing that they could have shared (CP 1, I 1).

This illustrates CP 1's desire to provide support to volunteers through the relationships they were building. CP 1 starts by referring to an opportunity she had to share her experience as a community partner in the programme during the training session at the beginning of the year. During this session CP 1 explained to the students that they should not feel threatened to open up about personal issues that may be affecting them, that the partners are there to provide support. CP 1 stated that she wished to build a relationship where she gets to know the students personally as they undertake their volunteer commitments. This is the kind of relationship that she hoped to achieve in both her current and future relationships with student volunteers.

CP 1 tried to build a relationship with her student volunteers that is more personal than formal. This is especially important as the programme encourages regular volunteering to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships. However, as CP 1 explains below initially, this is not always possible:

...another challenge that I have is that when they are not going to come, when a student has the flu, or has a lot of schoolwork to do they do not want to disappoint me, or they do not want to disappoint Masivuke. They choose to ignore their work and health and come here (CP 1, I 1).

CP 1 notes that she appreciates that students may prioritise their volunteering over other personal issues they are facing. This could be because students are strongly encouraged to make their weekly volunteer commitments and CP 1 is aware of their commitment to her.

CP 1 felt that perhaps in the programme there needed to be more flexibility in this regard, so that when required students could miss volunteering to attend to their personal needs.

It appears that CP 1 was successful in building a good relationship with her student volunteers. CE 1 reflected on the relationship that she built with her volunteer manager by saying:

> *We developed a very strong bond that I think will go even beyond me being CE representative anymore or not. I would still be able to go just pop by and do whatever, and just help without being the part of CE. So, that was the beautiful thing, having that relationship being built and being solid… I've learnt love. I mean, the mothers are amazing* (CE 1, I 2).

This description seems to contrast with the earlier excerpts that showed disappointment with what had been achieved. So, despite these, CE 1 spoke of the strength of the relationship established and her desire to continue in some way. CE 1 felt she had gotten close to her community partner so much so, that she could identify her as a motherly figure.

CP 1 takes the relationship that she builds with her student volunteers very seriously and is personally affected when one of them goes through difficulties. She continues, illustrating her concerns and wishes that she could have done more:

> *One of them tried to commit suicide. I do not know the reason, even now I do not know the reason, and now I feel like I did not, I failed as a mother, as a friend, as a teacher to her. So, I was so disappointed in myself to hear that she has been hospitalised because she overdosed on pills* (CP 1, I 2).

CP 1 explains that she felt bad that the student felt that they could not confide in her and trust her to provide support. Due to this unfortunate incident, CP 1 is keen to make more of an effort to connect personally with each of the student volunteers with whom she works.

Other student volunteers who have worked with CP 1 on the Reading Programme also report having built a good relationship with her, which has resulted in them doing more than just participate in the reading programme, but they also identify different ways that they can assist the centre. The Reading Programme has been discussed in Chapter 1. CP 1 explained:

> *One of them asked if they could bring teddy bears because there are two people who have donated teddy bears to them. So, they, can they give them to the children, and*

> *I said "no, it's fine". So that means to them it's more than the reading now, they are interested to do more* (CP 1, I 2).

Building good relationships with all her student volunteers is something that appears to be important to CP 1, and her examples are of student volunteers showing an interest in the children and the centre.

To conclude, this case study illustrates the challenges faced by students when striving to meet goals that are aspirational and well-intentioned but may be beyond their means. However, through the work done over the year, it illustrates that relationships are important to both parties, which resulted from some investment in building these. While the initial plans that were set out at the beginning of the year did not all come to fruition, a sound relationship was built between the community partner and student volunteers and it seemed that both parties wanted this to continue beyond the project.

Case Study 2

CP 2 is partnered with a hall consisting of four residences: 2 female and 2 male residences. CP 2's ECD centre was established in 2003 by a *Stokvel* group (a cooperative community-based funding scheme, like micro-finance initiatives). The centre was given its name, as a signal of the vision to help and encourage the community. It first started running out of a member's garage and grew from there. In 2006 the centre moved to bigger premises. These premises are owned by the municipality, and they are currently renting the space. CP 2's mother used to work at the centre, and when CP 2 was a learner in a local high school she used to visit her mother at the centre. This is when she became interested in and developed a love for working with children, deciding that she wanted to work for the centre upon completing her schooling. She then decided to spend some of her afternoons after school at the centre, using this time to gain experience in working with children. CP 2 officially joined the centre in 2011, first as a teacher for the 2 and 3-year-old children, and then in 2013 she became a supervisor. It was also during this time that the centre became formally registered with the DSD as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) enabling access to some governmental funding.

CP 2 became a volunteer manager after being nominated by her colleagues. Her colleagues felt that she was better suited for this role as she had completed high school ('matric'/grade 12) and could speak English. Like the way in which CP 1 was nominated, she explained:

> *Amongst my staff there are shy people who have not completed matric, so now they avoid anything that has to do with white people or requires one to speak English. So, they chose me to be the supervisor reinforcing that "this is well suited for you, Thabisa"* (CP 2, I 1).

The above illustrates the barriers that may still exist between people as a remnant of the apartheid era, where black people who in this context will predominantly speak isiXhosa and have not completed high school education are not confident in their English-speaking abilities. They may still feel marginalised and lack the confidence to be in spaces that may appear to require one to be well educated or be fluent in the English language – such as a university setting.

She goes on to explain that at first it was not easy being in this role, however she met someone through S@M who assisted her in boosting her confidence. She elaborated:

> *At first when I started it was not easy because it is not easy to stand in front of people. Then I was presenting. There is a lady called Sindiwe from a local ECD centre, she taught me how to stand in front of people, then here I am today. I can stand in front of people and say anything, but my challenge is English. I make mistakes here and there, but I am progressing, I am moving* (CP 2, I 1).

Community partners like CP 2 often appear shy when they join programmes at RUCE, as they feel intimidated by being in a university setting that is foreign and seems inaccessible to them as an ordinary citizen of the community. What may intimidate them is that firstly they sometimes believe that because they do not have formal university qualifications, like the students and the university staff they work with, they may not be as knowledgeable. Secondly, linked to this, the medium of communication is often English, which is a language they are not often confident in speaking as they may not have learnt it in a formal setting. These are examples of the legacies of colonialism in the existing structures. However, CP 2 has gained more confidence over time through being involved in the programme and through receiving assistance from fellow community partners.

CE 2's role is unique in that in the year preceding this research she was a residence CE representative. During the year that this research took place she became the hall CE

representative (these different roles are clarified in Chapter 1). In her hall there are two vacancies for CE representatives, one being an external CE representative, the role that she was playing, and the other being an internal CE representative. The roles of external and internal CE representative are also clarified in Chapter 1. CE 2 explained her role as follows:

> *The difference now between being a CE representative and being a hall committee representative is that I'm now like a supervisor of the CE representatives of our dining hall externally, meaning I'm still involved with our partners, just that I must supervise the programmes that we have within the dining hall. There is someone else that will supervise within the residences, which is internal* (CE 2, I 1).

CE 2 volunteered to take up the role of being an external CE representative for the hall due to her experience of having been a residence CE representative and having established a relationship with the community partner.

When CP 2 joined her ECD centre a partnership arrangement had already been established with RUCE, which she became a part of. She learnt from her supervisor what it means to work with student volunteers from RU. She explains that initially she thought that the students were there to help, however that soon changed after she was trained in RUCE principles:

> *So, then I thought that Rhodes' students come to help and then we must sit back and look at what they are doing. When Nomshado gave us a workshop she explained "this is not all about Rhodes' students coming to help us. They are here to gain experience and then we share the experience that we have with them, and so we work together"* (CP 2, I 1).

During the training session it was emphasised that the partnership should be of mutual benefit, where the relationship of benefactor and beneficiary is discouraged. This illustrates that the kind of relationship that is built between the community partner and the CE representatives is one which is characteristic of co-management, where there is mutual benefit, and everyone has an opportunity to contribute towards realising the goal. This means that goals that are formulated at the beginning of the year need to be of benefit to all parties involved in the project. The three goals that CP 2 and CE 2 set for the year were to start and maintain a garden to grow vegetables for the learners, beautifying the school by painting the front walls with bright colours, and literacy activities to ensure the success of learners in Grade R (school readiness).

CP 2 explained that she sat down with her student volunteers and negotiated how to work together at the onset of their relationship:

> *We sit down and draft a programme and then we shift our daily programme to accommodate them because their class times are not the same, you see* (CP 2, I 1).

It was important to have this discussion to shift the times of meeting to work towards the goals, since the students were often not available at certain times due to academic commitments.

Also, CE 2 explained how CP 2 had accommodated the students' timetables:

> *We had clashes with our times with the programme that they had there at school. We'd go there early because of their programmes but then that meant that we also had lectures, then there'd be problems with their daily programmes and us being there so there had to be like a swap where … they had to accommodate us* (CE 2, I 1).

Working in a flexible way meant that students could fulfil both their academic commitments, as well as their volunteering commitments. There was also constant communication and regular meetings throughout the year, to assess the progress made on the goals and to ensure that the arrangements made were still suitable for all. The kind of relationship that CP 2 had with her students is one where there was open communication and compromise; meeting each other halfway.

Communication, however, has not always been smooth in this partnership. When a new CE representative joined the partnership in the new year, CP 2 was not formally introduced to the new CE representative, which caused a lot of miscommunication between the volunteer manager and the new CE representative. CP 2 explained:

> *When I was having a conversation with Mbali she told me she was no longer the student leader. I don't know, she was promoted, I don't know what she is. Then there is someone I am meant to meet with, ever since then I never met with them. So, I do not know when they are coming and when they are not coming. I hear from other schools that "no, they are writing [exams]", I am not alerted about anything, about what is happening. I just see the bus stopping outside the gate of the centre* (CP 2, I 2).

CP 2 explains that due to the miscommunication she never knew when to anticipate the students' visits. What may have caused this confusion is that CE 2 was still involved in the

project, however in a different role to the previous year. Whereas in the previous year she was more hands-on as a residence CE representative, in the new year she took on a different role of being a hall CE representative, where her role was primarily a supervising one. It would seem as if two-way communication was disrupted by there not being shared understanding of the changes. CP 2 assumed that because CE 2 was still involved in the partnership she was still the main contact person. Eventually, however, they found a way to communicate better and work together.

CP 2 expands on the working relationship that she developed with the student volunteers:

> *They work well with me, but when they have a problem, we talk about it because myself and the CE representative that I worked with before would say "Sis Thabisa we are unable to come during the week, we will have a chance on weekends", so it is also my time on weekends, so I would also make means to meet them halfway so that we can develop what we want to achieve. So, our relationship is still alright* (CP 2, I 1).

Keeping open lines of communication and being flexible was important in developing the relationship. CP 2 was willing to accommodate the students when they wanted to do activities on the weekends. She explains that even though the weekends were an opportunity for her to rest and do her personal things, she understood that sometimes the students could only make time on weekends.

CP 2 also gave examples showing that the relationship that she built with her student volunteers extended beyond the boundaries of the formal relationship built as part of the ECD Residence Programme. CP 2 and her student volunteers had also partnered to participate in *Trading Live*, painting the walls of the centre. Student volunteers were part of fundraising activities for the centre and participated in a contest that the centre hosted; they took on the roles of judges as well as the 'master of ceremonies' for the contest. The student volunteers also assisted in the centre's end of year graduation.

At the beginning of the research, CE 2 expressed that she was uncomfortable with the kind of relationship that she had established with CP 2, citing that because she was from the local community, she felt uneasy. She explained:

> *They know me personally to the extent that I grew up in front of them, so I had to draw a line where now we don't have to be personal. It's about…ok, there must be*

this boundary because at times I felt like, not that they were using me, but they wanted me to do…they wanted me to do beyond (CE 2, I 1).

CE 2 was hinting that the relationship was not consistently of a professional nature, and because she was a local herself, she was not treated the same way the other student volunteers were treated, and that much more was expected of her. Community partners might not be clear about the way roles or expectations change when their student partners originate from the same community setting.

During the first focus group discussion that was held, CE 2 had an opportunity to express her concerns about her relationship with CP 2. CP 2 appreciated this, and in her own words said that since the beginning of the research she learnt:

I should treat them equally, like Mbali said that we should not take it for granted that we know her because she went to school in this community. So, I treat them the same, it does not matter who arrives, they are all equal (CP 2, I 2).

CE 2 attributed this to having had the opportunity to reflect on the dynamics of the relationship through being involved in the research process. In her own words:

So, it's made me bolder in just drawing the line that this is something I can do, this is something I can't do, it's over my capabilities. So, it was more helpful in that I was able to draw the line from our previous discussion (CE 2, I 2).

The interviews and focus group discussions had thus provided a space for CE 2 to reflect on what worked and didn't work in her relationship with her community partner and enabled positive developments. This prompted her to address the concerns that she had experienced in an amicable manner.

This shows that the focus group discussion provided a useful reflection space for this student to articulate the difficulties she had faced. After being able to navigate the complexities of the relationship of CE 2 with her community partner, she was able to develop a more personal relationship with her. She explained:

Yes, I might be a local student but sometimes you know how it's always not… you can't reach your mom to talk about other things; so, from them I got a big sister to speak with in terms of challenges I found, facing on campus and whatsoever. So, it wasn't just about growth that, ok, let's focus on these goals but there was also a personal relationship we managed to build (CE 2, I 2).

Being able to be honest with her community partner allowed her to be open to the benefits of building a personal relationship with her. Sharing similar sentiments as CE 2, CP 2 characterised the relationship that she has with her student volunteers as being like a sibling relationship. She said:

> *We are like sister and brothers* (CP 2, I 1).

This illustrates that the relationship may potentially become more personal and is not confined to the responsibilities that each partner has in the formal CE partnership.

All three goals that were set out by this partnership at the beginning of the year were achieved. CE 2 explained:

> *With the gardening what we did, we worked with the partners where they had some sort of workshop with the parents, and then after that we went to the garden. After that they just had to look after the garden and water the garden. Last semester, when we went for a visit, the garden was 'popping out' and everything. They were already using the crops and everything. So, it was a success* (CE 2, I 2).

The partners found it important to involve the parents as part of the gardening project, to create project ownership and sustainability. The parents developed a personal investment in ensuring that the garden was a success, as it was a source of nutritious food for their children as part of the centre's feeding programme. As illustrated in the quote above, the garden was considered a big success.

For the painting and school readiness goals, CE 2 explained as follows:

> *We went for painting also and that was a success. And the school readiness one is more like a continuous thing during the year, so we are still doing the school readiness one* (CE 2, I 2).

The painting of the school was a one-day event, whereas the goal of school readiness is ongoing. The goal of school readiness was linked to the reading programme. It would appear as if the goals were achievable and within the scope of the students' capabilities, impacting on their achievement. During training, community partners are strongly encouraged to take on SMART goals, which ensures that they have a greater chance of being achieved.

CE 2 attributed the success of accomplishing all three goals to teamwork and partnership. She explained:

> *It was mainly about partnership, involving and working together rather than saying that being more dominant. It was more about drawing the line of coming together and not being more dominant over the other, saying that I have all the resources. But, opening a space where everyone can come together and say this is what I have, this is what I don't have* (CE 2, I 2).

The student volunteers and volunteer manager had access to different resources, which they shared to achieve the goals. This meant that everyone felt they had something valuable to contribute towards achieving the goals, fostering collaboration. The above quote also shows the student's sensitivity to issues of power and dominance and to open communication about what each person has to offer.

In addition to accomplishing the three goals that they had set for the year, CE 2's residence also arranged an additional activity that they hosted with CP 2. The learners from the centre were invited onto campus to a movie day in the residence with the student volunteers. The purpose of this was to introduce the learners to more students in the residence. In addition to this, another residence that is part of CE 2's hall took the learners to the museum to learn about animals. This happened during the time that the learners were learning about animals in class. Doing this was reportedly beneficial for both the learners and the student volunteers. Taking the learners to a different learning environment enriched the learning experience; these activities also meant that many more student volunteers could be involved, as the activities did not require much traveling time on their part, due to being on campus or in proximity.

The work that CP 2 does with her students not only has a positive impact on their centre but has been felt in the community at large. She narrated a story about how, with the help of student volunteers she mobilised community members to assist with closing a dumping site that was next to the school and to ensure that it remained closed. In addition to that, the garden that was started also assists community members. She explained:

> *In our garden we plant beetroot, spinach, onion, cabbage, which are not on our menu. So sometimes we cook the spinach and something else. But, in the end we give it away. They arrive "we are here to buy spinach" and we say "no, we are not*

selling, go and pick". So those are one of the ways we help our community (CP 2, I 2).

Being able to contribute meaningfully to her community has meant a great deal to CP 2. This fulfils the vision that the founding members had for this centre of establishing a centre that would assist the entire community.

This case study illustrates that when SMART goals are set and negotiated between the community partner and student volunteers, they become easier to achieve. It also illustrates that sometimes tensions might exist in partner relationships and that in being open and honest by acknowledging them they can be resolved in an amicable way, which may strengthen the partner relationship moving forward.

Case Study 3

CP 3 is partnered with a hall consisting of 4 residences: 2 female and 2 male. CP 3's ECD centre was established on 4th June in 1988. CP 3 joined the centre in 2013. This was the year when she first enrolled her child at the centre. The teacher at the time noticed her interest in young children when she would drop off her child at school, and one day approached her to join the centre. CP 3 narrated the story as follows:

I can't say what she noticed in me, because after a meeting she asked to see me in the garden and asked me what I do for a living. I told her that I am unemployed, and she said, "are you interested in children, can you be a volunteer here?" I agreed (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 then became an unpaid volunteer for a period of a year, however due to her enthusiasm and helpfulness she would sometimes be given money by her colleagues at the centre to assist her with taxi fare. After some time, the teacher who recruited CP 3 left the ECD centre, and CP 3 also decided to leave. During this time, she worked for a period of 6 months for two other ECD centres in town, respectively. After these contracts came to an end, she was again recruited by her current ECD centre, to assist in one of the classrooms as well as with housekeeping. During this time, she was offered a small, regular monthly stipend.

After some time, CP 3 was approached by one of the board members who asked her what her role in the centre was, and how long she had been with the centre. This board member then called a meeting and asked for CP 3 to be permanently employed. This ensued and the

year before conducting this research, she was promoted to be the deputy principal of the centre.

CP 3 became interested in partnering with RUCE because upon visiting other ECD centres where RUCE was a partner, she realised that the students were a valuable resource. In particular, she was interested in working with student volunteers so that her learners could get used to interacting and speaking with diverse people, and some exposure to English as a language. She explained:

> *Over the past years our children used to be accepted at Masiphumelele then you realise that they are not accepted even at Masibambane and you realise that you do not understand what this means* (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 noticed that over the years learners from her centre were no longer being accepted into sought after primary schools (Masiphumelele and Masibambane) in the area.
She continued:

> *Eventually I realised that our children maybe are afraid to speak in the interview because they are only used to us, maybe if there are other people and not just us it will be easy to speak… That is when I became interested, it assisted us and worked well* (CP 3, I 1).

She explains that she felt her learners did not do well in the school interviews as they were shy. This is due to them only interacting and being familiar with their teachers and therefore being shy to speak to people unfamiliar to them in the interview. She felt that bringing the student volunteers in would expose the learners to a diversity of people and they would learn to be able to interact with them.

CE 3 became a CE representative after noticing the economic divide in Makhanda. He explained:

> *So, when I got here, I saw the situation, … there's a huge division of Grahamstown and the…of the Grahamstown community and the Rhodes community. So, I saw that division and I saw that there is CE* (CE 3, I 1).

He continued:

> *So, I found out that at least as students, [what] a student can do to make a difference. So, that's why I decided to take the forefront of making that difference and making uplifting CE in my residence* (CE 3, I 1).

Motivated by a desire to contribute to bridge the divide he had noticed, CE 3 asked his friend to nominate him for this position, and thereafter, through a manifesto, asked for his residence mates' votes to become the CE representative.

At the time of conducting this research, it was CP 3's third year working with RUCE. Unfortunately, when the second round of interviews were undertaken CP 3 was no longer employed with the centre. However, she continued working with the student volunteers and partnering with RUCE because she valued the relationship that she had built with the student volunteers and wanted to continue working on the goals that they had set until they had accomplished them. The goals that CP 3 and CE 3 had set for the year were to complete the work they had started for establishing a library for the ECD centre, work on improving the learners' literacy through reading, and working together on the aftercare programme. The aftercare programme was aimed at providing fun, educational activities for learners in the afternoons once the formal school programme had come to an end.

When the centre started working with RUCE, CP 3's colleagues did not seem to welcome this. However, CP 3 thought it important that the students work with their centre and therefore volunteered to be the volunteer manager. She explained that there was still some hostility amongst her colleagues towards the student volunteers:

> *The students come because of me, they come to me. Even when they are still entering the door they say "Thembela is not here" without even asking them what brings them here* (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 explains that her colleagues were simply not interested in working with the student volunteers, as they perceived this to add to their current workload. They did not appear to see the value in having the student volunteers visit their centre. She explains that when the students arrived her colleagues would make comments such as:

> *"Here are your people"* (CP 3, I 1).

These comments were felt as hurtful to CP 3, as she badly wanted her colleagues to see the value in having the student volunteers being a part of their centre. CP 3 spoke at length about the problem of animosity and hostility that appeared to exist amongst her centre staff members towards the student volunteers at the first focus group discussion. She attributed this hostility to her colleagues not understanding the purpose of having the student volunteers at the centre, feeling that being involved in the ECD Residence Programme was extra work for them since volunteer managers are sometimes required to attend training

sessions and meetings at RU after hours. Working after hours with no extra income was not something that CP 3's colleagues seemed happy to do. During the first focus group discussion CP 3 received advice from other community partners, as well as the CE representatives on what she could do moving forward, to improve the situation. CP 3 left the focus group discussion feeling supported and positive about resolving the issue. When the second interview was conducted, CP 3 was unsure whether the hostility from her former colleagues was still an issue as she no longer worked there. CE 3 added information by reporting that he had felt a positive attitude shift from the rest of the staff and feeling more welcomed and accommodated in the centre.

CP 3 said she did not mind this tension, as she described herself as someone who is easy going and is happy to work with her community to further develop her centre. Although CP 3 was welcoming to the students and worked well with them, the fact that her colleagues were initially not supportive was hard for her and, more broadly, had effects upon on the partnership. She explained that due to the lack of support from her colleagues she was not been able to fully fulfil her role in the partnership:

> *It is this working relationship that I say is lacking, because you find that I wanted to be as involved as I have been in the previous years, however I could not because I did not have back up* (CP 3, I 2).

The student volunteers also noticed this, and it affected the overall partnership with the centre. CE 3 explained:

> *Sometimes we would have less support from the partners. They do not work towards our goals, like, we're the ones who work towards their goals. So, if you can see that we are meeting at least halfway, they are also trying to engage with us* (CE 3, I 2).

