EXPLORING ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A RURAL PROJECT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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OPSOMMING

Konseptuele raamwerke, wat gebruik word om navorsing te doen of wat ontwikkel word vanuit navorsing, kan 'n belangrike bydrae maak tot gemeenskapsontwikkeling. Aspekte wat doelbewus ingesluit moet word in so 'n konseptuele raamwerk is die sosio-politiese konteks van 'n gemeenskapsontwikkeling projek sowel as die onderliggende en verskuilde makro-stelsel kragte, soos armoede, wat ontwikkelingswerk in landelike gemeenskappe beïnvloed. Wanneer aandag gegee word aan sulke kragte lei dit tot nuwe insigte in die makro-stelsel van ontwikkelingspraktyke en die geïntegreerde en strukturele aard van sommige ontwikkelingsuitdagings wat sigbaar gemaak moet word. Hierdie insigte bring die sosio-politiese karakter van die makro-stelsel waarin gesinne en gemeenskappe hulself bevind na vore.

Die doel van hierdie artikel is om 'n konseptuele raamwerk voor te lê wat uit 'n gevallestudie van die "Human Rights, Democracy and Development" (HRDD) projek gespruit het. HRDD is 'n volwasse opvoeding en ontwikkelingsintervensie in sewe landelike gemeenskappe in KwaZulu-Natal. Die raamwerk is voorgestel as 'n konseptuele instrument om verskillende initiatiewe te eksploreer wat daarop gemik is om gesinne se lewensomstandighede te verbeter en om gesinsekologieë in landelike gemeenskappe te verbeter en te verander.

Die artikel beskryf kortliks die vier HRDD projek doelwitte en vier pedagogiese strategieë sowel as die primêre makro-stelsel kragte wat die HRDD projek affekteer in meer diepte. Die makro-stelsel kragte is daarna bespreek in terme van hoe hierdie kragte die verskillende projek doelwitte positief of negatief beïnvloed.

Daar word in die artikel geargumenteer dat daar wel van makro-stelsel kragte soos armoede en patriargie in gemeenskapsontwikkeling literatuur melding gemaak word, maar dat onvoldoende aandag gegee word aan hoe magstryd en post-konflik status van 'n area kan dien as kragtige vormers van ontwikkelingswerk. Hierdie artikel neem hierdie kragte in ag in terme van hoe hulle na vore kom en die projek beïnvloed. Die raamwerk reflekteer ontdekking van wat die projek probeer vermag en watter makro-stelsel kragte, beide beperkende en drywingskragte, dit in die gesig staar. Ontwikkelingsintervensies wat poog om verandering te weeg te bring kan hieruit voordeel trek deur sensitief te wees vir hierdie kragte in die beplanning, implementering en die evalueringsfases van die projek.

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INTRODUCTION

The Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Science has over several years reported on conceptual frameworks or models adopted in or developed from research into community development projects (see for example Kgaphola and Boshoff, 2002; Trollip, 2011; Trollip and Boshoff, 2011; van der Merwe et al., 2010). Several of these studies have explored the successes and failures of such projects in terms of participants' skills, attitudes, cultural understanding and the different development processes employed. These are important contributions to the field in that they synthesise thinking about project dynamics (summative value) and also serve as conceptual and theoretical frameworks for future research (heuristic value).

The social ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) has underpinned considerable model development work by scholars in the social sciences interested in showing how people, families or organisations are influenced by various layers or systems of the ecological environment within which they are located. From this, frameworks showing interactions amongst micro-, meso- and macro-systems have proliferated. Kgaphola and Boshoff (2002) review several frameworks for food-behaviour research and propose a framework for such research in South Africa using such an ecological approach. The latter

article, through its review and proposed framework, illustrates the heuristic value of conceptual frameworks which allow for more systematic and holistic analysis while also simplifying a complex reality (summative value). In addition, opportunities for exploring the dynamic interactions between internal and external environments are provided. These purposes are aptly captured by Krondl (cited by Kgaphola and Boshoff, 2002: 67) who states that "Conceptual models identify factors and suggest their pathways. Thus they simplify a complex reality [summative value]… and become indispensable in designing research [heuristic value]"

This article discusses a conceptual framework developed from a case study of the Human Rights, Democracy and Development (HRDD) project, an adult education and development project in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The framework presents key features of the micro and macro environments of the project, while discussion of this framework will engage with some of the dynamic interactions between these environments. After briefly presenting the features of the micro environment, the article then focuses in greater depth on the macro environment, examining the major forces in the macro-system of this project. This focus stems from the view that the socio-political character of the macro environment requires more explicit exploration in conceptual frameworks of a project operating in a post-conflict rural context such as KwaZulu-Natal. The article is thus premised on the view that while macro-system forces such as poverty and patriarchy are well accounted for in the development literature less attention is given to how power struggles and the post-conflict status of an area can act as powerful determinants of development action and inaction. Paying attention to such forces allows for a situated understanding of development practices and for the inter-connected and structural nature of some development challenges to be made more visible. This brings to the fore the socio-political character of the macro-system within which family and community are located. Development interventions could benefit from being sensitive to these forces in project planning, implementation and evaluation phases.

After describing the HRDD project and research methodology, the article presents the conceptual framework. It first briefly discusses the four project goals: *learning, identity development, personal transformation* and *social change*. The article then briefly introduces four pedagogical

strategies employed in the project for advancing these goals, namely, *reflection, dialogue, action* and *relationships*. The major part of the article focuses on