CE 3 explains that it was discouraging for them, as the students, to not have the kind of support they needed from their community partner. He makes an example of how they hosted a fundraising initiative on campus as the students and invited the partners to attend and support the event, however none of them showed up.

Despite challenges with her colleagues, CP 3 described the relationship that she had with her student volunteers as being a good working relationship. When the partnership was established, they exchanged phone numbers for ease of communication. She explained:

> *The first thing I make sure, the welcoming, it's well. Show them the school and tell them about the school's programmes* (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 made sure to orientate her student volunteers and give them a full understanding of the centre and how it operates. In addition, CP 3 was very happy with the kind of relationship that she built with her student volunteers and believed that they are also happy with the relationship. She explained:

> *No, I do not want to lie. I'm so very, very happy. I have not encountered a problem, I have been happy, even my students have been very happy* (CP 3, I 1).

Although CP 3 encountered problems with her colleagues at the centre, she asserted that this did not have a negative impact on the personal relationship that she managed to form with her student volunteers. She explained that there were no problems, and she was pleased with how the relationship was developing.

CP 3 wished to work with the students outside of the ECD Residence Programme, getting them involved in the various activities of the centre. However, she explained that the problem had been a time clash:

> *... that is one thing that we have not yet done. For example, I told them that we also have fundraising initiatives, we have contests, we also have our own sports days as Clever Kids, however you find that the days that we have these activities are days that are awkward for them, and our times start in the morning. So, you find that at that time a person has class, and they are unable to attend. And the reason why we have the programmes on weekdays is because we have a problem over weekends* (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 was keen to include the student volunteers in as many of the centre's activities as possible, so that they have a good understanding of how the centre operates. Unfortunately, students were often not available during the week and it was not easy to organise events over weekends due to learners and staff not being available. Additionally, there were costs for transport, since the centre is in a different area of the city than the one they live in.

During the first interview, CP 3 explained that one of her responsibilities was to orientate students and to teach them how to work with young children:

> *My responsibility that I have now is that for example they arrive here not knowing what to do because a person comes to a site that has children, and says "I like working with children", but when they arrive here, they are confused and do not know what to do* (CP 3, I 1).

CP 3 managed to successfully fulfil this responsibility, as CE 3 reflected:

> *From my partner I think I've learnt how to engage with kids. So, getting that knowledge when I first got there, they were telling me things, like this is how you're supposed to do even it, when they are making noise and all of that, how to treat them and how to calm them down when they start to be restless* (CE 3, I 2).

CP 3 ensured that her student volunteers had the knowledge and skills that they needed to work successfully with the learners at her centre.

Regarding the goals that were set at the beginning of the year; good progress was made on the first goal of completing the library. CE 3 noted that they had been successful in raising some funds for this:

> *So, with the first goal, which is the programme that was the renovating of the library, we raised some funds. We're close now, it'll be R3 000 and something* (CE 3, I 2)

He further explained that the aim was to get everyone involved in making this project a success, including the parents of the learners:

> *To try get the parents involved in terms of fixing all the stuff that needs to be fixed, but then the school needs to put out the letters to the parents and ask whoever knows how to build a ceiling and all of that* (CE 3, I 2).

The students felt that it was important to involve the caregivers to partner in this project, and the volunteer manager agreed that they would write letters informing the parents of the developments and asking them for their assistance. They found it important to partner with the caregivers, to create ownership of the project and to ensure sustainability.

Unfortunately, they were met with challenges with regards to accomplishing the second goal. CE 3 explained:

> *With the reading programme, we've been challenged, we've been getting challenges of getting guys to go and read, but others are like "I'm not available this time, I'm not available this time." It's just the matter of their timetables clashing with the going to the centre* (CE 3, I 2).

The student volunteers could not be available during the time that the centre ran its literacy projects. CE 3 suggests that a way of dealing with this challenge is by either changing the time that has been set for the programme, which is unsuitable for most people, or being more flexible in terms of the different times during the day that people can participate. No further information was given regarding the third goal.

This case study demonstrates that it is important for all members of an organisation to take ownership of a programme to ensure its sustainability. It also illustrates that the preparatory work that students and volunteer managers undertake before commencing with their CE projects should not be done in isolation, and that some work may need to be done with all staff members to ensure that all develop a similar vision, perhaps co-constructed jointly. This case study also demonstrates the importance of creating "safe spaces", such as the focus group discussion, for people to engage in "courageous conversations" about the difficulties in their partnership development, to allow for an opportunity to find solutions or offer support to each other.

Case Study 4

CP 4's ECD centre was established in 2010. It is unique in that it exists to work with other ECD centres, its mandate being to support the work of ECD centres in the Makhanda township. CP 4's centre is designed in such a way that it is a resource to the local community as well as the local ECD centres and primary schools. Caregivers with their children, and ECD practitioners and primary school teachers with their learners visit CP 4's centre for various literacy activities. CP 4's centre already had established programmes that were aimed at developing the local community, before partnering with RUCE. CP 4 explained the purpose of her centre as follows:

> *It is open to people who are unable to send their children to school, then they bring their child. You, as the resource manager will then play, you will do the outdoor activities and everything else that happens in the classroom, so that the child does not get left behind. So that one day when they do go to school they will fit in because we've got the same lesson plan, the way that it happens in the classroom, the way that it is run. It is similar, but I do not teach. … because this resource centre is a 'come and play', then when they come and play, I just top up on what they have already learnt* (CP 4, I 1).

CP 4 thus explains that her centre has a dual mandate. Firstly, it is to ensure that children who are of pre-school going age but are unable to go to pre-school because of poverty are still provided the educational stimulation and opportunity to catch up with their peers once they finally join mainstream education. This is done through CP 4 providing educational activities for the children that are like what happens in a formal pre-school setting. Secondly, the centre supports the work that educators do in their classrooms, through providing additional educational resources for the learners that link with what they are doing in school.

CP 4 is partnered with a hall that is unique, in that it does not offer on-campus accommodation in terms of residences, however it is a hall for students who live off-campus. This hall is the biggest hall in the university by student numbers, and unlike other halls, it only has one CE representative, CE 4. Coordinating CE activities can be difficult for this hall, since the students are dispersed across the city, rather than being in on-campus residences and it only relies on one representative. CE 4 elaborated by saying:

> *A lot of students live in various places, so communication and engagement is quite tough, and there's no central meeting place, so projects are much more difficult to run* (CE 4, I 1).

It is likely to be easier to communicate with students who share a central meeting place, such as for students living in residence, but CE 4's hall does not have a central meeting place. As a result of the uniqueness of CE 4's hall, it is not easy for the hall to conform with the structure of the ECD Residence Programme, because it is challenging to mobilise students. As a result of this, sometimes there is low participation from this hall, as CE 4 explained:

> *The off-campus students' situation is so tough because first, to do a programme like this you need to be able to organise students. So, first, how do you organise students living off-campus?* (CE 4, I 2).

Unlike students living in on-campus residence accommodation, students living in CE 4's hall did not have regular meeting times, such as for the sharing of meals, where information could be relayed and discussed. Therefore, CE 4 found it challenging to be limited to email communication and not being able to have face-to-face interaction with the associated students.

CE 4 had been through a selection process to be the hall CE representative, after a friend had informed him of the position. CE 4 chose to be a CE representative for his hall because

it is something that he has always been interested in and passionate about. Like CE 3, CE 4 worried about the clear social divisions in Makhanda and felt that CE was one way to bridge this divide. He explained:

> *I think it's even more important in the Grahamstown sense, because they speak of Grahamstown East, Grahamstown West, and that conversation itself, as much as people make the best out of it, is also a problematic conversation. The fact that Grahamstown is segregated* (CE 4, I 1).

CE 4 thus reflected on the socio-economic disparities between the two distinct areas of Makhanda, which he refers to as Grahamstown East – characterised by poverty, unemployment, informal settlements, and poor schooling; and Grahamstown West – which is the more 'affluent' part of the town with more resources and access to some of the best private schools in the country. He reflected that the divide in the town is a problematic one, implying that such a divide should not exist. CE 4 saw CE as an opportunity to try and bridge this divide.

CP 4 started working with RU student volunteers before a formal partnership was established with RUCE through the ECD Residence Programme. Therefore, it was natural for her to become the volunteer manager. She explains that she started working with students through aiding them when they would visit her office. She has also maintained relationships with her student volunteers even after they left the programme. She gave an example of one of the students:

> *For example, we still work with Azola, even with things like workshops that she conducts for teachers, for older people* (CP 4, I 1).

CP 4 explains that she established a relationship with this student after the person visited her office asking for assistance with a different project. The relationship grew, and now CP 4 continues working with the student on other projects that she is involved in.

CP 4's approach to working with her student volunteers is to negotiate expectations from the onset, and to jointly come up with goals that they want to achieve by the end of the year. She explained:

> *We will sit down, and we think, or we set our goals. How are we going to work together? Their expectations, my expectations, and then we check from these expectations what is common. Then, within the common goals we decide on the one to tackle first* (CP 4, I 1).

By doing this, CP 4 encourages joint engagement on issues that have been jointly identified, in the promotion of a mutually beneficial partnership. Her CE representative, CE 4, also alluded to this when he stated:

> *I don't want to say what needs to be done. But, looking at these spaces and then working from there, rather than all sitting here and having this great idea "hey guys, what do you think we should do for this centre", and we go there and realise that they don't need that. So, the first step would be finding what the partner in these spaces would love for us to do for them and then what they can do for us* (CE 4, I 1).

CE 4 explains that in the past it was common practice for students to come up with 'solutions' to 'problems' that they had identified in the community partner organisations. This was always done in isolation, without the involvement with the partner and without using ABCD. Above, CE 4 explains the value in joint decision making and planning and working with ABCD.

The goals that CP 4 and CE 4 set were to host an open day, start a sandpit, and improve the literacy skills of the learners. The goal of having an open day was successfully accomplished. Unfortunately, no progress was made on the goal of the sandpit, due to there not being sufficient space in the yard. The main goal of CP 4's centre was to improve literacy skills for learners, working with both teachers and caregivers. One of the ways of doing this was through partnering with a literacy organisation to get isiXhosa books, however this partnership did not materialise. CP 4 explained:

> *We tried but we hit a stumbling block, the person who we usually see, he is someone who travels most of the time and has his own plans. And we met with him after he already had his planning that he completed the previous year for 2018* (CP 4, I 2).

CP 4 explains that due to initiating the partnership too late in the year with the literacy organisation, they were unable to get assistance for that particular year. However, CP 4 was welcome to approach the literacy organisation to partner with them for the following year, as the goal of improving literacy skills for learners was ongoing.

A second way of trying to achieve the goal of improving literacy skills was that the students would come and do reading for the learners who access the centre. Unfortunately, this too did not happen. CP 4 stated:

> *The students did not come at all this year to us* (CP 4, I 2).

This could be attributed to the fact that CE 4 was not very active during the year, rating his involvement as:

> *Very poor* (CE 4, I 2)

He explained that he had many responsibilities and could not manage to fulfil them all. He stated:

> *As a representative, no as a student, as a student living off-campus I was involved. But, as a CE representative, I was supposed to be steering the ship and leading. No, not as much as I would have liked if I'm being honest* (CE 4, I 2).

CE 4 was consumed with many other responsibilities, as he became a member of the RU Student Representative Council (SRC) and being the chairperson of the students living off-campus. This meant that he constantly had meetings and obligations to fulfil for these two positions, which meant that his responsibilities as a CE representative did not receive as much attention as he would have liked. Coupled with the challenges already identified above of not having a central meeting place and working by himself without a team of representatives in his hall, he really struggled to meet his CE commitments. He did however try and participate where he could, for example participating in two events with his partner during *Trading Live*, which were centred on reading and play for learners. CP 4 noted that CE 4 could not always meet the commitments made by stating:

> *He is busy, because he is at school, he is in the SRC and even them when they are communicating, they are not saying the same thing. If he is not there to push it, to even remind them, it means that it does not happen* (CP 4, I 2).

CP 4 noted that not having the constant presence of her CE representative was felt. She explains that by him not ensuring that the rest of the student volunteers were committing to sessions, it was hard to ensure that there was any follow through on plans made.

CP 4 built a good relationship with her student volunteers to such an extent that her student volunteers went over and above what the programme required them to do. She explained:

> *Even with things that they have, maybe things that they used at home when they were still young, they bring them. Things like dolls, books, some other toys. Although some were broken or needed fixing, but I loved the interaction between myself and them very much* (CP 4, I 1).

CP 4 thus explained that she received donations of items from the students for the resource centre, and that the students felt comfortable to donate items of a personal nature that had sentimental value, due to the kind of relationship that they had built.

Like the other partners, CP 4 and her student volunteers had challenges with the time constraints. This is due to the centre's activities being at a time when students were not available. However, like the other partners, CP 4 and her student volunteers came to a compromise and a working solution. She explained:

> *What was a challenge for them was time. The time did not correlate well with the other schools. In as much as I ended up, so that they can also see this being successful and it is not like we are wasting their time, I tried to negotiate that the schools that are closer, even if they do not come here to the resource centre, I spoke to the driver that the transport should drop them where we will meet* (CP 4, I 1).

CP 4 explains that due to the student volunteers being available at a time when there are no visitors to the centre, she decided to take the services of the centre to nearby schools so that the student volunteers could see the work that the centre does and participate in it. This meant that the students still had hands-on experience in the different schools.

This case study demonstrates that a 'one-size fits all' approach may not always be the best approach to CE projects and partnerships. Although the structure of the overall programme did not fit the nature of this partnership, those involved in the partnership still tried to make it work to the best of their abilities. While the partners had good aspirations, it seems as if some of what they spoke about were ideals rather than being turned into reality. This case study also demonstrates that teamwork is key in trying to achieve goals, particularly when one is faced with the responsibility of leading a large group of people and has many other responsibilities.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the four different case studies, at single case study level, through providing a detailed description of each partnership, and how the community partners worked with the CE representatives during the year that this research took place.

While only one of the four case studies really painted a success story in terms of all the goals set being met, strides forward were made in all the partnerships to try and achieve the goals with varying results. Despite not always being successful in reaching all their goals, participants reported having built good relationships with their partners. There also seemed

to be an acknowledgement of why the goals were not reached. Common reasons cited were the inability of the CE representatives to manage their time successfully, not having sufficient project management skills, and sometimes lacking teamwork between the students and amongst the CE representatives and colleagues at the centres. The following chapter will draw from the multiple case studies through expanding on these issues and providing further information on similarities and differences between the four different partnerships.

Chapter 6: Findings 2

This aim of this chapter is to present the findings from the four case studies that form the unit of analysis for this research, because of an analysis of similarities and differences between the four different partnerships. These findings are presented grouped in the broad themes of understanding of CE and the ECD Residence Programme; co-management; roles and responsibilities; emerging insights over time; and programmatic issues. Each of these themes is briefly described with some of the overarching themes being further divided into sub-themes. These themes emerged from the interview schedule. Whereas pseudonyms are used for the names of people and organisations that are mentioned in the excerpts in this chapter, participants are identified using the same coding as in the previous findings chapter.

Understanding of CE and the ECD Residence Programme

This theme collects the reflections of the CE representatives and volunteer managers on what they understood CE and the ECD Residence Programme to be, as well as their purposes. They also reflected on what being involved in CE activities meant to them.

One CE representative explained that for her, CE was about personal investment and altruism, without expectations. She reflected:

> *I just realised that it's all love. You don't have to do something because you want to get something in return* (CE 1, I 2).

She explains that for her it is not about having an expectation that you will gain something, but that her motivation was to give of herself.

In contrast to this, another CE representative explained that for some students that were recruited to participate in the programme, many did not commit long term due to them perceiving a lack of incentives for their contribution. He narrates:

> *Not everyone is keen to do something without an incentive unless they are passionate about it. So, you would find that people that really are involved in community engagement are generally people who are passionate about community engagement* (CE 4, I 2).

This speaks to the theories of motivation that have been covered in Chapter 2 of this thesis, and it seems that initially the students seemed to have extrinsic motivation for wanting to be

involved in the programme; meaning that they wished to gain something. However, perhaps once they realised the commitment that it takes to be in the programme, they decide to drop out. The above comments sound like the sort of altruism that might be found in charitable approaches of engagement.

Another CE representative built on this by expansion: for her CE was not about charity but about relationship-building. She commented:

> *It's not just about giving back, it's a matter of like trying to build a relationship amongst the partner and the students. A relationship that will be ongoing and, within that relationship, it's not about one person benefiting but both people they benefit. Even if you don't get something like material but, in terms of growth, you get to grow and get to be involved in some things, especially if you are not from Grahamstown* (CE 2, I 1).

This highlights her view of the relational reciprocity that adds value. Both of CE 4 and CE 2 had quite strong, personal feelings about what CE meant for them because of their experiences.

Illustrating some similarities to the idea of reciprocity mentioned above, a volunteer manager explained that for her, the programme was about the potential for enhancing development of all involved; and their co-operative working together with those involved in it. She stated:

> *My understanding is that this programme is aimed at growing our communities and the students. It is not about growing us. It is not about using the students to come and work in the schools while we fold our hands, but to work with us so to ensure good results for the students and CE [RUCE]* (CP 1, I 1).

Another volunteer manager agreed with the points about co-operation and partnership, but also saw her role as a guide, encourager, and facilitator of the students' activities:

> *I need to be able to guide the students when they arrive, having a smile on the first day that they come here. Then, I need to know what they are going to do here and what I need to do with them, because we are in a partnership here, not that they get into the gate to come and assist here or that I am going to help them, we are doing this together* (CP 2, I 1).

Both partners felt that the programme and CE are about working together towards a common goal that is of mutual benefit.

Additionally, a community partner also commented that she believed that the programme is not only about benefitting her, her organisation and the students involved in the programme, however it is also about benefitting the entire community (i.e., the Rhodes University community at large and the broader Makhanda community).

She stated:

> *I understand it as growing our communities* (CP 2, I 1).

In line with this view, a CE representative stated that for him CE was about uplifting the entire community. He stated:

> *CE is just uplifting Grahamstown* (CE 4, I 1).

He goes on to explain that this is of particular importance in the Makhanda context, as Makhanda is a town that is faced with inequalities, particularly in the education sector where most of the schools that are poor and under resourced are in the townships, in contrast to the well-resourced schools that more easily enable access to the university. This CE representative therefore concludes that CE is important in addressing this concern.

In the follow-up interview this CE representative reflected on how his perception of being involved in CE had evolved since participating in the programme:

> *It's changed my perception of community engagement. I think I've always been kind of someone that wants to see the difference kind of immediately* (CE 4, 1 2).

This CE representative reflects on how, through being involved in the programme, he realised that CE takes a developmental approach and is not about instant results. He speaks about the importance of making a long-term investment to see progress made.

Co-management

This theme deals with the partnership model that RUCE proposes of jointly planning, jointly executing, and jointly evaluating CE activities by CE representatives and volunteer managers. This partnership model is a principle that RUCE seeks to promote. In this section, CE representatives and volunteer managers reflect on how this worked in practice, drawing on practical examples of how they worked together over time.

Volunteer managers and CE representatives had similar ideas of what the co-management model means. Some excerpts from partners were:

Together we are partners, we meet each other halfway. It's a 50/50 partnership (CP 4, FG 1).

And

We are not the charity cases, we're supposed to know that we cannot just sit and expect handouts (CP 1, I 2).

Speaking to this, a volunteer stated:

So, opening the space of them, as partners, to also provide and then working on what they have, rather than always being the person who just provides and bring the things for them (CE 2, I 2).

And finally:

It's more like this is what we're thinking of doing, what are you thinking. Then the students put in their inputs and then the end process comes out and that's how co-management works (CE 4, FG 1)

Therefore, volunteer managers and CE representatives both felt that co-management was about each contributing equally to the work, for the benefit of all, working together as collaborators. However, the findings in the case studies illustrate that 'lip-service' is being paid to these ideas, where there is an understanding of the concept of co-management, with implementation of these ideas being patchy. There is also evidence of 'us' and 'them' thinking that presents itself in some of the excerpts, which is an example of othering. This commentary shows that the transformation of relationships may be an ideal, rather than having been realised.

While there seemed to be a good understanding of what co-management means, this did not always translate into good practice. For example, one CE representative complained that it felt as though he had no support from the volunteer manager and that achieving the goal was solely the CE representatives' responsibility. He explained:

It was more of us, in terms of going there and supporting them (CE 3, FG 2).

His perception was that the community partner did not meet them halfway in terms of working to achieve the goal. He refers to a fundraising activity that they held on campus to raise funds. While the invitation was extended to the community partner to attend and support this event, the community partner did not show up, which the students found to be quite disheartening. Whereas reason for this was not established, one could speculate that the 'us' and 'them' commentary illustrates the lack of real partnerships working, and that perhaps there were good intentions, but that these were not translated into action.

One of the CE representatives commented that sometimes what can lead to there being unequal relations is the myth that because Rhodes University students come from a more privileged setting, they have more money to contribute to realising goals that have been set for the year. A CE representative shared:

> *Sometimes I feel that there is a mentality that because it is Rhodes there is money, we can provide* (CE 2, FG 2).

This CE representative reflected on the thinking that may exist where some community partners may think that Rhodes University students may have access to more financial resources due to the socio-economic disparities that exist. What the student does not seem to realise however, is that students do have access to university resources that are otherwise not available to community partners and there also exists a divide educationally.

Co-management proposes working from ABCD, which entails all stakeholders working together to achieve an established goal. With this understanding, CE representatives and volunteer managers felt that their co-management relationships should extend beyond the relationship between themselves only, with a need to involve other staff members as well as community stakeholders. They proposed also involving the caregivers of the ECD learners in the partnership. A volunteer manager commented:

> *Even if the students work with the practitioners or the teachers, they can involve the parents, even if it is one or two of them* (CP 4, FG 2).

This proposal was made by the partner as she wanted a holistic approach to the learners' education.

Following the idea of working closely with the learners' caregivers, one of the partner groups involved them. For example:

> *Another goal was gardening. We called the parents that are unemployed to a workshop and they came. After completing the workshop, they went outside and were more practical. We accomplished the goal for the garden, we saw the fruits of the labour and the learners ended up having something to eat. So, it's all about inclusion and disclosing other things to the parents* (CE 2, FG 2).

This partner had also involved caregivers in achieving a goal of cleaning up a dumping area that was next to the school. Previously, the partner had struggled to ensure that the area was

kept free of refuse, however after involving the caregivers, the area was kept clean. Involving parents in these goals thus appeared to be beneficial for these goals.

However, it seems that involving caregivers was not always successful. One community partner said:

> *I've set two or three meetings, not a single parent arrived* (CP 4, I 2).

This community partner speculated that the lack of interest shown by these caregivers stemmed from them being unaware of the value that they bring to the partnership. She went on to suggest that an effort must be made at the beginning of the partnership to introduce the caregivers to the student volunteers, explaining to them what the programme is about:

> *So, when the students are introduced to the school, the school must invite even if it is two parents, so that they can give other parents feedback* (CP 4, FG 2).

She stated that the importance of this introduction stemmed from the caregivers being unsure of the role of the student volunteers or the programme. In addition, she stated:

> *Even other parents do not accept these students, because they are saying they are here for their studies* (CP 4, 1 2).

This community partner explains how previous interaction with RU students harmed their relationship with members of the local community. This is because, she explains, previously the students would treat the community as sites of research, only visiting the area to conduct research and never returning to present the outcome of this research. This sort of extractive research left feelings of distrust towards RU students.

Communication

This theme explores the participants' accounts of their communication techniques, looking at the communication between volunteer managers and CE representatives and amongst CE representatives who worked together in a hall. It looks at what participants valued as effective communication, and explores what may have led to instances of ineffective communication.

One of the important things that appeared to help in building good partnerships was developing good communication between CE representatives and volunteer managers. This was noted by one of the CE representatives who said:

So far it has been so good, like communication wise, can I say flowing? There is no barrier, everything is just properly translated. We understand each other, we know what we want, we know what the partner wants, and the partner understands us (CE 1, FG 1).

These sentiments were echoed by her partner, who stated:

Our communication is strong, because we have the group (CP 1, 1 2).

This communication was characterised as important in being able to work well together.

Different electronic platforms, such as WhatsApp, were used to enhance communication between the CE representatives and their volunteer managers. There were instances where this worked well, such as the following explanation:

Anytime when I just WhatsApp her she responds fast that "no, I am around" or "no, I am not around, you will find so and so" (CE 3, FG 2).

It seems WhatsApp was convenient in getting a quick response. This is reiterated as follows where a community partner also shares her good experiences of using WhatsApp:

If there is something that someone does not understand, we speak about it in private, and then we go back to the main group with one understanding (CP 1, I 2).

WhatsApp was being used as the main mode of communication, which seemed easily accessible to all. This partner speaks to the convenience of having both one-on-one and group interaction within the platform.

However, there were also instances where this did not work so well, as follows:

Another thing, there was another group that they created, then I was there. So, I was reading the texts and realise that these messages do not concern me because they pertain to the residence (CP 2, FG 2).

While WhatsApp could be used as an effective medium of communication, sometimes this did not work well when messages communicated on a WhatsApp group only pertained to certain individuals on the group. Although overall it seems that WhatsApp was a good medium of communication that was accessible and convenient for all, it may be necessary for those using it to have some guidelines around what is communicated in the WhatsApp group. Particularly, students need to consider carefully how community partners might perceive messages, hence the need for perhaps more careful moderation by CE reps.

Good communication alone however did not help in achieving the goals. As one CE representative explained, there was good communication with the volunteer manager and a solid relationship was built, however this was not always translated into acting towards the goal. She explained:

> *I think my team and I failed drastically, regardless of there being communication with Sis Sindiwe. I feel like there are times when we would come up with ideas that, ok we want to do this and this and this and then we failed when it came to execution* (CE 1, FG 2).

The CE representative attributed this 'failure' to lacking the skills of time management; being able to juggle between their academic and CE commitments. She also attributed this to being unable to translate her own ideas into action:

> *One was the thing of, we don't, we're not sure how to execute things* (CE 1, FG 2).

While they had good ideas, they were not always sure on how to follow through on them. This indicates that students needed further assistance to carry out plans. CE representatives felt that they sometimes lacked the skills to navigate their responsibilities.

Good communication was also unfortunately not always sustained. For example, when the CE representative was changed, as is the case at the beginning of each new year for each partner organisation, there was not always an easy transition. In one instance there was no clear communication with the volunteer manager about the handover process, which resulted in a few hitches in the relationship. She explained:

> *The next person, there was no communication. And then, I will be busy with my school's daily programme when the volunteer bus suddenly arrives, and I must stop my programme in order to accommodate them* (CP 2, FG 2).

This volunteer manager explains that not having proper communication channels became disruptive for her and her centre. Since she was not aware of the students' arrival time, she could not adequately prepare for it. Not having a proper handover session was very disruptive to this partnership, which created a lack of communication between the volunteer manager and CE representative. A way to overcome this is to ensure that the new CE representative is introduced to the volunteer manager from the onset in order that they worked towards a working relationship early on in their engagement.

One partner group admitted to having a breakdown in communication, with the CE representative stating:

> *I think communication was just something I struggled with…I think there was miscommunication from my side* (CE 4, I 2).

This CE representative strongly felt that they had been largely unavailable during the year, due to having other personal and academic commitments. Their volunteer manager also noticed this breakdown in communication, stating:

> *With some of the emails I sent to him, some he responded to and others he did not respond to. I think I have a full month without speaking to him* (CP 4, FG 2).

With this breakdown in communication, it is therefore not surprising to note that none of the goals that they had set for the year were achieved. These goals have been discussed in further detail in the previous chapter.

There was also not always good communication amongst the CE representatives themselves, which led to them not always being able to work well together as a group. This is explained by a CE representative:

> *Other representatives, am not sure whether they were going, or they were not going cause there was no communication between us regarding "who is going at what time, I went and did this and that." There was no communication that much between myself and the other representatives, I don't know why* (CE 3, FG 2).

This CE representative explained that he was unsure whether the other CE representatives in his hall were visiting the site at all, due to the lack of communication amongst them. This is an issue that needed further exploration, as it appears this student had difficulties with his peers' commitment.

When asked to brainstorm ideas on what would assist in ensuring that there is more teamwork amongst the CE representatives, one CE representative shared her experience as follows:

> *I think the main thing is the start, how you begin the year and how you guys begin with the relationship is the most important part. If you start and you feel like you're representing your residence alone and you don't know all the other representatives, that's where the communication breaks* (CE 1, FG 2).

This student thus emphasised that her team kept open lines of communication, because she initiated this from the onset of the relationship and kept on encouraging it. She further added that conversations kept going even in informal spaces, which helped to strengthen the relationship and keep the communication strong.

Another suggestion was to formalise the role of a CE representative in each hall. Some had hall CE representatives, such as one of the participants in this study, however most of the halls did not. One of the CE representatives suggested:

> *It would be more effective if each hall, it is mandatory for them to have like a hall CE representative who will overlook all the residences, like the other, being the CE representative for your residence, but one that will be like independent from them and overlook them that "you guys have this goal, I want a report"* (CE 3, FG 2).

The residence CE representatives would be required to report to the hall CE representative, who would in turn report to RUCE. Although this implied control and setting targets, this was a welcomed suggestion, with one CE representative stating:

> *I think it would give us a sense of like accountability, that you are a leader as well you feel, it's going to give you that passion that something needs to happen. You must be seen as active because you're supposed to submit a report. So, I think that, so that idea of submitting a report is going to emphasise on accountability which is going to motivate even us as students that hey, as CE representatives that something must happen. We need something to happen because we have something to submit. I think that's where we lack, I think that's why we have become very relaxed, we're like "we're just doing it at our own time"* (CE 1, FG 2).

The more hierarchical system of residence representatives reporting to a hall representative who then collates an overall report seemed to be an idea that was supported by those present at the focus group. Such an approach could then tighten up the lines of reporting and improve two-way communication.

While this idea of introducing a hall representative seemed to be popular, one of the CE representatives reflected on the difficulties that having this role could potentially pose:

> *It's been a challenge now with regards, the CE representatives themselves depending more on the hall representatives* (CE 2, I 2)

Reflecting on this, this CE representative stated that the residence representatives did not seem to have a clear understanding of the different roles. Therefore, should this role be formalised in the future, there would need to be a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the different representatives.

In addition to introducing a hall representative, during the second focus group discussion CE representatives also identified the importance of encouraging warden participation in the implementation of the goals. A warden is employed by the university to oversee the functions of their assigned residence, like the role of a matron in a boarding school. A CE representative commented:

> *In the wardens' meetings you should try to encourage that 'ok wardens, this is what we can do for community engagement'* (CE 2, FG 2).

Another CE representative commented that seeing a warden take interest in the activities that they do as students was encouraging:

> *I think that, just to testify, I have friends that live in other reses. They get excited when they see their wardens on a trip with them…it gives the student like that thing…the main leadership, the mother of the house or the father of the house is there. Therefore like, you also feel like, you also enjoy being there because there is leadership of some sort and it's not only us students* (CE 1, FG 2).

Considering the positive outcome that active wardens have, it may prove beneficial to see how they can participate meaningfully in the programme and encourage participation from their students.

A final suggestion was that there be some form of team building amongst the CE representatives of each hall, so that they learn to work together from the start. A CE representative commented:

> *I feel like there should be a team building kind of a thing… I'm not sure a team building camp or just a day where it is just us as CE representatives, practical. If it means that we're going to be doing some sports running, but it must just be a day where we just connect, and we enhance our team building skills. I feel that will also help in the halls* (CE 1, I 1)

This is an important thing to note, as the CE representatives are expected to be able to work together, without having built any form of relationship in the past; and after being used to working independently, in their own residences. It is a taken for granted assumption that because they are all in the same hall, it might be easy to work together. However, this unfortunately appeared not always to be the case. This illustrates that students have agency and lack authority over one another. This was reflected on by a community partner:

> *But what he can't have control over them, he cannot force to bring them together. They are not cows or goats, each person decides what they want to do* (CP 4, I 2).

CE representatives also noted that there was not always good communication between them and RUCE. One of them noted that

> *The problem I had was that the communication with like the CE office, it was not as clear, especially when we started because I didn't know that "ok fine, I'm now CE representative, do I wait until training day so I can actually start implementing certain things?"* (CE 1, I 1).

This CE representative also notes that she was quite confused at the beginning of the year, as she lacked insight into her role. She reflects that at the beginning this also affected her being able to be effective in her position, further citing as an example that when she had a meeting with the rest of her residence committee, she would not know what to report back in terms of her portfolio, which was frustrating. This is something that needs to be much more explicitly addressed at the initial training, to facilitate a greater sense of agency and flow of communication both ways.

Negotiation

This theme explores the participants' account of the types of negotiation that were characteristic of their partnerships.

At the onset of the relationship the volunteer manager and CE representatives identify the expectations that each of them has for the partnership, and then negotiate how they wish to work going forward based on mutual understanding. This is explained by a volunteer manager who said:

> *We sit down and say these are the goals we wish to accomplish, these are my expectations, what are your expectations. And then, with our common expectations, we prioritise that this is what we will do* (*CP* 4, I 2).

This volunteer manager explains that while community partners have goals for their organisations, CE representatives bring with them ideas that they have. She explains that it is therefore important for each party to share their ideas at the onset of the engagement and together decide on which ideas are feasible.

While goals and a timeframe are set at the beginning of the year, it is important to clarify that there is always room for flexibility when things do not go according to plan. A volunteer manager explained:

> *They can notify you in good time that "I am unable to come now mother, what I am going to do is this and that, or I will send this person on my behalf"* (CP 4, FG 1).

This volunteer manager explains that as part of the relationship building process it is important to keep open lines of communication; where the CE representative is unable to come, they communicate in a timely fashion with the volunteer manager, outlining what they are able to do remotely or alternatively which student volunteer they will ask to complete tasks at the centre on their behalf. Negotiation and flexibility therefore play an important role in the partnership. It is interesting to note however, that this negotiation and flexibility seems to be in relation to meeting times and availability, rather than to the goals.

Roles and responsibilities

This theme strives to probe what sense CE representatives and volunteer managers make of their roles and responsibilities. To begin, the CE representatives identified aspects of these and how they hoped these would influence their working relationships. This is followed by the views of the volunteer managers. Many of these excerpts draw from the first interview, therefore much of what is said is aspirational still. There was no meaningful development of this in the second interviews and focus group discussion.

One CE representative commented:

> *Well, personally, the one I perceived to be my responsibility as a CE representative is to be the bridge between the students and the CE office* (CE 1, I 1).

This CE representative primarily saw her responsibility to keep communication lines open to keep the programme functioning. She commented further:

> *I've got to make sure everybody is communicated to and that everything is running* (CE 1, I 1).

Playing this role assisted this CE representative to build a good relationship with not only the other CE representatives in her hall, but also with her community partner.

Another CE representative shared that for him it was about ensuring that students are made aware of the various opportunities that are available in CE. He stated:

> *Letting people know what CE is and guiding them through that and mostly learning about CE in depth personally. It's just letting people know there is this space, because most people do have a passion for it but just don't know the ways to go about doing it. So, for me, it's just making that space available and just letting them know about it, and engaging* (CE 4, I 1).

For this CE representative, CE meant bridging the inequality divide that prevails between Makhanda East and Makhanda West. This divide has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter. It is quite interesting however that initially he makes the observation of people being passionate about CE, however not knowing how to get involved. In contrast, in his follow-up interview, he stated:

> *Information is being put out there, if you're someone that wants to get involved in community engagement you don't have to, I don't know, climb mountains to find it* (CE 4, 1 2).

In his follow up interview this CE representative states that RUCE makes information widely available to students regarding different volunteer opportunities. In the first interview this CE representative admitted to being quite disconnected from the work that RUCE does. Therefore, one could speculate that through being involved in the programme this CE representative became more aware of the information that is available to students regarding different opportunities to get involved in CE.

Sharing similar sentiments about raising awareness about CE, another CE representative defined her role as not only being one of information sharing, but of also teaching fellow students what CE at RU is all about. She stated:

> *A definition of being a CE representative is being a link between the partner and also my fellow students within residence, whereby I must encourage the students in terms of going to our partners, volunteering and also telling them it's not just about giving back to the community but also you get to learn and benefit as a student just as the partners are benefiting from your involvement in the CE* (CE 2, I 1).

For this CE representative, volunteering meant supporting the community partners. In the follow-up interview she reflects on how she is personally invested, as she was born and raised in Makhanda East:

> *I'm a local student. I know that what happens in the township and I can relate. For instance, you know how the government doesn't support other schools like primary schools* (CE 2, I 2).

This illustrates that this CE representative had a deeper understanding of the context, which was linked to her motivation to be involved in CE, but to also encourage involvement from her peers. However, it appears that 'telling' students about CE did not prove too successful for this CE representative, since in the follow-up interview, she admitting to struggling to motivate other students to volunteer. She thought it might be best for RUCE to intervene and run an awareness campaign around the benefits of volunteering. What this CE representative does not realise is that students have agency, and whereas she can provide information and encouragement, she cannot force them to participate.

Like this, another CE representative explained that while this role is a unique leadership role, it is also to make a positive impact in his local community. He stated

> *To be a leader in my residence, also while I'm a leader, because I believe in making a difference in the community that I'm in* (CE 3, I 1).

This CE representative recognises the partners' sites as part of his community, acknowledging that for him being a student at RU also means he is a member of the broader Makhanda community. So, this becomes a unifying cause and perhaps mitigates against 'us' and 'them'.

For many CE representatives this role was also a way for them to promote the values of CE such as mutuality and relationship-building. This relationship-building refers to the relationships that CE representatives and volunteer managers state to have built with one another, which are explored further later in this chapter. CE representatives seemed to share similar ideas on what they perceived their roles to be, which centred around being an intermediary between their community partner organisation and RUCE, between RUCE and the students in their residences, as well as between students in their residences and their community partner organisation. They also spoke about valuing participating in the development of Makhanda, as they identified themselves as members of the Makhanda community.

One volunteer manager saw the role of a CE representative as being a role model to the young learners in the ECD centres. She explained:

> *We are building something where children will have wishes and be able to say that 'one day I want to go to university'. Because our children lose interest at an early age, they do not want to go to school, they give up and you must constantly push* (CP 4, FG 2).

She added:

> *It means 'one day I will also be able to study at RU'* (CP 4, I 2).

This refers to children being able to aspire to studying at the university. CP 4's CE representative concurred with this, stating that many of the children do not have positive role models:

> *Most of the children, they do not come from the best living environments* (CE 4, I 2).

Therefore, having 'access' to a RU student in the form of them being present in the centre was welcome, as their presence brought much-needed hope for the young learners. In addition, the volunteer manager felt that the student volunteers were in a much better position to teach the learners English:

> *When they have a conversation, I feel that they can speak the language more than me* (CP 4, FG 2).

This emphasis that is put on being fluent in English reflects some of the realities of what is perceived to assist people to progress, may be remnant of South Africa's colonial past.

Expanding on the role of responsibilities, a volunteer believed that her role is to induct CE representatives and to ensure that they are fully aware of the ECD space and know how to treat children. She explained:

> *My responsibility is to address them when they are here, informing them what the programme is and then introducing them to the children…I need to teach them the rules of the school* (CP 3, I 1).

Volunteer managers therefore play a role of liaison for student volunteers and keeping the ECD spaces welcoming of the volunteers; troubleshooting if necessary; as well as ensuring that they are aware of the practices of the centre and that there are open lines of communication.

In addition to inducting student volunteers, one volunteer manager stated:

> *As a volunteer manager I need to make sure that when the volunteers arrive at the school, or when the students arrive at the school, they are treated well whether I am there or not. They feel welcome whether I am there or not. If I have a problem with them, I address it directly with them, and if it does not work out then I report it to the office [RUCE]. Then, if they don't pitch up to the school, I need to make sure that I check what the matter might be, if they had not reported* (CP 1, I 1).

This volunteer manager explained that what was important for her was about liaising with other staff members to welcome the students; and also, being aware of and taking steps to resolve any difficulties. This volunteer manager also seems to have a good sense of what steps to take if there are concerns, first addressing difficulties with the students, and only after that going 'higher up'.

She goes on to state that she saw her role as ensuring that she keeps her student volunteers accountable:

> *I told them that I give them two weeks. If we do not do anything during that period, I want him to go to RUCE and report there. We should not wait for the meeting to report that we are not coping. That's why they could then organise themselves and come and sit outside even though the gate was locked and make the alphabets. There is a need that, when you are a manager, the students must understand that you do take things seriously* (CP 1, I 2).

This volunteer manager emphasises the importance of being stern when the need arises and providing some sort of direction when they can see that the student volunteers are failing to implement plans. She goes on to explain that being stern does not mean being unfriendly, however the sternness will be beneficial to the students in the long run. She states that while students may not realise it while they are still participating in the programme, being actively engaged may lead to them developing valuable skills that they could use in the workplace, such as teamwork and effective communication.

Emerging insights over time

In what follows below, CE representatives and volunteer managers reflect on what they have learnt in their journey of being jointly involved in CE activities. Since many of the excerpts

come from the initial interviews and focus group discussion, one could speculate that these insights are based on the initial building stages of the partnership process. Where there have been further developments in the partnership, excerpts from the follow up interviews and focus group discussion are drawn on to illustrate this. However, since these are minimal, it brings into question whether there was any further development of insights or the extent of any transformation.

Relationship building

In this theme, volunteer managers and CE representatives described the type of relationships they wish to build with one another. As many of the excerpts are from the initial interviews and focus group discussion, one may conclude that what the participants were saying was aspirational. There is little evidence to show to what extent these relationships were built further throughout the course of the year and this research.

Illustrating the desire to be a support for the CE representatives, a volunteer manager commented:

> *We are building a relationship that a person should know that whatever situation they find themselves in, whether it's bad, whether it's good, but "I have someone whom I can talk to" you see* (CP 4, FG 1).

This volunteer manager explains that she wants to create the kind of relationship where her student volunteers can feel they have a safe space and a person to confide in, even if it is not related to CE activities. This implies a caring type of role that the partner would like to provide. Adding to this, in a follow-up interview, another volunteer manager commented that she tries to build a space where students felt free to approach her:

> *We are trying very hard to be approachable* (CP 1, I 2).

Referring to the overdose mentioned in the previous chapter, this volunteer manager reflects on how she felt guilty for not noticing that one of her student volunteers were going through a tough time emotionally. She felt personally responsible to ensure that whenever student volunteers visit her site, she provides a safe and supportive environment.

Adding on to the kind of relationship that is being fostered, a CE representative commented that:

> *Most importantly the partners take more interest in us as individuals than just being CE representatives coming to wherever the partner is* (CE 1, FG 1).

This CE representative has recognised the personal investment of her community partner, in that she not only sees her as just a CE representative but someone that she can build a personal relationship with. She continued:

> *The partner is more interested in the people that she's working with more than us being there to help with whatever goals they have* (CE 1, FG 1).

This means the kind of relationship that the partner wishes to establish is also of a personal nature, where the volunteer manager takes a personal interest in the CE representative. The volunteer manager, in a follow-up interview, concurs by stating that in future she plans on getting to know each student personally:

> *Even if we go out and have an hour or 30 minutes with each person if it's possible. Sit with them and get to know them* (CP 1, I 2).

This volunteer manager believes that getting to know each of her students personally may create the kind of relationship that she envisions, where the students feel free to be open to her about problems they may be facing.

A volunteer manager explained this relationship as:

> *Even if you are no longer the CE representative, even if you are no longer at Rhodes, but you've got someone who you can say "if I am lost in Grahamstown, Sis Tobeka where are you in Grahamstown, where is a certain place, there is a family member of mine coming that side* (CP 4, FG 1).

This volunteer manager explains that it is the kind of relationship that is ongoing, where they can continue to count on each other for personal and family-related reasons even after their formal partnership through CE has come to an end.

These relationships have thus evolved to symbolise the kind of relationships that could be expected in families. For example:

> *The partner takes interest in us as individual and I think it's safe to say that the partner takes a role of being a mother, because she's constantly checking up on us. Even though it's not related to CE things, but she just makes sure that the relationship is maintained* (CE 1, FG 1)

For some CE representatives their community partners have taken on the role of being like a mother, due to the kind of maternal support that they receive from them. Reflecting on this in the follow-up interview, her volunteer manager commented:

> *There is no student that calls me 'Sindiwe'. They all say mamzo [mother] or say Sis Sindiwe* (CP 1, I 2).

By doing this, the students recognise that support that the volunteer manager gives them is like the support that they would receive from their own mothers or an older sister.

While these relationships have embodied aspects of family relationships, these relationships have been diverse, depending on what the other party is needing out of it. A volunteer manager explains:

> *Not only being a mother, but I can also be a friend. I can, at the same time if you have a problem, be an ear to listen* (CP 4, FG 1).

Another volunteer manager added:

> *Or a shoulder to cry on* (CP 1, FG 1).

These excerpts demonstrate the volunteer managers' willingness to establish a relationship where they provide different kinds of support to the CE representatives, as they may need it.

Another volunteer manager explained the kind of relationship they aspire to have with CE representatives as:

> *It's not about being only a mother, it's about being a friend, being their family members, being their peer. I mean, we want them to feel free to call us anytime. You must know that we are a call away from you guys. If it is burning, just call and say "Sis' Tobeka it is burning". Quickly, Sis' Tobeka will make a plan even if they are unable to come but she's going to do something so that you can feel that Sis' Tobeka is not just a partner, but she's a human being, she is a mother, she's a friend, we are everything to you guys. And we want you to understand that you are important to us* (CP 1, FG 1)

This volunteer manager gives examples of how important it is for them, as community partners, to always support their student volunteers. While sharing her views on the kind of relationship she wishes to build with her students, she spoke directly to the CE representatives present during the focus group discussion, appealing to them to understand how important nurturing this relationship is for the partners.

Building on the concept of a volunteer manager being more than just a partner, however, being a 'human being', her CE representative commented:

> *So, it becomes like a job you know. It becomes like a job. You're like "I'm going to go to the school, do what I have to do and then I'm out after that." So, it doesn't really give us that, "ok, when you get there, you're going to be dealing with people, you're going to establish relationships"* (CE 1, FG 1).

She reflects that initially she thought of it more as a job role and did not envision making a personal connection with her volunteer manager, but this soon changed through the way that her volunteer manager interacted with her.

In the early stages of the partnership building process, one of the CE representatives reflected on the relationship being built with her volunteer manager:

> *What the partners did was, as soon as we got there, they broke that barrier. Like, they just made me understand that "ok fine, we understand that you guys are here to help us, but also allow me to help you, let me get to know you"* (CE 1, FG 1).

The partners being welcoming, open, and friendly during the students' first visit to the centre went a long way in building a relationship between the partners and the students. What the partner did was invite the students to be a part of their community; inviting the students to build a relationship with them.

In the follow up interviews and focus group discussion, some volunteer managers reflected on the relationships that they had built with their CE representatives:

> *We end up bring friends that have conversations outside of the department that initially introduced us* (CP 3, I 2)

Another partner stated:

> *Now it is a family relationship* (CP 4, FG 2)

With another adding:

> *Of ubuntu* (CP 1, FG 2)

These two volunteer managers felt that they were somehow interconnected with their CE representatives, having established their own kind of family relationship. The CP 1 partnership culminated in a social event that they hosted at the end of the academic year.

Commenting on the longevity of the relationships built (and alluded to in an earlier excerpt), a CE representative stated:

> *But it's a relationship that we establish that is long term. Even though I'm not going to be CE representative next year, but then I know that, in my own spare time I can call Sis Sindiwe "where are you, can I come through?"* (CE 1, FG 1).

In the second focus group discussion she added:

> *We've gained a mother from Sis Sindiwe. She has become like our older sister or a mother, that relationship has been established. The relationship was very tight even after this, even personally for even next year if I'm not in the same sort of position. But the relationship I have established, I don't think it going to change. So, it's been a positive one* (CE 1, FG 2).

This CE representative felt that she had built a good relationship with her community partner to an extent that she felt comfortable to contact her directly to see if she was willing to volunteer in her personal capacity, outside of the formal volunteer programme. It is however not clear to what extent this relationship was established after the study was concluded.

One of the CE representatives also commented to the type of relationship that she had tried to establish with the CE representatives with whom she worked in her hall:

> *So now that there's a team, then I think it becomes so much better because you know that 'ok, I can now lean on this one, I can lean on that one'. So, I think what we did differently was communicate, we pushed that 'guys, whatever happens we need to talk to each other'* (CE 1, FG 2).

She explains what she thinks allowed her and her team 'work' well together, being communication. However, I am not sure to what extent this team worked well together, as this CE representative also admits to the team having many ideas and failing to execute them all. She also comments on how, through frustration, she organised activities and events without including her team members.

Another CE representative also alluded to the lack of teamwork within his hall, attributing this to poor communication:

> *There's been a lack of communication* (CE 3, I 2).

It seems the success of the teamwork within the halls was limited, with only one CE representative, CE 2, reporting on having good teamwork within their hall. It was also CE 2's hall that was successful in achieving all three goals that had been set for the year. This

is an indication that if there is a lack of good teamwork amongst the CE representatives in the hall, it may lead to a difficulty in achieving the goals.

Two volunteer managers also described having established personal relationships with RUCE staff:

> *If I need something, I can go there, even if's something personal. Just personal communication, not discussing work-related issues. Perhaps I talk about my personal issues, asking 'how about I do it this way and that way, am I doing it right?'* (CP 4, I 2).

Another volunteer manager commented:

> *I mean she is my mother. It does not matter what happens, because she is a parent and even when I have a personal problem, I can go and share it with her. Her shoulder is there for me to lean on and tell her, and she advises me* (CP 1, I 2).

These two partners reflect on how they believe a safe space has been created for them staff members at the RUCE offices to share their personal problems and they trust that they will receive good advice. This is something that these two partners have cherished. It seems however this relationship that was built caused some jealousy with the other community partners, resulting in CP 1 being teased. However, CP 1 indicated that she had learnt to ignore this name calling.

What was concerning to note is that it seemed that no meaningful partnerships had been formed amongst the volunteer managers themselves:

> *Even the schools, they do not want to visit one another* (CP 4, 1 2).

This volunteer manager reflects on how it is difficult to get the various ECD sites together, citing as an example an event she organised which she hosted at one of the sites. She had invited all the ECD sites in the area, however none of them honoured the invitation. Another volunteer manager adds:

> *We usually invite each other as ECD practitioners or ECD pre-schools, but we do not attend* (CP 1, I 2).

Upon further investigation, it seems that this lack of cohesion is due to a structural problem that stems from competition for the meagre ECD funding:

> *For a lot of people, they do not want to do anything that will not generate an income* (CP 1, I 2).

This volunteer manager alludes to ways that they prioritise activities and events that will lead to funding for their organisations, due to funds being limited. Another volunteer manager alludes to this by saying:

> *From 42 learners, we now have 16. So, we cannot fundraise with 16 learners* (CP 2, I 2).

This volunteer manager shares that for their organisation, during the time of conducting this research, they had limited funds available as they had a significant drop in learner enrolment. She also speaks to the difficulty of raising funds when one has a small number of learners. In trying to explain the drop in numbers, she goes on to state that there are 3 other ECD sites within proximity to hers. It seems that a few people end up opting to start their own ECD sites, due to wanting access to funding:

> *People want money more than anything else. And where it becomes sad is that a person will open their own school, the parents do not pay, and they become frustrated (*CP 4, I 2).

It seems that this frustration of not having access to adequate funding then leads to each partner focusing on trying to generate funds for their own organisation independently, as opposed to trying to identify synergies and work collaboratively with other partners:

> *A person likes doing what they want, they do not want to work with other, and exchange their ideas or advice. They have this thinking that 'if I tell Benita that she must do this and that, perhaps Benita will become better than me'. They end up being in competition* (CP 4, 1 2).

This lack of collaboration thus clearly stems from deeper structural inequalities. It seems the best way forward would be trying to tackle these inequalities first with the associated government department.

Key learnings

What follows is a reflection from participants on what they believe to have learnt during the time of their partnership. CE representatives reflect on what they learnt from each other and from their partners, and volunteer managers reflect on what they learnt from their CE representatives and one another.

Upon reflecting on the nature of their relationships, CE representatives felt that they contributed to some of the key learnings from being involved in the programme. One CE representative reflected:

> *The relationship that we have with them especially teaches them how to deal with students or people our age, or how to deal with people that you work with* (CE 1, FG 1).

This CE representative reflects on how this experience may have contributed to community partners learning more about relating to young people, especially those in university. In a follow up interview, a volunteer manager reflected on this, stating how through being involved in this programme, she was able to challenge a commonly held myth amongst non-university educated people that university students are unapproachable, and one cannot work with them. She reflected

> *Educated students today are threatening to people Benita. A person will say "this person is too educated and now they are unapproachable, it is not easy to get close to them". I realised that they are people who get close to people and they are of assistance to us. You realise that they can converse casually, and you forget how educated they are…I realised that they are good people* (CP 3, I 2).

This community partner reflects on how it may seem threatening to work with university students, given their distance from the partners' realities. However, by getting to know them and work with them in a programme such as the ECD Residence programme, where each person is encouraged to form a mutually beneficial relationship, she soon realised that they are not that different from anyone else. Through partnering with the students, this volunteer manager was able to have a different perspective about university students, challenging her previously held assumptions.

CE representatives also believed that they contributed to some of the key learnings that their peers received, and in doing so, also developed and honed on some skills. A CE representative shared:

> *I think also it helps us to understand how to work with people, I mean working in a team and having one goal* (CE 3, FG 1).

This CE representative further added that:

> *So, I think it gives us the sense of being in a working, in a workplace and working with a team of people* (CE 3, FG 1).

The excerpt above emphasises the importance of teamwork and how one works effectively in dynamic groups. This is a lesson that this CE representative felt would be valuable in the workplace where they will be required to work with different people.

Drawing on his aspirations of learning skills during his participation in the programme, in a follow up interview a CE representative shared that he felt he had learnt valuable skills that he could use in other aspects of his life, developing a broader skill set:

> *Being able to organise stuff…like being able to be in that environment to organise stuff also gave me that experience. And then also having to know how to encourage people, like pitching ideas to people… so also having those ideas broadened my mind, like it opened me* (CE 3, I 2).

He thus emphasises learning organisational skills, interpersonal skills, as well as presentation skills. Another CE representative commented:

> *So, I think, one thing it taught me very, I think I'll carry it forward going into life, is to manage my time. Plan my time. Yes, it is something that you love, but like, you have studies and everything and you must plan your time* (CE 1, I 2).

In addition to this, she stated:

> *I learnt not to have so many ideas, but to just only, like I said, starting out small is the most important part* (CE 1, I 2).

This reflection emphasises how to be strategic in managing how they spend their time on various commitments that they want to be a part of (in this instance CE volunteering) and commitments that they are required to be a part of (that is, their academic programme). It also looks at the importance of setting SMART goals that can realistically be attained.

Another CE representative felt that being involved in CE contributed to her growth and taught her that there are many people who can contribute to her personal development. She reflected:

> *I've grown and in that growing process I have gained to be matured in the sense that within the community, it's not just about myself. There are other people who play a role in my growth, so volunteering has helped me in that sense that I know that there are other factors that play a part in my growth* (CE 2, I 1).

Reflecting on her personal development, this CE representative realises that people around her have contributed to this. Like this, during the second interview, another CE

representative stated that he learnt from his volunteer manager the value of teamwork and being able to trust the people that you work with. He stated:

> *So, I've learnt that it's ok to lean on people or even to trust someone else to do something, if you can't* (CE 4, I 2).

For these two CE representatives CE taught them the power of influence from the people in their lives.

Reflecting on their participation in the programme, during the follow up focus group discussion, another CE representative added that through being in the programme they developed self-awareness. She reflected:

> *I think the biggest lesson I have learnt is just, I learnt about myself…I have grown* (CE 2, FG 2).

This CE representative reflects on how it for her this was a journey of personal development, which she attributes to having overcome some challenges related to being involved in a CE programme, such as navigating a space outside of her comfort zone.

CE representatives also felt it important to share their learnings with incoming CE representatives, so that they do not make the same mistakes as them. During the second interview a CE representative reflected:

> *I learnt that consistency is really vital, and I would advise incoming CE representatives for like 2019 that "guys, whatever you do at the beginning of the year, you should have consistency. It's exciting when you start in January, but it goes down* (CE 1, I 2).

She thus notes that motivation is likely to change throughout the year. A better briefing may have assisted her to be more successful in achieving the goals that she had set at the beginning of the year with her community partner.

Like the sentiments that the CE representatives share, the volunteer managers also felt that they had learnt important skills through being involved in the programme. During the second interview one volunteer manager reflected:

> *What I learnt is how to work in a team… secondly, I learnt how to listen to others* (CP 1, I 2).

This community partner felt that she honed her teamwork and listening skills. Building on this idea of learning teamwork, another volunteer manager commented:

> *I learnt that it is not important to do something for yourself, if you are doing it on behalf of the school you must include other people. Involve other people, because once you leave there will be a gap* (CP 3, I 2).

This volunteer manager notes that she realised the importance of ensuring that she collaborates with her colleagues, even though as the volunteer manager she will lead the programme. She reflects on the importance of teamwork to continuity and potential sustainability of the partnership beyond her tenure. Another volunteer manager shared how she not only learnt the spirit of sharing knowledge and skills, but also how this is of benefit to her community. She stated:

> *What I have, I should share with others who do not have, building our community. So, what I have, I must share with other people. The knowledge that I have…those that have should share with those that do not have* (CP 2, I 2).

For this partner the insight was about learning the importance of sharing what you have with those around you.

The volunteer managers however explained that amongst themselves as community partners it is not always easy to teach each other or learn from one another. One volunteer manager stated:

> *We do not want to rise up, we see someone as being 'forward'* (CP 1, FG 1).

This volunteer manager uses the word 'forward', which culturally means a person who perceives themselves to be better than others. She explains how people shy away from stepping up for fear of being ridiculed by their colleagues, as their colleagues may perceive them to act like a 'know-it-all'. She goes on to reflect on this again during her follow up interview, saying how her colleagues name-call her and say she is the 'teacher's pet' because she always avails herself whenever RUCE is looking for volunteers.

In addition to this challenge, another volunteer manager reflected on how learnings are not easily received by all community partners. She stated:

> *It depends on how much you want to learn* (CP 4, FG 1).

This partner reflects on how she feels often colleagues will look at who is delivering the message, as opposed to looking at the value of the message. In her follow up interview, she explains how colleagues are not always open to learning from each other and goes on to

share how people who try to share their knowledge are told that they are making themselves 'clever'. This points to a problem that a culture of sharing and learning from one another has not be fully established between the community partners, perhaps due to the structural inequalities explored elsewhere in this chapter, however this is speculation.

Reflecting on how there seems to be little collaboration between community partners, a volunteer manager, during the first focus group discussion, stated that they had not previously thought that they had any role to play in the development of their colleagues, both those that they work with in their centre as well as those that they work with in the ECD field. She stated:

> *I did not know that we need to have an impact on other partners and have an impact on other colleagues. But, today, I think I will make means* (CP 1, FG 1).

Due to the conversation that happened at the first focus group discussion, and the resultant insights gained, this volunteer manager made a resolution to be more intentional in sharing their knowledge and skills with colleagues, whether this is well received. For this volunteer manager, the first focus group discussion presented her an opportunity to reflect on the role that they could play in developing one another. In her follow up interview, this volunteer manager stated that she had made attempts to share her knowledge, however she was unsure of the impact of this, as she realised that people have agency and therefore it is up to the person that she shares knowledge with, what they do with it.

Although she was unsure of the success of sharing her knowledge, this volunteer manager felt that she was successful in sharing her resources. During her second interview she reflected on how she felt privileged as she now, through being on the programme, had honed on her networking and community mobilising skills. She felt she could use these skills for the betterment of the rest of her community. She comments:

> *I do not see a reason for not trying to assist develop another school the same way that your school was helped* (CP 1, 1 2).

She explains that she had overheard that this partner organisation was struggling with the upkeep of their premises. CP 1 then volunteered to assist to mobilise resources for this school. She successfully lobbied community members to help clean the grounds, cut the grass, and paint the outside walls. This community mobilisation is admirable; however, it seems that unfortunately, drawing on what the volunteer managers described during this research, it is more of an isolated event and not the norm.

In light of what the volunteer managers shared about the lack of collaboration between them, a CE representative felt that more could be done to encourage this and to foster relationships amongst partner groups so they could work together to realise their goals:

> *What I noticed is that all the partners, they mostly share the same goals. Why don't we share our own things as CE representatives, so that we can meet the goals of the partners? So, I've learnt that working together as a team can make us do wonderful stuff* (CE 3, FG 1).

The first focus group discussion offered an opportunity to explore meeting, networking, and collaborating together. Noting that there had been a tendency to work in silos, this CE representative encouraged the sharing of resources for greater impact and sustainability.

In their follow up interview, a volunteer manager also alluded to working in more collaborative ways, noting that the focus group discussion was a springboard for broader collaboration. She commented:

> *We, people who formed part of your group, have an influence towards others who were not part of it* (CP 1, I 2).

This volunteer manager seemed to aspire towards making a personal connection with all those who were part of the focus group discussion, hoping that they could foster a collaborative relationship that would inspire all the participants of the ECD Residence Programme. The format of the focus group discussion, which mirrored a small group reflection session, therefore inspired her to start working more collaboratively and having more discussions with other partner groups.

Programmatic issues

In this theme the CE representative and volunteer managers reflect on practical aspects of the programme that are beneficial to the relationship-building process to develop the partnerships. They also reflect on aspects that do not work very well and wish to change to enhance the programme.

Programme ownership

What follows reflects the extent that participants felt that there was an ownership of the programme in their partner organisations. What dominated the discussion during the first focus group discussion was how in one partner organisation the volunteer manager felt that her colleagues did not take an interest in the programme. There were many speculations as to why this was, with some advice being offered on how to possibly deal with this issue.

A volunteer manager shared her difficulties in working with her colleagues, who seemed uninterested in being involved in the programme at all:

> *There is a problem. You find that your staff do not want to welcome the students and they say, "this is your thing". You find that when it comes to students arriving and I am not there, they sit there and do not know what to do. They are told "Thembela is not here, so you must wait for Thembela"* (CP 3, FG 1).

This community partner explains how in her centre there has not been ownership of the programme, and her colleagues see it as solely 'belonging' to the volunteer manager. She comments on the unfriendly nature of her colleagues towards the student volunteers, stating that they often do not greet the students and if the students arrive and she is not there, they are given a cold shoulder. This may be a result of the lack of early introductions and integration, or possibly feelings of envy or being intimated. These feelings of intimidation have been discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

After much speculation on the cause of this problem, one of the suggestions that was raised was structuring the programme differently, to allow for all staff members of a centre to get involved in the programme and take ownership of it. A CE representative suggested:

> *I think it should be a matter of not paying all our attention to our site manager. You know when it comes to training. We should involve other staff members* (CE 1, FG 1).

She explained that the learning from the training should not only be for the benefit of the volunteer managers, but for the organisation.

Picking up on this idea of working with all staff members in a partner organisation, another CE representative shared their thoughts:

> *The problem here is the hierarchy thing because they see you as up there doing the stuff* (CE 3, FG 1).

The issue could be that the rest of the staff may not feel that they were collaborators on the programme, as the volunteer manager takes the lead and has the overall responsibility for it. The aim of involving everyone is to also to try and break down the hierarchy that seems to be created unintentionally through only having one person involved in the coordination of the programme from the centre. The potential effects of this on other staff members is that they may become disinterested, as they do not think that their input is needed.

This hierarchy and division, which results in certain staff members feeling alienated and thus not taking ownership of the programme, may also be unintentionally created through how CE representatives treat other staff members. A CE representative reflected on this through saying:

> *We also have a contribution to them not showing interest in us. In the sense that we are introduced to the site members, so when we get to the site our focus is on the site manager. When I arrive there the first person, "Hi Sis Thabisa" so, by the virtue of me showing interest in Sis Thabisa shows that I am isolating them* (CE 2, FG 1).

Thus, being only introduced to the volunteer manager at the initial training may result in paying more attention to the volunteer manager and thus in the process alienating the rest of the team at the centre, since the students have not established a relationship with them from the onset.

In trying to address this problem a CE representative suggested creating more opportunities to get to know all staff members in each centre, establishing a relationship with each one of them. She suggested:

> *I think team building. There must be a day whereby there are no children, just us and them and then between us and them, there must be some sort of, I hate the word 'meet and greet', but it has to be something whereby we learn how to work with each other* (CE 1, FG 1).

This suggestion would enable CE representatives to meet all the staff and get to know each other before they work together. Another CE representative supported the idea of team

building, reflecting that through this one gets to know their teammates personally which may also assist in breaking down stereotypes and preconceived ideas about the other person.

Picking up on what a volunteer manager had alluded to earlier, a CE representative spoke to how sometimes students from RU can be perceived to be unapproachable to some community partners, therefore it is not easy to establish a relationship:

> *If we can do team building, then you get an opportunity to see my personality that I'm not this high maintenance 'coconut' person. We can have a relationship* (CE 2, FG 1).

The term 'coconut' is a derogatory term that is used to refer to black people, by fellow black people, when they feel that the black person is not 'black enough' in behaviour and outlook and rather acts like a white person. Using this term shows elements of prejudice and discrimination, where those who perceive themselves to be 'blacker' than 'coconuts' tend to distance themselves, seeing these others as 'sell-outs'. This is another instance of othering. This CE representative therefore supports the idea of team building as she believes that it will allow all to get to know each other better, facilitating healthier working relationships and perhaps better working towards the good of the children.

Other suggestions given were around the volunteer manager keeping open communication channels with the rest of the staff, to ensure that everyone is aware of the programme, what it entails, and who is involved. These suggestions were made by two volunteer managers who had a good understanding of what this volunteer manager was going through, and therefore were made drawing on their own experiences from their organisations. Firstly, what was highlighted is to ensure that all staff members are introduced to the CE representatives and student volunteers. This was explained by a community partner as follows:

> *What I am thinking is that, when a student comes to my school, I should introduce them to my colleagues. Not so? Then, I talk about what is going to happen; "you are going to arrive here, you are going to come whether I am here, here are the people you will find when you arrive* (CP 4, FG 1).

This introduction serves as a first contact, where the different parties will be able to begin to get to know each other. This is important, as this volunteer manager explains that they do not work in isolation however, they also have fellow colleagues that the students should be able to work with as well. Secondly, what was highlighted was to ensure that feedback is

given to all staff members regarding progress made in the programme. This was explained by a community partner as follows:

> *When you go and hear what's happening at Rhodes, you then go back to the staff and tell them that this and that are happening* (CP 2, FG 1).

This community partner felt that keeping lines of communication and being transparent would be essential in ensuring that everyone is aware of what is going on and thus can contribute.

One of the issues that was thought to contribute to the problem of not all staff members wanting to engage with the students is the issue of the language barrier. Many students converse in English, with some not being familiar with the local language (isiXhosa). This causes a barrier in communication, as for some community partners who have not had the opportunity to further their education, fluency in English may be a challenge. This therefore means there is a barrier in communication as the students and community partners are not able to converse in the same language. CE representatives and volunteer managers reflected on the importance of the language that is used as a medium of communication. A CE representative commented

> *We have to bear in mind this issue of the language barrier, but if there is someone who is isiXhosa speaking, please be willing to translate* (CE 2, FG 1).

She added

> *Because a person will think that "I need to speak English, no man I would rather not concentrate on them because they will laugh at me"* (CE 2, FG 1).

So, always speaking in English may be a deterrent for other staff members as they do not feel confident in their abilities and thus will choose not to engage with the students based on that. She suggests that where possible, translation should be made available to put everyone at ease. However, this again gives primacy to speaking English, with speaking isiXhosa perhaps not as valued. Reflecting on the issue of language in the second focus group discussion, another CE representative commented:

> *I need to learn Xhosa* (CE 1, FG 2).

She realised that not knowing the local language was an impediment in building a relationship, and she felt that it created a distance between her and staff members of her community partner organisation. This highlights the need for students to become more aware of their privileged language status; and that their attitudes to and willingness to learn isiXhosa need attention.

Following the deep engagement in the focus group conversation around the issue of staff members from the centres not taking full ownership of the programme and seeming unwelcoming towards the students, the volunteer manager involved addressed this issue with her colleagues. During the second focus group discussion the CE representative who was partnered with that centre reflected that there had indeed been a change since the beginning of the year. He stated:

> *I think now there is a change, more people are taking ownership because if I show up there, I do not feel lost, even though maybe Sisi says she is not there. I still go there and when I get there, even if it is a different person that I have not met before, but if I tell them that I'm a student at Rhodes, I just came to read, they quickly say "ok, go to that room" and they are the teacher of the learners. They put the learners in that room and keep on checking what do I need. I don't feel like there is still that thing of, yes, I think there is change* (CE 3, FG 2).

This illustrates that he felt much more supported by all staff members at the centre because of insights gained in the first focus group discussion, and that even though at times the volunteer manager would not be present when he visited, her colleagues took care to ensure that he felt welcome. It was encouraging to note this example of positive change.

Programme structure and management

CE representatives expressed a need to develop the programme structure in such a way that there is more interaction amongst themselves as CE representatives, as well as with volunteer managers. This can be done at both training at the beginning of the year, as well as through ongoing engagements throughout the 19-week duration. Comments were made on how to improve the training received at the beginning of the year, the ongoing relationship with community partners throughout the year, and the working relationship between RUCE and the CE representatives.

With regards to how the training was being conducted, a CE representative reflected on the style of the training that seemed to mimic academic presentations:

> *Can we not sit down and watch slides and be spoken to, because I keep zoning in and out. I'm going to grab one or two things out of that. Can it be something very*

practical because what we do in CE office is very practical rather than theory (CE 1, FG 1).

This emphasises the importance of a learning environment that is dynamic. She states that when the training is more practical it is more beneficial, and it creates opportunities for the CE representatives to create relationships and learn to work with each other from the onset. In the follow-up focus group discussion, another CE representative alluded to this stating:

Not like sitting down and listening, but activities that are going to physically get us involved and working together (CE 3, FG 2).

For this representative it was important to include practical activities that lend themselves to teamwork and collaboration. He added that he thinks the current structure of the training is what may deter others from volunteering, as they do not find the training to be exciting and dynamic.

Another important aspect to incorporate into the training is practical skills on how to execute their duties. Drawing on their lived experience, during their follow up interview, a CE representative noted:

It should equip us with more information, more practical information that if I'm going to be a CE representative this is how I should go about doing things. These are the channels I should follow, and this is how I should go about planning events (CE 1, I 2).

What this CE representative is saying picks up on an earlier theme about students not actually having had the life experiences to enable them to manage quite pragmatic issues. This CE representative highlighted the need for them to be equipped with time management skills. She stated:

How do I plan my time? Because I think that that is one thing as CE representatives we fail to do. Like, as much as we're in this position we fail to manage our time, hence the burden becomes too much. Halfway throughout that 'yho' this is just a lot, I just want to quit, I'm done with CE representative (CE 1, I 2).

This CE representative adds that not having such life skills drawn from life experience could easily lead to feeling disempowered and disheartened, and therefore wanting to quit the programme due to feeling overwhelmed.

Equipping the CE representatives with all the skills that they need to succeed in their positions could have a positive impact with regards to getting more students involved in CE activities. This is the belief of one of the CE representatives who reflected:

> *I think more than anything, if you can equip the CE representatives then I think more students would be involved, because now I will be knowing what my job is. I'll be knowing it inside and outside. I'll know what my responsibilities are* (CE 1, I 2).

This highlights that they sometimes struggled with getting students interested in sustained engagement and being equipped with the skills she needed for her position could give students a sense of confidence in them as their leader in CE, which might encourage them to participate.

Additionally, the CE representatives who were also part of other volunteer programmes found that the training was repetitive across the different programmes that RUCE offers. She found that the training offered for other volunteer programmes was similar in nature to that of the ECD Residence Programme:

> *The first few hours of what is presented to us is the exact same thing as what was presented to them before* (CE 1, I 1).

This CE repetition can be discouraging and may also lead to students' lack of attention during the training session. Therefore, this is something to take note of as some students join more than one programme. Perhaps it would be useful for programme organisers to offer training that has a different focus and varied activities for the different volunteer programmes.

With hindsight, during the second focus group discussion, a CE representative suggested that training in the middle of the year be done, to keep the momentum going amongst the CE representatives as they become tired towards the end of the year. He suggested that:

> *At the start of the second semester, have like team building activities happening… something that is going to build you guys as a team so that you can work together* (CE 3, FG 2).

This CE representative noted the importance of re-energising the team, since sometimes they can become demotivated.

During their initial interview, one volunteer manager also commented on the training. She felt that it needed to include skills training for student volunteers to work more effectively

with young children. She stated that she often experienced student volunteers underprepared and not always knowledgeable on how to work with the young children. She gave an example:

> *I would say there are things that they need training on, for example we have a problem of children who are unable to write their name. The student will hold the crayon for the child and help the child write, which is wrong* (CP 3, I 1).

This community partner explains that by holding the child's hand while they write they take away the autonomy from the child and the child does not learn to write their name on their own, as their hand will simply move with the hand movement of the person holding their hand. She explains that the correct way of doing this is tracing the outline of each letter in small dots and asking the child to connect the dots through showing them which direction they should flow. She also added:

> *At the very same time I would like them to be trained on how to read a story, because I notice that they read stories without pictures. They just print the paper and read the story. The child ends up not knowing what is being read to them because they cannot show them the pictures…they also like bringing stories that are long and forget that these are babies, and they need short stories* (CP 3, I 1).

This volunteer manager highlights quite pragmatic forms of training that she believes is currently missing. Perhaps this is an opportunity for volunteer managers to be asked to contribute their knowledge to fulfil this role of capacity development.

A positive aspect to the training is the inclusion of the philosophy of CE. This aspect of the training was well received by CE representatives. One commented:

> *The trainings are helpful because we have this knowledge that CE is about just giving back…the other thing about the training that's positive about it is we get to learn its's not charity* (CE 2, I 1).

She reflects on how through training they begin to have a mind shift in how they understand and approach CE. Another CE representative shared this sentiment and stated:

> *It was an eye opener, even though it was too long, but it was an eye opener…every time coming to give, that was my mentality of it first, but after the training I saw it no, coming to give is not helping* (CE 3, I 1)

What these CE representatives are reflecting on resonates, implicitly, with some of the themes that have been raised in this chapter, including co-management and relationship

building. However, more fundamentally they are reflecting on the change of attitude from charity-focused to reciprocity.

With regards to the ongoing reflection sessions during the 19-week S@M period (these have been outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis), a CE representative stated that it would prove to be more beneficial to have more frequent meaningful reflections with both CE representatives and volunteer managers. She reflected on the interaction in the focus group discussion and stated that:

> *You see this session that we have now, can we have more of it with our partners. Can there be a time once a month or if it means once a term where we sit down with our partners?* (CE 1, FG 1).

She proposed including more frequent in-depth reflections in smaller group discussions. During a follow up interview, a volunteer manager also alluded to this, stating that meeting time is limited and does not provide enough time to fully engage with issues. She stated:

> *I think the meeting time is small* (CP 1, I 2).

This partner felt that the short meeting time for the reflection sessions in the current programme structure did not lend itself to meaningful interaction.

During a follow up interview, a CE representative again spoke to the importance of creating reflective spaces where the conversation is with multiple people creates learning opportunities. She stated:

> *If that was made consistent within the CE, I think it would be amazing, because it would build a thing of, a strong bond. A kind of partnership that we're not competing within the CE for the CE [RUCE] attention, or we're focused on our site. But we're also building each other* (CE 1, I 2).

This CE representatives emphasises that spaces like the focus group discussion create opportunities for learning from each other and for people to share their challenges deepen relationship bonds and receive support from the rest of the group. These suggestions for more small group reflections come from different sources and resonate with each other.

With regards to the communication between RUCE and CE representatives, it was noted that the messages were not always clear from RUCE. Firstly, CE representatives felt that they weren't always clear on their role and highlighted the need to be trained on this from the onset. During the follow up interview a CE representative stated:

> *I think the office failed me and I failed myself in the sense that I had no sense of direction of what I'm supposed to do, what this position entails, and what my responsibilities are. Because it's just vague that you are a CE representative, your job is just to get the people within the rest of the hall to engage with the community. It's not enough, you need more emphasis because that's just vague* (CE 1, I 2).

What this CE representative highlights links back to an earlier theme about RUCE not being aware of what the students are experiencing and the students lacking the insight or assertiveness to make approaches to ask for assistance. Therefore, there seems to be a support gap. This CE representative felt that she did not have clarity, which led to her not being able to fully fulfil her responsibilities. In addition to this, this CE representative felt that RUCE was not consistently supportive throughout the year. She stated:

> *It's supportive if you come through and you ask all the questions, ask how you go about doing things, but yes, I think it's a matter of you having reached out to them, but the other way around, that channel doesn't work. It just only works at the beginning of the year where they give you a task* (CE 1, I 2).

She reflected on how she had to initiate the communication with RUCE, and that this communication was not always two-way. In addition to this, she felt 'forgotten' after the training session and believed that perhaps the staff at RUCE are often busy with other projects thus making them unable to give CE representatives the kind of guidance they need. She further noted:

> *I get the idea that they want us to be independent and see what, as students, we can achieve on our own. But, yes, not all of us can achieve that. We need guidance and all* (CE 1, I 2).

While valuing the skill of being able to work independently, this CE representative felt that at times this was too much for her and that she needed scaffolded support during different times of the year as the programme progresses.

During their follow up interview, another CE representative shared a similar sentiment, stating that RUCE did not follow up on any progress that the community partners and

students were making towards the goals, and when no progress was made there were no consequences which caused people to start slacking. He suggested that there be closer monitoring:

> *So, they can take that goal, track it like "from this date you said you were going to do this, did you do it? You said you were going to do this". Even the partners, "did you guys do this and that?" so that we can have improvement. Sometimes we pass those dates and then we don't do that and then we just end up not doing it, and when we move to the next one you see. So, if we, even if the office can just keep track and record of whatever is happening* (CE 3, I 2).

This CE representative illustrates the need for communications that follow up on proposed actions, to enable students feel that they need to be more accountable and to ensure that work was indeed being done towards the goals. This suggestion of some form of monitoring system would be for both partners and students. In addition to this, he continued:

> *Currently, I don't think there is much support from the office because you just, you just go there, guys without even the office knowing that you guys are there. So, you just go there, and they do not even know when you go there, did you go there or didn't go there. So, and whatever, let's say you had an event, or you want to put the word more out there and then there is just not much support. You find that even other representatives didn't know, you posted even in other groups, but you will just be the only one advertising* (CE 3, I 2).

This CE representative believes RUCE staff are not aware of whether, or when, the students visit the centres. He also states that it is hard to draw the support of the rest of campus for fundraising activities, if RUCE is not seen to actively support the marketing of the event through sharing it through its networks and on its social media platforms. He goes on to suggest that if RUCE supports the events of the various halls and encourages all CE representatives to attend, this may lead to more collaboration amongst the halls and less competition for resources.

A key theme that seemed to be prevalent in the follow-up interviews was having volunteer sessions over the weekend. This was suggested by both CE representatives and volunteer managers. Commenting on how to resolve clashing times, as spoken about in both this and the previous chapters, a CE representative commented:

> *Some students are free only on a weekend, only on a Saturday. If we were to put community engagement events on a weekend, we would probably get more turnout* (CE 4, I 2).

This CE representative explains that due to varying academic schedules, it is often difficult during the week to engage in CE activities. This CE representative therefore suggested that the best way to get more participation from students is to have activities over the weekend. Alluding to this, another CE representative commented:

> *The way that it could be resolved is to be moved to like weekends. I feel that weekends are the most convenient for everybody* (CE 1, I 2).

Her community partner, in their follow up interview, also suggested this by stating:

> *If we could maybe check if maybe on certain Saturdays, maybe two Saturdays per month, we come maybe for an hour or so* (CP 1, I 2).

Another volunteer manager commented on how weekends are the best time to complete activities towards some of the goals, in this case refurbishing the school library:

> *I told them that the best day to complete the work on the library is a weekend. So, if they can come over the weekend, I am also free, I can come and assist* (CP 3, I 2).

Therefore, from the above excerpts, it seems that the best availability for some people is over the weekend due to varying schedules that lead in time clashes during the week.

One CE representative particularly felt strongly that this programme was designed specifically for students in residence and not those who live off campus. The reasons for this are alluded to earlier in this chapter. Reflecting on his experience in the programme, during his follow up interview he stated:

> *I think it works for a particular student setup. So, that's why for me I, if I would, if it were to change to accommodate oppi [oppidan] students* (CE 4, I 2).

This CE representative strongly feels that the programme needs to be done in such a way that the Oppidan hall can also be accommodated in a way that they feel supported. This means that there is a need to explore this further, and not simply to take a 'one-size fits all approach' as the context of students living on campus and off-campus differ.

Experiencing the ECD Residence Programme as an employee at RUCE

As an employee at RUCE, firstly, being actively involved in the ECD Residence Programme as a coordinator, and thereafter observing it from the 'side lines' as one of the employees at RUCE, I was privileged to make a few observations about the programme. This section serves to record some of those observations, which may not have come up in the interviews, however I have considered these important to be included in this thesis. These are observations I made about the partner groups who were participants in this research.

On two occasions I witnessed the power of community mobilisation, where community partners involved in the ECD Residence Programme identified assets in their community that they could use to address their local challenges. The first was with Mother Hen Pre-School and the second was with Masivuke Pre-School. Mother Hen and Masivuke are used as pseudonyms.

For many years, Mother Hen struggled with an illegal refuse dump next to their school. This, they felt, badly affected the health of the learners. They tried for many years to get the refuse cleared up by the municipal authorities, however they were unsuccessful. Upon joining the ECD Residence Programme this became one of their goals in their first year in the programme. They worked closely with the student volunteers in achieving this goal. At first, they tried to clear up the refuse with the student volunteers and caregivers of the learners. This proved unsuccessful however, as people kept leaving refuse next to the school. The volunteer manager and the student volunteers then drew up and distributed informative flyers, educating the community about the dangers of leaving refuse next to the school. This unfortunately also did not yield positive results. Finally, they decided on doing a door-to-door campaign. During this campaign they visited the households in the area, appealing to community members to not leave refuse next to the school due to the health hazards this posed to the learners. In addition to the door-to-door campaign a community meeting was held. As a result of this, a neighbourhood watch was established. Community members living near the pre-school started reporting those who continued to illegally leave refuse next to the school to the local police department and the health department. The perpetrators were fined, which deterred them and others from illegally leaving refuse next to the pre-school

going forward. This shows both persistence and trailing different approaching by the partners concerned; some of these may also have had a cumulative effect.

The volunteer manager at Masivuke Pre-School started a campaign to get water tanks installed in the ECD centres in Makhanda East. This was due to the drought that is prevalent in Makhanda, which badly affected the operations of the ECD centres. As the chairperson of the ECD forum, she mobilised support from the members of the forum. Together, they wrote a fundraising proposal and approached the director of RUCE for assistance. RUCE was able to connect this volunteer manager to various social networks that could assist. Through this assistance, funding was secured from a local bank to install water tanks in each school. A national bank, after hearing about this campaign, also donated funds for the installation of more water tanks. Each ECD centre now has two tanks installed because of this campaign. This illustrates the value of utilising networks of people with connections, to access resources not immediately available locally.

Short reflection on the findings

What seems to be evident in the excerpts is a theme of 'us' and 'them', which can be both patronising and othering. There seems to be little mention of 'we'; both from the volunteer managers and the CE representatives. This seems to suggest that some of what the participants discussed relating to relationship-building and the partnership are still at an aspirational level. It is unfortunate that this othering was not evident at the time of the data collection process (in order that it might have been pointed out to participants), and it only became apparent during the critical analysis of the writing up process. Perhaps this became a blind spot because I was close to the research. There was one example of insight gained by CE 4, where he spoke passionately about the broader area being 'his community', but this needs to be built upon more explicitly. Since this was not explored further, it may be useful to conduct further research to establish whether these aspirations have been fulfilled and whether the bridging between communities enabled more communality.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a cross case study analysis based upon the four different case studies that are part of this research. This has been done through presenting themes and sub-

themes that have emerged and reflecting on these. Key findings coming out of this chapter worth noting are how both partners and students seemed to have a shared understanding of what co-management is. However, upon closer examination, it seems these co-management principles are more aspirational and do not always translate into good practice. Relationships were highlighted as important by all participants, with some participants sharing that they hoped to continue building the relationships that had been established in their partner groups even once the programme has come to an end. Participants reflected on what works well with the current ECD Residence Programme structure and made some suggestions for how the programme may be enhanced.

This chapter highlights that the focus group discussion provided a reflective space for community partners and CE representatives to engage on critical issues that they face in their various centres, and an opportunity to think of a different way of working together towards realising common goals. The next chapter will aim to link some of these findings to literature.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter links key findings from this research to established literature, to answer the research questions. To recap, these research questions are:

- what are the students' as well as the partners' experiences of building and managing partner relationships (the co-management of community engagement activities)?

Further research questions were:

- how do students and partners experience jointly planning, executing, and reflecting on community engagement activities, in which they are involved together?
- What are the emerging insights and issues over time?

The main aim of the research questions was not to inform changes in practice over time, but rather to provide a space to reflect on these practices.

This chapter aims to answer the above research questions through looking at ways that the findings from this research contribute to what exists in the literature and establishing whether there are any gaps that need to be filled. I attempt to answer the research question through six prevalent themes that have emerged in this research. These are: features of successful partnerships; the co-management model; broader principles of CE and the reality of the ECD Residence Programme; transformative learning; the ethic of *ubuntu* and its contribution to CE; and the challenges of systems of power.

Features of successful partnerships

Various authors (e.g., Barrera, 2015; Gugerty & Swezey, 1996; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Mintz & Hesser, 1996) note many of the features of successful partnerships between HEIs and community partners. These features include amplifying the community partner voice (Barrera, 2015), collaboration and reciprocity (Mintz & Hesser, 1996), where work is done *with* as opposed to for individuals (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996; Fitzgerald et al., 2010), and communication (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). The section below discusses to what degree these features were found to be characteristic of the partnerships in the ECD Residence Programme.

Amplifying the community partner voice

Community psychology emphasises the importance of engaging community voices in the development of programmes (Seedat, 2012). Incorporating the voices of community partners is essential in building bridges, making change, problem solving, and to combat exploitation or differing expectations (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Recognising this, RUCE has created multiple platforms for voices of community partners to be heard. The aim of these platforms is for community partners to have a say in how the programme is managed. These platforms include the signing of the MOU by both RUCE and community partners, outlining the roles of responsibilities of both. Additionally, an annual strategic planning session is held at the beginning of each academic year where community partners are encouraged to come up with the goals that they wish to achieve through the programme during the year. The aim of this strategic planning session is to drive the community partner agenda, ensuring that work done during the year meets the community partners' identified needs. The mid-year review session is a platform for community partners to reflect on how the year is progressing, and to propose any changes they wish to implement in the programme going further. It was at this mid-year review session, during the pilot year of the programme, that the Reading Programme was requested by the partners. As a response to this request, RUCE subsequently piloted the Reading Programme during the second half of the year. Another platform that serves to amplify the community partner voice is the end of year evaluation session. Here, the community partners have an opportunity to reflect on how the year progressed and again propose any changes to the programme going further.

While all of these platforms have been put in place, community partners in this research identified a need for more frequent smaller group discussion meetings, where there could more be in-depth engagement. These small group discussions could be similar in nature to the platform that the focus group discussions for this research provided, where a selected number of community partners had an opportunity to freely discuss issues, they found of importance to them. They identified this as important in building more solidarity amongst themselves and an opportunity to work together in addressing common challenges in their organisations.

Collaboration and reciprocity

Good CE partnerships are centred around collaboration and reciprocity. For genuine collaboration to occur, all partners need to develop a trusting environment, where there is a shared goal, shared responsibilities, and shared authority (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). For this collaboration to be successful, it needs to be built on a solid working foundation developed over time (Strand, et al., 2003).

The idea behind S@M is that there is joint planning, joint execution, and joint reflection on CE activities that students and community partners are involved in together. This does not always translate into reality since this research highlighted mixed feelings on whether collaboration and reciprocity were achieved successfully in the partnerships. Two of the CE representatives described feeling that there was not always full collaboration in the partnership. They reported feeling that they had alone taken on the responsibility to make the partnership work, with the community partner not always meeting them halfway. This feeling was also expressed by one of the community partners, who reported feeling disappointed that her student volunteers executed a goal without fully involving her, although she had initially been fully involved in the planning stage. This led to her feeling left out, as she had been excited about contributing towards the execution of the goal.

CE representatives within a hall are required to work as a team, to ensure that the goals of the community partner are realised. However, many of the CE representatives in this research reported there being limited collaboration in their halls, with one CE representative often taking on the sole responsibility of working closely with the community partner. This, they reported, caused a lot of strain on the relationships they had with fellow students, as well as with their community partner.

Whereas a volunteer manager is selected or elected from each organisation to be the main liaison person with RUCE, it is hoped that all staff members of an organisation take ownership of it. One of the community partners in this research highlighted challenges in working with her colleagues to realise the goals of the programme. She reported that her colleagues did not see the value of the programme and thus did not take ownership of it. This translated into this volunteer manager taking on full responsibility of implementing the programme in her organisation, causing her a lot of strain. Although at the time of this

research only one community partner faced this difficulty, another partner did allude to having faced similar problems in the past in her organisation. This highlights that when working in ECD centres there is not only 'one' partner and that layers of responsibility and relationship may be present.

It is thus important to note that within partnerships there may be complex dynamics, which are like those of interpersonal relationships (Pasque, 2010). This means that careful work needs to be done in developing them. Based on the reflections of the participants in this research, more work needs to be done with both students and community partners to build more collaborative and reciprocal relationships. Some of the suggestions that came from the participants in this research were having teambuilding activities amongst the CE representatives as well as between the CE representatives and the community partners, to foster good working relationships. In addition to this, there was strong support to include all staff members of the community partner organisations in aspects of the programme planning, execution, and reflection; so that they can feel a part of it, rather than potentially feeling left out.

Communication

Gugerty and Swezey (1996) note the importance of communication in building reciprocal relationships. Communication has been noted to be important in enhancing relationships between community partners and CE representatives, the relationships of CE representatives in each hall, the relationship between RUCE and the CE representatives, and the relationship between RUCE and the community partners.

Overall, participants in this research felt that the communication within their partner groups was good. Many of the partner groups reported having regular, open communication. This was both in-person and virtually when they could not meet due to proximity and varying schedules. Partner groups introduced WhatsApp groups to facilitate communication. These groups predominantly worked well, serving to quickly send and receive information and discuss ideas. While the WhatsApp groups were a convenient form of communication, there was some evidence of these not always working as well as they possibly could. These included members of the WhatsApp group using it for posting messages that are not relevant to the entire group. An example of this is students posting messages that do not pertain to

the community partner, leaving the community partner feeling confused and left out. WhatsApp groups have proven to be a valuable platform for communication; therefore, it is important to orientate partner groups to the effective use of these, to ensure effective communication.

There were varied experiences with regards to having good communication amongst the CE representatives themselves in their various hall groups. Some CE representatives reported having frequent communication, whereas others struggled to maintain this communication. It was noted that CE representatives who had established a relationship amongst themselves at the beginning of the year enjoyed having frequent, continuous communication. These groups also had a 'leader' who ensured that this communication kept going. Noting this leadership role as important in facilitating good teamwork and communication, the CE representatives in this research strongly advocated for the role of a hall CE representative to be formally introduced in the programme. Whereas a handful of halls already have this role, this role has largely not been formalised within the structure of the ECD Residence Programme. The hall CE representative's primary role would be ensuring that all the CE representatives within the hall work as a team.

In designing the structure of the ECD Residence Programme, what may have been taken for granted by RUCE is that because the CE representatives in each hall live near one another and share a common meeting space, it would be relatively easy for them to communicate and work well together. However, as this research highlighted, this was not necessarily the case. The reason may be that prior to the onset of the partnership many of these CE representatives may have not formally met nor worked together before. It is therefore essential that more preparatory work is done to foster teamwork.

CE representatives noted difficulties in communication between RUCE and themselves. This resulted in CE representatives being confused as to what was expected of them during the weeks before training commenced each year. Prior to training, CE representatives would not have formally met with their community partners and may not be aware of the goals that they have for the year. During this time prior to training however, as members of residence committees, they could still be expected to attend residence committee meetings and residence meetings where they are required to give an update regarding their portfolio. CE representatives described this as a confusing period for them where they were unsure of

what to report on due to the programme not having started. The academic year typically starts during the first week of February and training for CE representatives during the year of conducting this research was the second weekend of March. The programme officially commences the week after training has been done.

Additionally, during the programme, some CE representatives felt that they would have enjoyed and benefitted from having more support from RUCE in executing their activities. This they attributed to feeling like they did not have the required skills, such as time and project management, to work independently. They noted that having consistent communication and guidance from RUCE could alleviate some of the pressure that they felt. Although acknowledging that RUCE was available and willing to assist them when they asked for help, the CE representatives noted that it would be more beneficial to have more open lines of communication and information readily available, as opposed to constantly seeking help. CE representatives also noted, with frustration, that there seemed to be no follow-up on the part of RUCE to adequately ensure that all CE representatives from each hall were actively involved in working with their community partners. They noted that not closely monitoring the contribution of each CE representative could unintentionally lead to some CE representatives not equally sharing in the responsibility. This may lead to those actively participating feeling pressured and potentially demotivated in the long-term. The programme may thus benefit from more formalised monitoring on the part of RUCE, to ensure that all CE representatives are actively involved. Where they are found not to be, there may need to be a follow-up procedure put in place.

Perhaps it would also prove useful to reconsider the training of CE representatives; to be more practical and include a more detailed orientation into what the role entails, to ensure that each CE representative has a clear understanding of their responsibilities. During the training session CE representatives could also be alerted to the different resources they may use for support. Additionally, while training is provided on the S@M project planning cycle, perhaps the CE representatives would find it more beneficial to be trained in the skills that they will need to work successfully in a team and with their community partner. These skills include project management, time management, and teamwork.

Co-management model

There are various role players in this co-management model, as proposed by RUCE. These are RUCE, the volunteer manager, and the CE representatives. This is illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Co-management model

In this model, each role player has different responsibilities. The main role that RUCE plays is the overall management of the ECD Residence Programme. This includes initiating a relationship with each volunteer manager, the initial training of volunteer managers and CE representatives, and monitoring and evaluation of the programme. In addition to this, RUCE plays an intermediary role between the community partners and the rest of the RU community, as well as between the community partners and others in the Makhanda community. The aim of playing this intermediary role is to map networks and provide links to resources to achieve the community partner goals (Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

The volunteer manager works closely with the CE representatives. This interaction is based on mutual goals and democratic processes, where reciprocal relationships are formed (Gugerty & Swezey, 1996). Volunteer managers provide learning opportunities for students

in their organisations. In interacting with the CE representatives, they induct them into the work with children, they teach them about the local community (Bender, 2008), and link them to the community resources to achieve their goals. Volunteer managers are thus responsible for training and orientating students in their organisations. They also provide support to the CE representatives when they are at their organisations.

In working closely with their respective volunteer managers, the CE representative is responsible for recruiting students from their hall to assist in volunteering of their time and skills to result in realising the goals. They also play an intermediary role between the community partners and the broader RU community, linking to resources (such as university facilities) that may assist in achieving the goals (Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

The role players that have emerged in this research are the caregivers of the children in the ECD centres. These role players have been identified by various partner groups as important in realising the goals. This was evident in the case of one of the partners who has been working closely with the caregivers in realising two of their goals, in different years. Other role players that have emerged as important are the staff members at each community partner organisation. This research illustrated that when there is no buy-in from the entire organisation, this may lead to challenges in the implementation of the programme activities. One of the long-term goals in a collaborative partnership is the potential of further developing capacities of communities (Strand et al., 2003). Taking these role players into account and intentionally involving them in different aspects of the programme may create community ownership (Eksteen et al., 2012; Lazarus et al., 2015) and ensure community embeddedness (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). This may lead to community collaboration and interdependence (Venter, 2004), which may ensure that there is better sustainability.

Participants in this research seemed to have a good understanding of the partnership model that RUCE proposes. This is a model of co-management, which advocates that each party in the partnership has a say in the management of the partnership. Whereas participants in this research seemed to have a good understanding of what co-management meant, this did not always translate into good practice. Tensions existed in partner groups due to unmet and sometimes unrealistic expectations. These foreground the importance of acknowledging and negotiating expectations from the outset (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). This was characterised by initial meetings where community partners and CE representatives set their expectations for

the year and negotiated what was feasible in terms of time and resources available. What was equally important however, and seemed to be missing in some instances, was the periodic review of these expectations to prevent a breakdown in the partnership relationship (Machimana et al., 2018).

Broader principles of community engagement, and the reality of the ECD Residence Programme

Fitzgerald et al. (2010) propose four key concepts that should underpin HEIs' approaches to community partnership development. These are community embeddedness, asset-based solutions, building community capacity, and partnering with collaborative networks. One may argue, based on the findings of this research, that these were achieved in varying degrees in the ECD Residence Programme. Each of these concepts are expanded on below, with commentary on how they are being achieved, or not, in the ECD Residence programme.

The first concept, community embeddedness, suggests that CE programmes need to be embedded in the local community, for a CE partnership to be successful. Looking at the findings of this research, one could argue that there is a need for more community involvement as has been highlighted by some of the community partners. During this research, community partners highlighted that in some instances there was the lack of full ownership of the programme in their organisations. This they attributed to only having one person in the organisation, the volunteer manager, being central to the programme implementation. The volunteer manager was tasked with being the liaison person with RUCE, as well as being the first point of contact for the student volunteers when they arrive at their organisation. Additionally, the volunteer manager was tasked with being responsible for orientating the student volunteers as well as providing any training they deemed necessary for the volunteers to be able to undertake their volunteer activities successfully.

With the volunteer manager having all these responsibilities, this could potentially lead to the other staff members of the organisation feeling left out. The CE representatives alluded to this, admitting that when they visit the organisations, they tend to focus their attention on the volunteer manager since this is the person they have been introduced to. By doing this, they admit to unintentionally side-lining the rest of the staff in the organisation. Interestingly

the volunteer managers and CE representatives did not talk about ways they had included the rest of the organisation's staff, such as when they are having meetings or sharing tasks. Perhaps, upon reflecting on this during the focus group discussions, there may begin to be a change in this, enhancing greater inclusivity.

RUCE awards volunteer managers certificates at the end of this year. This awarding of certificates was another element that the participants attributed to not all members of an organisation taking full interest in and ownership of the programme. These certificates carry the RU name and logo and are signed by the Vice-Chancellor of RU and the director of RUCE. They are awarded for participation in the programme for a specific year and are presented to the volunteer manager at the end of the programme cycle each year. As they carry the RU name and logo and are signed by decision makers in the institution, they can be seen to be of value and prestige. This could be especially true for community members who have not previously received an opportunity to further their studies at a prestigious institution such as RU. During this research, participants reflected on the fact that due to the names appearing on the certificates being those of individuals (i.e., the volunteer managers) and not that of the organisation, some staff members in the organisation may feel that there is no tangible incentive for them to participate in the programme, which may lead to them being disinterested.

Taking these issues into account, more work needs to be done to embed programmes more successfully and to ensure that all members of the organisation take ownership in them for more sustainability. There have been however two notable instances of meaningful community involvement.

The first instance was when one of the volunteer managers managed to successfully work with the caregivers of the children from her organisation, as well as members of the broader community that the organisation is a part of, to successfully achieve two goals. The first goal was to clean up the dumpsite next to the school and ensure that there was no further dumping. The second goal was to start a garden in the school that would feed the children in the school as well as provide fresh vegetables for community members. This good demonstration of ways that community involvement brought about more impact and sustainability, as well as ownership of the project outcomes.

A second instance of meaningful community involvement was when one of the volunteer managers, using her role as the chairperson of the ECD forum, collaborated with other practitioners and RUCE to successfully get water tanks installed in all the schools. This meaningful collaboration brought about a valuable and much-needed resource for the schools.

While the examples listed above are an encouraging step towards community embeddedness, more work needs to be done to fully embed the programme both in the organisations and the broader local community.

The second concept that Fitzgerald et al (2010) propose is using asset-based solutions. This entails building on the strengths and assets of community partners. As part of the training for the programme, community partners and CE representatives are introduced to the theories of ABCD (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b). In addition to this, as part of week 2 of the S@M project management cycle, each partner group engages in a community mapping exercise. As part of this exercise, a transect walk is done in the community that the organisation is a part of and assets in the community are identified. The aim of this exercise is to orientate students to the broader context and to identify local assets that could be used to help achieve the goals for the year.

Throughout the 19-week S@M project management cycle the use of asset-based solutions are continuously reinforced. This can be seen in week 5 when the goal is divided into tasks that each member of the team is tasked with leading, and in weeks 5 & 6 when each partner group is asked to present their goal to a panel of community members who may provide some insight to the goals. The inclusion of community members for this panel presentation could be seen as drawing upon local assets, through tapping into their social capital (Rhodes University Community Engagement, 2020b). Lastly, during the quarterly reflection sessions, partner groups are encouraged to use assets available to them to help achieve the goals they have set for the year.

The third concept that Fitzgerald et al (2010) propose is building community capacity. Capacity building requires for the community partners to be involved in developing community programmes and that they feel the benefits. In addition, it entails broadening capacity building to other associated people within the context.

Various learning opportunities are provided for community partners to build capacity in community development processes. Firstly, alongside the CE representatives, volunteer managers are trained on various community development processes. Secondly, being involved in the programme provides opportunities for community partners to grow skills in communication, facilitation, leadership, and teamwork. These skills are referred to in the section below. Thirdly, during the presentation phase of the goals in S@M, community partners are presented with the opportunity to network with various stakeholders that they could potentially partner with in realising their goals. This network is further grown when community partners attend the national symposium on CE that RUCE hosts each year that is attended by a diverse group of practitioners and academics from across South Africa. During the presentation phase of S@M, community partners hone their presentation skills, as they are required to present to other partner groups and a panel. These presentation skills are further developed should community partners choose to take up the opportunity to present at the annual national symposium. Evidence from this research suggests that community partners' capacity is built through both personal development and community development processes. I first explore the former.

With regards to personal development, volunteer managers identified having learnt the skill of being able to lead a group of students through a project management process. They indicated that prior to engaging in this programme they did not think that they had the capacity to do this. In contrast, they viewed RU students as having more knowledge, skills, and capabilities than them. They saw the students as coming from a prestigious HEI, coming to volunteer in under resourced organisations. Thus, they did not view themselves as having expertise that they could share with the students. However, through engaging in this programme, they realised that they too had knowledge, skills, and capabilities that were valuable and they could impart to the students. Shifting the narrative that it was only the students who had something to contribute to the partnership, volunteer managers took on the role of developing training for students volunteering in their organisations to assist them to work more effectively in their organisation. This training included teaching students how to work effectively with young children, something that many of the student volunteers may not have had previous experience in, and something that the volunteer managers could be regarded as 'experts' in, considering their roles in their organisations. Additionally, volunteer managers were responsible for orientating students upon arrival in their

organisation and supervising their volunteer activities. Lastly, volunteer managers taught students about their respective community settings, thus broadening the student volunteers' understanding of aspects of the South African context (Lemon, 2004).

Through doing this, the volunteer managers created opportunities for student learning that students may not have experienced, had they not undertaken volunteer activities. These opportunities lay a foundation to help develop students in critically engaged and socially responsible ways, and perhaps into being well-rounded graduates (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). The CE representatives attested to this by reflecting on the knowledge and skills they had learnt through their engagement, which they believed they could apply to other aspects of their lives going forward.

Secondly, volunteer managers identified having learnt the skill of effective communication for both informal and formal communication. They reported learning how to communicate better with their colleagues and with other volunteer managers (for example by becoming more assertive) and they also reported learning how to communicate their ideas in a more formal setting, such as presenting in front of an audience. Through being engaged in the programme, they gained the confidence to articulate their ideas without the fear of not being fluent in the English language. The English language may still present itself as a barrier that may still exist between people as a remnant of the apartheid era, as many non-English speakers may still feel marginalised and lack the confidence to be in spaces that may appear to require one to be educated or be fluent in English – such as a university setting.

In terms of building community partner capacity in community development processes, volunteer managers reported having learnt the importance of partnering with colleagues in their organisation, for more ownership of the programme as well as for sustainability of the programme. This is particularly important, as the volunteer manager is elected or selected each year by their organisation, therefore in the case that they do not continue being the volunteer manager during the following year, there would need to be continuity through the role being adopted by another staff member. One of the participants reflected on the importance of partnering with colleagues during the first focus group discussion, citing how teamwork in the organisation is integral for the successful implementation of the programme.

Linked to this, community partners also stated that they learnt the importance of collaborating with other organisations and working with members of their communities for greater impact. This was illustrated through the successful cleaning up of the refuse area next to one of the schools, the establishment of a garden in one of the schools, and the mobilising of water tanks for all the ECD sites in Makhanda East. Volunteer managers stated that they had a better understanding of the importance of sharing knowledge with others, and instead of focusing solely on developing one's own organisation, they also experienced collaborating for the betterment of the entire community.

The limitation, however, as has been described by the participants in this research, is that capacity-building through being involved in the ECD Residence Programme focuses primarily on the volunteer managers. It is unclear to what extent the rest of the staff members in the organisations have built capacity, through being involved in programme implementation. Findings in this research suggest that some staff members are not involved at all in programme implementation, keeping their distance. This has led to participants calling for a different approach to working in the ECD Residence Programme that formally recognises the role that all staff members have to play.

The fourth and final concept that Fitzgerld et al. (2010) propose is partnering with collaborative networks. This means building networks in the community that are both collaborative and sustainable. While there is evidence of this happening in varying degrees amongst the community partners, more work needs to be done in this regard. There is still evidence of some competition between the ECD sites, with many volunteer managers admitting that a good working relationship has not been well established between them. This competitive nature has led to many of the ECD sites working in silos, with the fear of sharing knowledge that their 'competitor' may use, possibly to attract more funds for their school. There are currently limited funds that ECD centres receive from the DSD, and this is a structural problem (Giese & Bulender, 2011; The Project Development Trust of KZN & The Housing Development Agency, 2014).

Funding from the DSD is available through two main channels. The first is a subsidy that is calculated per child per day for children aged 0 to 4 years, whose caregivers pass an income means test. This subsidy is only available to registered ECD centres and is allocated at the DSD's discretion. The second channel of funding is for ECD programmes that are not centre

based and are run by registered NPOs (Giese & Bulender, 2011; The Project Development Trust of KZN & The Housing Development Agency, 2014). Non-centre-based programmes include playgroups, home visits, toy libraries, food gardens, and parenting workshops that are run by NPOs (Ilifa Labantwana, 2018). Although funding may be accessible from the DSD, the DSD is under no obligation to provide such funds, even for ECD centres in disadvantaged communities such as Makhanda East (Giese & Bulender, 2011; The Project Development Trust of KZN & The Housing Development Agency, 2014).

The social action model of community psychology (Ahmed & Pretorius-Heuchert, 2001) seeks to challenge such structural problems, through working towards greater social justice and liberation. As illustrated above, it seems that good policies in SA exist to support ECD centres, however the proper implementation of them is lacking and the system appears to be working sporadically, dependent on staff members' capacities and DSD delivery (or lack thereof). This has resulted in large power differentials between staff in the DSD and ECD/NPO recipients, that have translated to low levels of community cohesion and impact on lines of communication (Riemer et al., 2020). Whereas, at face value, it seems that community partners have gained empowerment in acting in their organisations and in some instances in their broader communities, more work needs to be done to capacitate them to take charge of their own empowerment on a larger scale (Eskell-Blokland, 2012) and perhaps to build networks to support each other in advocacy roles and negotiating with the DSD. The aim is for these community partners to develop more agency and capacity to act against the inequalities they frequently experience. This, however, is something difficult to achieve in a short-term programme such as the ECD Residence Programme and may require more long-term solutions with more university staff involvement, because students lack the experience to act in these higher-level ways.

Transformative learning

CE has the potential to lead to transformative learning (Davis et al., 2017), as evidence from this research shows. This is through its potential to shift preconceptions that people have, by forging partnerships between students and community partners in non-traditional settings (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press). Findings in this research point to evidence towards transformative learning for both community partners and student volunteers.

Reflection activities, embedded in CE activities, are designed to promote the development of new understandings for students (Akhurst, Solomon, Mitchell & van der Riet, 2016). Reflection was structured within the ECD Residence Programme, with community partners and CE representatives meeting every quarter to reflect on their activities and key learnings. Additionally, reflection and evaluation were structed into weeks 13 and 19 of the S@M project planning cycle. This process, facilitated by RUCE, took the form of meetings where students and partners were required to jointly engage in various reflective activities.

Six areas within which worldviews are disrupted are proposed by Kiely (2004). These are explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Evidence in this research however only points to elements of four of these six areas. These are political transformation, moral transformation, cultural transformation, and personal transformation.

The first area of transformation, political transformation, refers to an expanded sense of social responsibility and citizenship, in moving away from passive volunteerism to more active involvement. It also refers to increases in the sense of awareness and understanding of the inequitable distribution of power and resources in a community (Kiely, 2004). One could say that political transformation appeared to be starting to emerge for the student volunteers who were part of this research. This is because these student volunteers reflected on having built close, personal relationships with their community partners; and due to having built these relationships, having the desire to continue being involved with the organisations beyond their involvement during the ECD Residence Programme. Community partners also expressed a desire to continue working with the student volunteers and building relationships with them. It is not clear however to what extent this happened subsequently. Further research would need to explore whether these aspirations indeed translated into action and to ascertain to what extent these experiences resulted in more in-depth political understanding in participants.

The second area of transformation, moral transformation, occurs when people develop relationships based on mutual respect leading to an evolving sense of solidarity. It occurs when community partner groups start to move away from understanding engagement as being characteristic of providing a one-way charitable service, where one is a benefactor and the other is a beneficiary; towards building reciprocal relationships where everyone's knowledge and skills are recognised and appreciated (Kiely, 2004). Within this research

there was evidence of community partners being challenged in their preconceived ideas about what CE is and what the role of student volunteers were. Community partners stated that initially they thought that CE was about students from RU lending a helping hand in their organisation. It was after the initial training that RUCE provided and through consistent engagement in the ECD Residence Programme that they came to realise that the relationship was intended to be reciprocal, with both the community partners and student volunteers learning and benefiting from the engagement. Again, a longer-term focused research project would be necessary to ascertain the degree to which moral transformation was effected.

In addition to this, in reflection during the focus group discussions held during this research, the community partners realised that it was important to have collaboration amongst themselves as community partners. The aim of this collaboration, linked to the ethics of *ubuntu* that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, would serve to strengthen their communities. However, whereas all community partners who participated in this research made a commitment to collaborate with one another going forward, there was no evidence of this having happened upon investigation in follow up interviews. This may be due to factors already alluded to earlier in this chapter.

In the third area of transformation, cultural transformation, the participant begins to rethink dominant cultural and social values, norms, and rituals. This rethinking includes the questioning of Western thinking. In addition to this, cultural transformation is about being critical of privilege (Kiely, 2004). There has been evidence of this in this research with the emergence of valuing the knowledge of community partners as equally important as 'formal, academic' knowledge. Social knowledge should be encouraged to emerge (Eskell-Blokland, 2012). However, the instances of othering noted in the data collected signalled that whilst bridges had started to be built, the cultural divide was still experienced by participants.

Evidence in this research points to a move towards decentring Euro-American hegemony (Oyedemi, 2018) through beginning to recognise and value community partner knowledge as important for student learning and development (Şahin & Dogantay, 2018). This process is two-fold, consisting of the epistemic project and the personal project. While the epistemic project is about knowledge creation and the valuing of all knowledge, the personal project is a rehumanizing approach which allows students, and in the case of this research, community partners to claim their spaces equally in being part of shaping knowledge. The

personal project is important in processes of dismantling cultural colonisation, which has been one of the most destructive aspects of colonisation as "it tends toward permanence in social understandings of self, social practices and knowledge creation" (Oyedemi, 2018, p. 4-5). This research demonstrates that strides may be made to reduce injustices in knowledge production (Heleta, 2016), through foregrounding student and community knowledge and agency (Timmis et al., 2019). However, there still appears to be further progress to be made.

Through being engaged in the ECD Residence Programme, community partners learnt more about themselves, which led to some changes in the way that they view themselves. Reflecting as part of this research, community partners stated that prior to engaging in this programme they perceived themselves as beneficiaries and did not recognise the valuable assets they bring to the partnership, as well as their agency to be influential. Over time, community partners developed an understanding that they contributed to student development. Additionally, this research provided an opportunity for them to reflect on how they could also contribute to the development of one another as well as others in their broader communities.

In the fourth area of transformation, personal transformation, learners begin to rethink their previous self-concepts, their lifestyles, their relationships and possibly their careers. Additionally, people begin to recognise their vulnerable sides (Kiely, 2004). For this research, community partners began to recognise and value their capabilities. They started taking up leadership roles, through designing and implementing training for students to be able to volunteer effectively in their organisations. Community partners recognised that they could teach students how to work with young children, an experience that student volunteers may not have had previously. There is also anecdotal evidence that community partners also started sharing their knowledge amongst one another. An example of this is of one of the community partners who learnt presentation skills and confidence from another community partner involved in the ECD Residence Programme. It is important to note however that when looking more closely, it seems that these instances of community partners sharing knowledge with one another occurs anecdotally and not frequently. Reasons for this have been explored in detail elsewhere in this chapter.

While this research has investigated evidence of transformative learning for the participants, it is important to highlight that as the ECD Residence Programme runs for a 19-week period,

it may be unrealistic to expect substantial transformation to emerge (Worrall, 2007). Additionally, this research has not examined the impact of this transformative learning on student volunteers and community partners over time. Therefore, in taking a more critical stance, further research needs to be done to determine whether transformative learning does occur in the context of this programme and to what extent, as well as the transfer of such learning to other aspects of academic study. In addition, it is important to look at the long-term effects of this transformation on student volunteers' (Kiely, 2004) and community partners' daily lives. This is because research (e.g., Akhurst et al., 2016) shows that there is possibly a hierarchical progression towards transformative learning as student volunteers and community partners continue being involved in CE activities. Individuals may experience different levels of transformation at different times in their journeys, with some not benefitting from transformative learning at all.

Due to the limited scope of this research, transformation in this research has been taken to mean the *intention* towards acting in more socially just ways, rather than the action itself (Kiely, 2004). Further research will need to investigate such aspects further. Additionally, this research has only investigated the positive aspects of the results of transformative learning and has not focused on the internal struggles that student volunteers and community partners may face when re-evaluating assumptions that they hold (Kiely, 2004). Further research will need to be done in this area to develop this further.

The ethic of *Ubuntu* and its contribution

Findings in this research point to partnerships being characterised by the ethic of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu*, an African philosophy, strongly values social ties that one has and emphasises the interconnectedness and dependence that human beings have on one another (Mkabela, 2015). *Ubuntu* in this research speaks to recognising the importance of building mutually beneficial partnerships in CE. These partnerships are characterised by interdependence, where there is a recognition that each partner needs the other (Arumugam, 2001). HEIs are dependent on their local communities to realise the decoloniality agenda, and communities are dependent on HEIs to gain access to resources (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press). Equally so, there was a recognition in this research that student volunteers were dependant on community partners to gain more knowledge and skills, and community partners were dependant on student volunteers to provide a human resource for their organisations. As part

of this research, an article (Bobo & Akhurst, 2019) was published specifically considering *ubuntu* as a fundamental aspect of the work in this context, which the reader is referred to in Appendix 9.

Student volunteers in this research reflected on how they were initially motivated to engage in CE activities by their sense of duty as Africans to 'help' (Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016). They noted the economic divide in Makhanda and reflected on their privilege as students in a HEI. Additionally, community partners in this research reflected on how they were initially motivated to engage in CE activities to receive 'help' for their organisations from RU. This sense of duty to help and desire to receive help may have initially been characteristic of a charitable model of engagement, with one party being the benefactor (i.e., student volunteers) and the other being the beneficiary (i.e., community partners). However, through learning about CE principles at RU during training and through being involved in the ECD Residence Programme; there was a gradual shift to building reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships between student volunteers and community partners.

Participants in this research highlighted how important relationship-building was to them. There has been deep investment in building these relationships, with the realisation that different people play a part in an individual's growth. Both CE representatives and community partners expressed their desire to get to know one another at a more personal level, and to build relationships that extended beyond the duration of the ECD Residence Programme. Characteristic of the relationships in *ubuntu*, community partners saw their role as not just volunteer managers, but as older siblings and mother-figures to the students (Kamwangamalu 1999). The student volunteers resonated with this, with many of them calling the volunteer managers *sisi* and *mama,* respectful ways to refer to a woman who is older than you in the amaXhosa culture, directly translating to big sister and mother.

Many participants in this research expressed a desire to continue with the relationships that they had built in their partner groups beyond the duration of the ECD Residence Programme. While there was some anecdotal evidence of some students keeping in touch with their community partners after their engagement in the ECD Residence Programme had come to an end, it seems like this desire to continue the relationship was more aspirational and did not always translate into action. Perhaps further research could explore to what extent these relationships that are built during the partnership are sustained.

While there seemed to be a strong aspiration towards establishing good relationships between the CE representatives and the community partners, unfortunately this did not seem to be the case amongst all the community partners. Upon exploring this further during this research, some community partners noted that they had not seen the importance of working together and they did not recognise that they could learn from one another. Whereas a commitment was made towards building these relationships and learning from another, results from the follow-up focus group discussion highlighted that this had not necessarily been actioned by any of the partners. Barriers to community cohesion or partnership-building amongst the community partners still exist, and future research could take a deeper look into the reasons for this.

CE representatives also reflected on the importance of establishing good working relationships amongst themselves as students. During the research period they reflected on how the halls worked independently of one another, and sometimes competed with one another. Participants in this research expressed the desire to build more unity amongst the halls. Recognising that they shared similar goals, they saw the value in combining the limited resources they had access to and working together to achieve greater impact. There was a strong call for RUCE to facilitate the process of partnership building amongst the halls, with the belief that if RUCE initiated this process there would be a buy-in from the various halls. It is interesting that participants wanted RUCE to take this top-down approach, as opposed to them initiating a grassroots intervention. Since this realisation, that participants wanted a top-down approach, only came to the researcher during the analysis phase, there was no further probing on this matter. Furthermore, there was no further probing into the reasons why the halls appeared to work in silos during the data collection phase of this research. Further research could explore this more closely.

Reflecting on the state of relationships and partnerships in the ECD Residence Programme, participants in this research saw the importance of establishing relationships amongst the various partner groups, to pool together resources and share knowledge and skills, as they realised that they had similar goals and faced similar challenges. While there is provision in the programme for partner groups to network with one another during the quarterly reflection sessions, participants in this research called for more meaningful engagement with one another. They stated that they found the model of the focus group discussion to be more

effective, as it involved only a few of the partner groups that met for a duration of one and a half to two hours and provided a space to explore issues that partner groups faced in a more meaningful way. In contrast, the quarterly reflection sessions are attended by all the partner groups (there would be 15 partner groups present, with each group averaging 5 people) and lasted for an hour. The time factor and the fact that all partner groups attended this session meant that sometimes partner groups could not move to a deeper level of engagement. Participants in this research asked that a recommendation be made to RUCE to reconsider the structure and interactions of these reflection sessions.

Challenges of systems of power

Critical community psychology emphasizes social justice, equity, community participation and control. It highlights the importance of engaging community voices (Seedat, 2012), and aims to promote equitable resource distribution (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press). Elsewhere in this chapter, the challenge that ECD centres face with regards to accessing funds from government institutions from the DSD have been highlighted.

RUCE could work with community partners to better access funding for their organisations. However, acknowledging that the South African context is an unequal one, it must be noted that it may often be challenging to engage with and penetrate governmental structures such as the DSD due to the profound influence of power dynamics on resources (Lazarus et al., 2015). A difficulty in challenging the status quo in poorly resourced areas such as Makhanda East may appear to be threatening to those in power, and thus result in negative consequences such as the complete removal of the little resources already available. Therefore, it might be more beneficial to more gently work with and not against such systems, trying to provide insight into how they could work better (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press). Whilst such an approach might be coherent with a social action model, it is difficult to challenge structures that are not open to engagement with the people they are meant to serve; and at times perhaps peaceful protest action or higher-level negotiation is necessary.

A critique that can be levelled against the ECD Residence Programme is that it seems to take an ameliorative approach towards the partnership development. However, this need not be seen in a negative light, as this approach is sometimes necessary to establish a good partnership and lay a foundation for more transformative work to occur as the partnership

progresses. A strong focus is on developing good relationships that may lead to the minimising of power differentials that exist (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press).

Due to the limited duration of the ECD Residence Programme, it may be difficult to effect any kind of systemic or sustainable change (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press), especially considering that each year community partners work with a new cohort of student volunteers. Thus, this thesis recommends that RUCE as a division, focusing on structural inequalities as the root cause of community distress, consider working with the principles of the social action model. The aim would be to mobilise community partners to improve their own lives, through perhaps groups of stakeholder representatives putting pressure on institutions such as the DSD to bring about structural changes to facilitate this process of improvement (Seedat et al., 2001). Since the primary goal is transformation and social change, there is a need to create enabling spaces for community partners to empower themselves through mobilising and establishing contacts that previously did not exist, to draw on resources and support each other (Arumugam, 2001).

What appears to be evident in this research is the participants' move away from a charitable model of engagement towards aspects of a social justice approach. Participants reflected on moving away from the notion of 'helping' which is characteristic of the charitable model of engagement (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002), towards the idea of working together; where each person has assets to contribute to the partnership, and participants each build their capacities and skills further. Having said this however, none of the participants reflected on challenging existing oppressive structures that continue to prevail in SA, resulting in an inequitable country. CE representatives did not appear to see their roles as beyond providing ongoing volunteer services; and did not mention broader political and social structures that they might be able to influence through representations (Mitchell & Dabysing, 2016). A shortcoming to this research was that this was not explored further during the data collection process, and it only became apparent during the analysis phase. It may be beneficial for further research to foreground such considerations, to explore this further.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to answer the research questions through identifying key themes that have emerged in the findings of research. It has also considered relevant aspects of

established literature, in relation to the key findings that have emerged. Where gaps in the current findings have been identified, recommendations for future research have been made.

The following chapter, which is the final chapter of this thesis, will include an evaluation of this research through reflection on the strengths and limitations of this research. In addition, recommendations for future research as well as recommendations pertaining to the ECD Residence Programme will be made. This chapter will also include my concluding reflective thoughts as a practitioner who was involved in this programme before conducting research on it.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter, being the final chapter of this thesis aims to provide concluding thoughts for this study. This will be done through providing an evaluation of the study, by reflecting on its strengths and weaknesses. Further to this, recommendations for further research will be made. This chapter will also, drawing on some of the key findings, make recommendations for the ECD Residence programme. The chapter ends of with my final thoughts as a researcher.

Strengths of the study

Five key strengths of this study have been identified. The first strength of this research is that it takes a multiple case study approach in trying to understand CE partnerships that are formed within the context of HE. This is a strength, as previous research has been at single case study level (Cox & Seifer, 2005). This research looks at the different types of partnerships that are formed. Its primary focus is on the partnership that CE representatives and community partners form, with a secondary focus being on the relationships that develop (or not) amongst community partners and amongst CE representatives. Additionally, this research looks at the kind of relationship that is established between RUCE and community partners, as well as between RUCE and CE representatives.

The second strength of this study is that it tries to amplify the community partner voice (Community Partner Summit Group, 2010). It tries to create a platform where community partners can share their own stories, using their own voices. In doing so, it seeks to reimagine how systems of power may be deconstructed in trying to work in participatory ways towards greater equality (Heleta, 2016). This has been important, as research (e.g., Akhurst, 2016) shows that the voices of community partners, particularly in South Africa, have largely been missing from the literature. Creating this platform where community partner voices are amplified ensures that opportunity is created for community partners to participate in the shaping of a programme that works for them (D'Arlach et al., 2009). The ECD Residence Programme was not co-designed with community partners, although in designing the programme RUCE had already established relationships with many of the community

partners. Thus, this research opens an opportunity for some of that engagement to happen (Seedat, 2012), even though it may be in hindsight.

The third strength of this study, which is linked to the second strength, is that it was the first time that research of this nature was being conducted on the ECD Residence Programme. As the programme is still relatively new (existing for about 5 years at the conclusion of this study), this study presents an opportunity for the programme developers to critically evaluate what works well and what does not work well for the programme. Based on the findings of this research, this study also provides some recommendations (elsewhere in this chapter) for the possible improvement of the programme.

The fourth and final strength of this study is that it was designed to be reflective. Through the focus group discussions and the one-on-one interviews participants had an opportunity to reflect on their engagement in the programme, identifying both bottlenecks and what worked well in the partnerships. The participants in this research commented on the usefulness of this engagement, expressing the desire to have more reflective sessions of this nature in future. For one community partner this engagement meant an opportunity to collaboratively come up with possible solutions to a problem she had been struggling with for a long time in her organisation. For one CE representative this engagement meant an opportunity to better get to know the other community partners, who are in the programme.

Limitations of the study

Three limitations of this study were identified. The first limitation is this study is that a small sample was used; a total of four out of fifteen partner groups at the time of undertaking data collection. This means that is it difficult to generalise the findings to the entire population. However, as this research was designed to be reflective in nature, and it took on a qualitative design, the main aim was to get a deeper understanding of different perspectives.

The second limitation of this study is that I held a dual role of being a researcher and an employee at RUCE. In particular, prior to being engaged in the data collection process, I coordinated the ECD Residence Programme and thus formed relationships with some of the participants in this research. While this relationship had positives for the research in that it meant the participants could feel comfortable in talking to me, the negative was that because

I was an employee at RUCE participants could potentially be less critical in their reflection. In Chapter 4 of this thesis, I reflect on detail on how I carefully navigated my insider/outsider status (Akhurst et al., 2018).

The third and final limitation of this study is that this research highlights a number of the structural inequalities that still prevail in South Africa and specifically in the ECD sector. The social action model of community psychology proposes challenging these structural inequalities through activism (Arumugam, 2001). Doing this is not easy, however what this research demonstrates is that a foundation has been laid for RUCE to engage in more transformative work with community partners, to address some of these structural inequalities in future (Akhurst & Mitchell, in press).

Recommendations for future research

Considering the strengths and limitations highlighted, three recommendations for future research are made. Firstly, it may be valuable for a longitudinal study to be planned, to ascertain to what extent transformation for participants occurs. Additionally, it would be interesting to have follow up discussions with participants from this study, to track whether some of the aspirations were fulfilled and to track any changes or developments. Of particular interest, it would be good to look at to what extent the relationships that were built during this period were sustained.

Secondly, it may also prove useful to conduct research with those community partners who no longer participate in the ECD Residence Programme. The aim of conducting this research would be to provide valuable insights into the reasons for leaving the programme and whether these have to do with how the programme is managed.

Lastly, whereas it was valuable to provide a reflective space through this study, future studies could take a participatory action research methodology, this would mean moving beyond reflection and reporting on these reflections, but also taking collaborative action.

Recommendations for the ECD Residence Programme

What follows are several recommendations that are made for the possible improvement of the ECD Residence Programme. These recommendations stem from the findings of this research.

With regards to training, the CE representatives who participate in this research suggest that a more dynamic training programme is developed, one that focuses not just on theory however on application as well. Recommendations for inclusion in the training include team building activities for the various partner groups, as well as for CE representatives in each hall. Additionally, what may also be beneficial for the programme is to scaffold learning opportunities that are made available to CE representatives and volunteer managers throughout the year, providing key information and interventions during strategic phases of the programme cycle. These key interventions could include training on time management, communication, conflict resolution, and project management skills.

A call has also been made for support to be made available for all staff members in community partner organisations. This support would be in the form of capacity development. The aim of this would be to strengthen relationships between volunteer managers and their colleagues, and between all staff at community partner organisations with CE representatives. It is hoped that through this intervention there will be more ownership of the organisational goals as related to the ECD Residence Programme. This is not to negate the role that the volunteer manager plays, however it is an attempt to be more inclusive.

In trying to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, a proposal is being made to introduce and formalise the position of a hall CE representative. The main function of this role would be to provide coordination amongst CE representatives in a particular hall, and to be a liaison with RUCE. The hall CE representative would also serve the role of strengthening communication between the community partner and their hall.

There exists possibility for collaboration between RUCE and the Division of Student Affairs (DSA). The DSA, through its student services section, provides support to students and wardens in the residence system (Rhodes University Student Services, 2020). A call has

been made for wardens to be involved in the programme at hall level, as anecdotal evidence shows that this has yielded positive results. Thus, it may be useful for RUCE and the DSA to work together to see how this can be realised.

Participants in this research have also identified having smaller-group reflection sessions to be of benefit, as opposed to the current model of having a reflection session with all participants in the programme. These smaller-group sessions could provide an opportunity for more meaningful engagement to occur, where partner groups can discuss issues affecting them in more detail. These smaller-group reflection sessions could also be a springboard to identify synergies between partner groups and foster collaboration.

Finally, careful consideration needs to be given to ways that the Oppidan hall may be included more meaningfully in the programme. As it stands in its current form, the ECD Residence Programme works best for halls that have more than one CE representative. Therefore, it is recommended that the programme be reimagined to be more inclusive.

Final thoughts

This research has attempted to provide a deeper understanding into CE partnerships that are formed in the context of HE. In doing so, it has provided valuable insight into how CE partnerships are negotiated in the South African context. It is hoped that the contributions that this research makes will be of value to RUCE and to CE practitioners in HE. It is also hoped that this research has succeeded in providing a reflective space for community partners to share their stories amplifying their own voices and ideas. To conclude, I believe that this study has potential to further transformation to the approach of CE partnerships in HE.

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Appendix 1: Siyakhana@Makana Project Planning Cycle

Appendix 2: Sample Memorandum of Understanding

RUCE & COMMUNITY PARTNERS'
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
2016

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between Rhodes University's Community Engagement (RUCE) and:

_____

Hereinafter referred to as COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANISATION.

A. RUCE recruits and refers volunteers ONLY to organisations that

1. Provide community based development programmes and work to advance the ends of social justice and the public good.

2. Community partner organisations RUCE supports fall into one of the organisational categories listed below: *(please check appropriate box and attach proof of not-for-profit status)*

☐ Not-for-profit status *(please specify and attach proof of status)*

_____

☐ Faith-based/church/religious *(please attach proof of status)*
☐ Department / Program of: Municipality, Province or National Government
☐ School: Public Private (non-profit)
☐ Specific for-profit organisation that serves community needs and have well-defined roles for volunteer involvement: Hospital Hospice Other–(please specify)

_____

B. RUCE will NOT recruit or refer volunteers to:

☒ Create new objectives for Community Partner Organisations from scratch. The work volunteers will do must feed into Community Partner Organisations' already existing objectives.
☒ Individuals—volunteers will only be referred through required Community Partner Organisation.
☒ Political campaigns
☒ Any activity involving proselytizing/inducing others to convert or join one's faith, party, institution
☒ Any activity that will not be supervised by a community partner
☒ Any project that is not mutually beneficial and does not provide working and learning opportunities for volunteers and community partners.
☒ Activities that only entail fundraising
☒ Run a fundraising campaign –they can assist in a campaign

☒ Replace paid workers/employees/board members/organising committee members
☒ Work during Rhodes holidays and examinations

C. RUCE agrees to offer services that include:

1. Invitation to participate in RUCE volunteer training and recruitment events
2. Invitation to participate in RUCE exhibitions, public debates and awareness weeks
3. Community partner training sessions, regular communication and visits
4. Regular communication/information about RUCE, its programs, trends, local, regional and national service initiatives to Community Partner Organisations through face-to-face visits, orientations, e-newsletters, email, etc.
5. National and Global exposure for Community Partner Organisations through online presence on RUCE's website. RUCE will also make available relevant information and advice on the website.
6. RUCE staff support for Community Partner Organisations to manage volunteers: including making transport available for volunteers and providing registers for volunteer attendance.
7. Promotion of volunteer opportunities, as appropriate, through media partnerships, directories, mailers, and appropriate websites

D. PARTNER ORGANISATION agrees to:

Please check each statement that applies to your organisation. If there is a statement you cannot check, provide a brief written explanation and attach to this Memorandum of Understanding.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

☐ Provide proof of organisations' structure and its' a not-for-profit status (if applicable)

☐ Identify an onsite Volunteer Manager who takes responsibility who takes responsibility for volunteers: Name: _____ phone: _____

☐ Practice ethical decision-making and core competencies in volunteer administration

☐ Return telephone calls and email notifications from volunteers and RUCE in a timely manner

☐ Provide a safe and secure environment in which volunteers will work in. This includes securing a regular volunteer venue.

☐ Meet with volunteers to review activities and assess impact made

☐ Be willing to co-manage the volunteers in your site: Provide on-the-job orientation, supervision, support, and guidance for volunteers

☐ Communicate regularly with the student leader and RUCE SVP Coordinator timeously if there is a problem.

☐ Provide services without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, or the presence of a non-related medical condition or disability

☐ Notify RUCE of any change in availability of volunteer opportunities and of any change of address/telephone number/email/volunteer manager within Community Partners' programs

☐ Community Partners must attend the Mid-Year Review session and Year End Evaluation session as well as fill in a short annual reflective report to be submitted to RUCE in November. This report will be used as a tool for monitoring and evaluation.

☐ Re-register with RUCE annually by signing an MOU.

☐ Keep RUCE advised of ongoing volunteer needs, projects appropriate for special volunteer populations, larger group projects and special events.

E. Specific Programmes

E.1 SIYAKHANA@MAKANA

Participation in the Siyakhana@Makana Programme minimum requirements:
☒ Willingness to attend and participate in annual training on the **12th and 13th March** 2016. Minimum attendance is from 9 – 13:00 on Saturday 12th March.
☒ Orientate student volunteers on arrival defining clear guidelines of service and expectations. Decide on dates for joint planning to take place.
☒ Attend four (see dates below) Siyakhana@Makana meetings that are held at 17:30 – 18:30 at Emfundweni. This session provides support for partners and students.
The above are compulsory.

Siyakhana@Makana Meetings for 2016

If you require transport for these meetings, indicate below or contact Nosi Nkwinti.

TERM	Meeting Dates 2016	Do you need transport for this meeting?
TERM 1	(Training 12-13March)	
TERM 2	07 April 2016 12 May 2016	
TERM 3	04 August 2016	
TERM 4	08 September 2016	

Does your organisation have their own vehicle? _____

E.2 STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME (SVP)

Participation in Student Volunteer Programme minimum requirements
☒ Willingness to attend and participate in annual training on the **5th and 6th March** 2016. Minimum attendance from 9:00 to 13:00 on Saturday 5th March.
☒ Orientate students on arrival offering clear guidelines for service and expectations
☒ Ensure registers are signed by the volunteers and submitted quarterly.
☒ Attend quarterly meets at RUCE for SVP. Meetings run over a week, the Care Group will be the first day, Tutoring/Mentoring the second day, Arts and Alternative Education is the third day.

TERM	Meeting Dates 2016	Do you need transport for this meeting?
TERM 1	(Training 5 & 6 March) **14-16 March**: (14th Care group, 15th Tutoring/M group, 16th Arts and Alt Ed group)	
TERM 2	**23-25 May**: (23rd Care Group, 24th Tutoring/M group, 25th Arts & Alt Ed group)	
TERM 3	**8-11 August**: (8th Care group, 10th Tutoring/M group, 11th Arts & Alt Ed group)	
TERM 4	**12-14 September**: (12th Care group, 13th Tutoring/M group, 14th Arts & Alt Ed group)	

The RU volunteers will be serving within the following dates:

VOLUNTEER SESSIONS 2016	
SVP TRAINING	***5 and 6 March***
Term 1	*7 March – 18 March*
Term 2	*4 April – 27 May*
Term 3	*18 July – 26 August*
Term 4	*5 Sept – 14 October*

F. Agreement

COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS' DIRECTORS/MANAGERS MUST SIGN THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

I have reviewed this memorandum of Understanding and I agree that my organisation _____ _____will abide by all the outlined requirements and comply with all legal national policies and regulations regarding providing a safe work environment. I agree that my organisation and RUCE both reserve the right to review the partnership should the above mentioned agreement be breached.

Exact Title: _____
(Director/Manager)

Printed Full Name: _____

Signed at: _____ on this _____day of _____20_____
(Place) ***(Date)*** ***(Month)*** ***(Year)***

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Volunteer Manager_ Printed Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____
Signature: _____

In 2016, each student volunteer will be required to fulfil a minimum of 22 contact sessions at a Community Partner Organisations' site. Community Partner Organisations must ensure that they keep a register of all volunteers for all volunteer days and return this register to RUCE at the end of every term by giving the register to the Student leader or dropping it off at RUCE.

We hope that 2016 can be a fruitful and well organised year for volunteering in Grahamstown and
With your support we can make a visible difference in Grahamstown.

Appendix 3: Sample Training Programme

SIYAKHANA EMAKANA (S@M) TRAINING
for
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES, STUDENT GROUPS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

SATURDAY: 12 MARCH		
TIME	**ACTIVITY**	**VENUE**
08:00	Registration	Foyer
09:00	Welcome: DVC Dr Peter Clayton	Eden Grove Blue
09:10	Higher education transformation and the role of student volunteerism/community engagement: DVC Dr Peter Clayton	Eden Grove Blue
09:30	Education Documentary: Some are more equal than others	Eden Grove Blue
10:00	S@M Road map: Di Hornby	Eden Grove Blue
10:15	TEA BREAK	Foyer
10:45	Project management process: Di Hornby	Eden Grove Blue
11:30	Community Partners Fair	Foyer
12:15	Asset Based Development: Anne Loffler	Eden Grove Blue
13:00	LUNCH	
13:45	Creativity and Resource Making: Rat Western	Foyer
14:45	Partner & Student Group introductions Expectations of each partner (Student and Community Partner)	Eden Grove Blue
15:45	Reflection and evaluation of the training	Eden Grove Blue
16:00	Close	

If you have come here to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you've come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Lilla Watson Aboriginal elder

Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance Letter

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Psychology Department
1 University Road, Grahamstown, 6139, South Africa
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa
T: +27 (0) 46 603 8500
T: +27 (0) 46 603 7614
E: psychology@ ru.ac.za

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 August 2017

Benita Bobo
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Benita

RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE (PROJECT PSY2017/52)

This letter is to confirm that the Psychology Department Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) recommends the approval of your research proposal and ethical standards protocol with the tracking number PSY2017/52 and title, 'A multiple case study approach to understanding partner relationships within the context of community engagement at Rhodes University' which served at the RPERC meeting on 21 June 2017.

Please note that our recommendation will serve at the next Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) meeting where a final decision regarding approval will be recorded. You may now commence with all research activities, including data collection.

Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators.

The ethical conduct of the study is the joint responsibility of you and your supervisor.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jacqueline Marx
CHAIRPERSON: RPERC

Appendix 5: Information to Participants

Information to participants (Community Partners)

Good day

I am a PhD student in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, and I am doing research on Community Engagement, particularly the ECD Residence Programme that you are a part of. I would like to invite you participate in my research.

I would like to hear about your experience of participating in the ECD Residence Programme. The information you give me will be used for my PhD thesis. The results will also be made available to the staff at RUCE as it will help them understand what works about your partnership in working with students in the ECD Residence Programme, as well as the things that need to be improved. This will stand to possibly benefit you, as this information will be used to strengthen your relationship with the students you work with in the ECD Residence Programme. Please note that in feeding back this information to RUCE, I will NOT disclose your name or organisation, nor will I disclose what you said to me unless you specifically ask me to. All conversations that we will have will be treated as STRICTLY confidential. Please also note that I will always double check with you if I have understood what you have said to me correctly, in follow-up interviews and focus group discussions, and will make changes to my records if needed.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please feel free to be open and honest and be reassured that whatever you say during the research process will not affect our relationship in any way going forward.

I will be conducting an initial interview with you, which will last for about an hour. I may also call upon you to participate in focus group discussions with other participants in this research. These participants include community partners and students who are part of the ECD Residence Programme. These will all be arranged at a time and venue most suitable for everyone. The focus groups should not last more than two hours. Furthermore, as I am also a coordinator of the ECD Residence Programme, I might also make some observations of your interactions during your time with the students. Upon making these observations I will double check with you, in follow-up interviews and focus group discussions, about your opinions and whether I can use the information in my research.

Please note that during the research process I will not ask you to talk about any personal things, however if this does come up and you want to talk about it, that's OK too. What I'd like to hear about is what it has been like working with students and participating in the ECD Residence programme. If you experience any discomfort or distress during the research process, please let me know. We will discontinue and I will assist in referring you to a professional for assistance. If at any point you want to stop being a participant in the research, please feel free to let me know.

Please note that if you choose to not participate in the research, it will not have any negative consequences to your working relationship with RUCE. Do you have any questions?

Information to participants (Students)

Good day

I am a PhD student in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, and I am doing research on Community Engagement, particularly the ECD Residence Programme that you are a part of. I would like to invite you participate in my research.

I would like to hear about your experience of participating in the ECD Residence Programme. The information you give me will be used for my PhD thesis. The results will also be made available to the staff at RUCE as it will help them understand what works about your partnership in working with community partners in the ECD Residence Programme, as well as the things that need to be improved. This will stand to possibly benefit you, as this information will be used to strengthen your relationship with the community partners you work with in the ECD Residence Programme. Please note that in feeding back this information to RUCE, I will NOT disclose your name or residence, nor will I disclose what you said to me unless you specifically ask me to. All conversations that we will have will be treated as STRICTLY confidential. Please also note that I will always double check with you if I have understood what you have said to me correctly, in follow-up interviews and focus group discussions, and will make changes to my records if needed.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please feel free to be open and honest and be reassured that whatever you say during the research process will not affect our relationship in any way going forward.

I will be conducting an initial interview with you, which will last for about an hour. I may also call upon you to participate in focus group discussions with other participants in this research. These participants include community partners and students who are part of the ECD Residence Programme. These will all be arranged at a time and venue most suitable for everyone. The focus groups should not last more than two hours. Furthermore, as I am also a coordinator of the ECD Residence Programme, I might also make some observations of your interactions during your time with the community partners. Upon making these observations I will double check with you, in follow-up interviews and focus group discussions, about your opinions and whether I can use the information in my research.

Please note that during the research process I will not ask you to talk about any personal things, however if this does come up and you want to talk about it, that's OK too. What I'd like to hear about is what it has been like working with community partners and participating in the ECD Residence programme. If you experience any discomfort or distress during the research process, please let me know. We will discontinue and I will assist in referring you to a professional for assistance. If at any point you want to stop being a participant in the research, please feel free to let me know.

Please note that if you choose to not participate in the research, it will not have any negative consequences to your working relationship with RUCE. Do you have any questions?

Appendix 6: Consent Form

Consent Form (Community Partners)

RHODES UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ (participant's name) agree to participate in the research project of **Benita Bobo** on **A reflective multiple case study approach to understanding partner relationships within the context of community engagement at Rhodes University.**

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a PhD degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on **076 454 3670** (cell phone) or **b.bobo@ru.ac.za** (email). The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee(s), and is under the supervision of **Prof Jacqueline Akhurst** in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on **046 603 7084** (office) or **j.akhurst@ru.ac.za** (email).
2. The researcher is interested in **the nature of partner relationships between community engagement representatives at Rhodes University and community partners who are registered with the Community Engagement office.**
3. My participation will involve **two one-on-one interviews that are no longer than 1 hour, and two focus group discussions, with other community partners and community engagement representatives, that are no longer than 2 hours**.
4. I am to maintain confidentiality at all times. I may not divulge any information from the focus group discussions.
5. The researcher may record observations made during meetings with community engagement representatives, but will check with me if these are accurate and I am happy for them to be included in the research.
6. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
7. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concern I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction. FAMSA may be contacted for further support on **046 622 2580**.
8. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstance occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
9. Choosing to not participate in this research will not have negative consequences in my working relationship with RUCE.
10. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader, unless I expressly inform the researcher otherwise.

Signed on (date): _____
Participant: _____
Researcher: _____

Consent Form (Students)

RHODES UNIVERSITY – DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I _____ (participant's name) agree to participate in the research project of **Benita Bobo** on **A reflective multiple case study approach to understanding partner relationships within the context of community engagement at Rhodes University.**

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a PhD degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on **076 454 3670** (cell phone) or **b.bobo@ru.ac.za** (email). The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee(s), and is under the supervision of **Prof Jacqueline Akhurst** in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on **046 603 7084** (office) or **j.akhurst@ru.ac.za** (email).
2. The researcher is interested in **the nature of partner relationships between community engagement representatives at Rhodes University and community partners who are registered with the Community Engagement office.**
3. My participation will involve **two one-on-one interviews that are no longer than 1 hour, and two focus group discussions, with other community engagement representatives and community partners, that are no longer than 2 hours**.
4. I am to maintain confidentiality at all times. I may not divulge any information from the focus group discussions.
5. The researcher may record observations made during meetings with community partners, but will check with me if these are accurate and I am happy for them to be included in the research.
6. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
7. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concern I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction. The counselling centre may be contacted for further support on **046 603 7070**.
8. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstance occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
9. Choosing to not participate in this research will not have negative consequences in my working relationship with RUCE.
10. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but the report will be designed in such a way that it will

not be possible to be identified by the general reader, unless I expressly inform the researcher otherwise.

Signed on (date): _____
Participant: _____
Researcher: _____

Appendix 7: Interview Schedules

Interview schedule for first round of interviews (Community Partners)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your experience of participating in the ECD Residence Programme. The information you give will be used for my PhD thesis. The results will also be made available to the staff at RUCE as it will help them understand what works about your partnership with the students you work with in the ECD Residence Programme, as well as the things that need to be improved. Please note that in feeding back this information to RUCE, I will NOT disclose your name or organisation, nor will I disclose what you said to me unless you specifically ask me to. All conversations that we will have will be treated as STRICTLY confidential. Please also note that I will always double check with you if I have understood what you have said to me correctly, and will make changes to my records if needed.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please feel free to be open and honest and be reassured that what you say here will not affect our relationship in any way going forward. If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time please let me know.

The interview will last for about an hour. I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you? I'm not going to ask you about any personal things, however if you want to talk about such matters, that's OK too. What I'd like to hear about is what it has been like working with students, participating in the ECD Residence programme.

Questions

1. Tell me a bit about your organisation
    a. When was it established?
    b. Where is it located?
    c. What do you primarily do?
2. What is your role in the organisation?
3. Explain to me, what does it mean for you to be a manager of volunteers?
    a. What are your roles and responsibilities?
4. How did you get the role of manager of volunteers?
    a. Were you nominated, elected/selected?
    b. Did you volunteer?
5. How are you finding this role?
    a. Are there any challenges that you face?
    b. Are there any successes?
6. Tell me about your partnership with the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) office?
    a. When was it established?

    b. How was it established?
    c. Why did you choose to work with RUCE?
7. Tell me about your partnership with your hall
    a. When was it established?
    b. How was it established?
    c. If you could choose your hall partner yourself, would you choose this hall?
        i. Why or why not?
8. How has your relationship been with your hall partner?
    a. What works well?
    b. What does not work well?
9. What is your understanding of the ECD Residence Programme?
10. How have you experienced the ECD Residence Programme?
    a. What works well?
    b. What does not work well?
    c. How does it compare with the Student Volunteer Programme?
11. How have you experienced the students who work with you in your organisation?
12. What are your thoughts about the students' training?
13. Do you believe that the students have added value to your organisation?
    a. Why or why not?
        i. How?
    b. What do you think the students gain from their involvement?
14. Tell me about your goal for this year
    a. How have you divided the tasks for the goal?
15. Tell me about the Reading Programme running in your school. How is it going?
16. Are there any other community engagement activities that you are involved in with your partner hall?
17. How can your overall experience of working in the ECD Residence Programme be improved?
18. Anything else that you would like to share with me?

Interview schedule for first round of interviews (Students)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today.

I would like to hear about your experience of participating in the ECD Residence Programme. The information you give will be used for my PhD thesis. The results will also be made available to the staff at RUCE as it will help them understand what works about your partnership with the community partners you work with in the ECD Residence Programme, as well as the things that need to be improved. Please note that in feeding back this information to RUCE, I will NOT disclose your name or residence, nor will I disclose what you said to me unless you specifically ask me to. All conversations that we will have will be treated as STRICTLY confidential. Please also note that I will always double check

with you if I have understood what you have said to me correctly, and will make changes to my records if needed.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Please feel free to be open and honest and be reassured that what you say here will not affect our relationship in any way going forward. If you do not wish to answer any questions please just say so and if you want to stop the interview at any time please let me know.

The interview will last for about an hour. I would like to record the interview, is that okay with you? I'm not going to ask you about any personal things, however if you want to talk about such matters, that's OK too. What I'd like to hear about is what it has been like working with community partners, participating in the ECD Residence programme.

Questions

1. Tell me a bit about your hall
    a. How many residences are part of it?
    b. Where is it located?
2. Explain to me, what does it mean for you to be a community engagement representative?
    a. What are your roles and responsibilities?
3. How did you get the role of community engagement representative?
    a. Were you nominated, elected/selected?
    b. Did you volunteer?
4. How are you finding this role?
    a. Are there any challenges that you face?
    b. Are there any successes?
5. Tell me about your partnership with your community partner
    a. When was it established?
    b. How was it established?
    c. If you could choose your community partner yourself, would you choose this partner?
        i. Why or why not?
6. How has your relationship been with your community partner?
    a. What works well?
    b. What does not work well?
7. What is your understanding of the ECD Residence Programme?
8. How have you experienced the ECD Residence Programme?
    a. What works well?
    b. What does not work well?
9. How have you experienced working with your community partner?
10. What are your thoughts about the training you receive?
11. Do you believe that you have added value to your community partner organisation?
    a. Why or why not?
        i. How?
    b. What do you think you from their involvement?

12. Tell me about your goal for this year
    a. How have you divided the tasks for the goal?
13. Tell me about the Reading Programme running in your community partner organisation. How is it going?
14. Are there any other community engagement activities that you are involved in with your community partner?
15. How can your overall experience of working in the ECD Residence Programme be improved?
16. Anything else that you would like to share with me?

Interview schedule for second round of interviews (Community Partners)

1. Now that you have experienced the role of being a volunteer manager, can you share with me what the experience has been like?
    a. What are some of the successes that you have had, and what do you attribute these successes to?
    b. What are some of the challenges that you have faced, and how have you worked to overcome these challenges?

2. How, if in any way, has your understanding of the ECD Residence Programme changed since we last spoke?

3. Which of the 3 goals that you had this year have you managed to accomplish?
    a. What do you believe contributed to the success of these goals?
    b. If there are any goals that you did not managed to accomplish, what do you think went wrong in your planning and/or implementation?

4. Last time we spoke at length about the challenge of time, and that sometimes students are unable to make certain times due to lectures and tutorials. Has this been resolved?
    a. If not, what do you think we can do to work around this?

5. What do you believe you have learnt from your community engagement representative this year?
6. Have you learnt from other community partners who are part of the programme in any way?
7. What valuable lessons do you feel you have contributed since being on the programme?

8. Can you give me practical examples of how the programme can be better structured for both community partners and students?
9. In terms of the partnership, what role do you think RUCE has to play?
10. Do you feel that RUCE is supportive?

a. How so?

11. What can be improved in your relationship with RUCE
12. Tell me about the revamped Reading Programme.
    a. How is it working in your school?

13. Have you done any activities with your hall on campus this year?
    a. Was there any significance in you going onto campus with your community engagement representative, as opposed to them always visiting your site?

14. How would you rate your involvement in the programme this year? This includes coming to all meetings and being part of all the planning and decision making with the community engagement representative.
15. Did you and your hall participate in Trading Live for Nelson Mandela week this year?
    a. What did you do?

16. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me, or ask me?

Interview schedule for second round of interviews (Students)

17. Now that you have experienced the role of being a community engagement representative, can you share with me what the experience has been like?
    a. What are some of the successes that you have had, and what do you attribute these successes to?
    b. What are some of the challenges that you have faced, and how have you worked to overcome these challenges?

18. How, if in any way, has your understanding of the ECD Residence Programme changed since we last spoke?

19. Which of the 3 goals that you had this year have you managed to accomplish?
    a. What do you believe contributed to the success of these goals?
    b. If there are any goals that you did not managed to accomplish, what do you think went wrong in your planning and/or implementation?

20. Last time we spoke at length about the challenge of time, and that sometimes students are unable to make certain times due to lectures and tutorials. Has this been resolved?
    a. If not, what do you think we can do to work around this?

21. What do you believe you have learnt from your fellow peers this year?
22. What do you believe you have learnt from your community partner this year?

23. Have you learnt from other community partners who are part of the programme in any way?
24. What valuable lessons do you feel you have contributed since being on the programme?

25. Can you give me practical examples of how the programme can be better structured for both community partners and students?
26. In terms of the partnership, what role do you think RUCE has to play?
27. Do you feel that RUCE is supportive?
    a. How so?

28. What can be improved in your relationship with RUCE
29. Tell me about the revamped Reading Programme.
    a. How is it working in your school?

30. Have you done any activities with your community partner on campus this year?
    a. Was there any significance in you coming onto campus with your community partner, as opposed to you always going to their site?

31. How would you rate your involvement in the programme this year? This includes coming to all meetings and being part of all the planning and decision making with the community partner.
32. Did you and your community partner participate in Trading Live for Nelson Mandela week this year?
    a. What did you do?

33. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me, or ask me?

Appendix 8: Focus Group Discussion Schedules

First focus group discussion

Co-management

1. What are your experiences of building and managing partner relationships?
2. What is your understanding of the co-management of programmes?
    a. How do you experience jointly planning, jointly executing, and jointly reflecting on community engagement activities that you are involved in with students OR partners?

Roles and relationships

3. What role do you think you have to play in student OR partner development?
    a. And in the development of your peers (other CE representatives OR other volunteer managers?)
4. Do you see yourself as a teacher in this space?
    a. To the students OR to the partners?
    b. To your peers (other CE representatives OR other volunteer managers?)
5. Do you see yourself as a role model?
    a. Why or why not?
    b. In your communities (being it the broader Grahamstown community, OR the broader Rhodes University community)
        i. In which way?

Emerging insights over time

6. What valuable lessons do you feel you have contributed since being on the programme?
7. What milestones have you reached in your relationships since being on the programme?
    a. With the students OR with the partners?
    b. With the CE office?
8. What do you think works well in your partnership, that you think you can share with the group?
9. What challenges have you faced, that you have overcome and learnt from, that you think could serve as a lesson to everyone else?
10. Are there any challenges that you are currently facing, that you would like some advice on?

Programmatic issues

11. Can you give me practical examples of how the training can be better structured, for both partners and students?
    a. How can students be better involved in the training?
    b. How can partners be better involved in the training?
12. Can you give me practical examples of how the programme itself can be better structured, for both partners and students?

    a. What are your thoughts on the requirement of weekly attendance?
    b. What are your thoughts on the requirement of quarterly meetings?
    c. What are your thoughts on the requirement of quarterly written reports?
13. What role do you think the CE office has to play?
14. Do you feel that the CE office is supportive, to students and to volunteer managers?
    a. How so? Or why not?
15. What can be improved in your relationship with the CE office?

To conclude

16. Are there any lessons that you have learnt today, that you will be taking with you?
    a. How will you apply them?
17. Are there any questions or comments to close off?
18. What would you like me to share with the staff at RUCE?

Follow-up focus group discussion

1. Which of the 3 goals that you had this year have you managed to accomplish?
    a. What do you believe contributed to the success of these goals?
    b. If there are any goals that you did not managed to accomplish, what do you think went wrong in your planning and/or implementation?

2. Last time we spoke at length about the challenge of time, and that sometimes students are unable to make certain times due to lectures and tutorials. Has this been resolved?
    a. If not, what do you think we can do to work around this?

3. Last time we spoke about the role that you have as community partners to teach other community partners and to learn from them.
    a. Since we last spoke, have you been more conscious of this?
    b. Since we last spoke, what have you learnt from other community partners?
    c. Since we last spoke, in what ways have you been intentional in teaching other community partners?

4. We also spoke about the role that you have as a teacher to student volunteers. Since we last spoke, do you believe you have played this role?
    a. How so?
    b. Do you think the students have realised that you have played this role?

5. What do you believe you have learnt from the students?
6. What do you believe you have learnt from being part of the ECD Residence Programme?

7. What valuable lessons do you feel you have contributed since being on the programme?
8. Can you give me practical examples of how the programme can be better structured for both community partners and students?
9. In terms of the partnership, what role do you think RUCE has to play?
10. Do you feel that RUCE is supportive?
    a. How so?

11. What can be improved in your relationship with RUCE?
12. Tell me about the revamped Reading Programme.
    a. How is it working in your school?

13. Have you done any activities with your students on campus this year?
    a. Was there any significance in you coming onto campus with the students, as opposed to the students always coming to your organisation?

14. How would you rate your involvement in the programme this year? This includes coming to all meetings and being part of all the planning and decision making with the students.

15. Did you and your students or other partners participate in Trading Live for Nelson Mandela week this year?
    a. What did you do?

16. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me, or ask me?

‘Most importantly, it’s like the partner takes more interest in us’: Using *Ubuntu* as a Fundamental Ethic of Community Engagement (CE) Partnerships at Rhodes University

Benita Bobo
Jacqueline Akhurst

Abstract

Community engagement (CE) has been noted as an important means of enhancing students’ experiences in undergraduate programmes, because this promotes interdisciplinary conversations. In addition, it has the potential to challenge the colonial forms of disciplinary knowledge that have dominated thus far, and may play an important role as we seek to Africanise the curriculum. The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Residence Programme is a CE programme at Rhodes University, where community partners from ECD centres engage with student volunteers, over a period of one year. Such programmes are co-managed between the Rhodes University CE (RUCE) Division and community partners, as well as between community partners and student volunteers from a variety of programmes of study. This, it is hoped, translates into the building of mutually beneficial relationships. However, what do these relationships actually mean for the students and partners, and what are their benefits and challenges?

Using the ECD Residence Programme as a case study, this paper argues that CE at Rhodes University is centred on the ethics of *Ubuntu*. Findings from an initial round of interviews and a focus group illustrate that the community partners and student volunteers build long-term, meaningful, and mutually beneficial relationships that extend beyond the boundaries of the CE activities in which they are involved. These relationships are based on

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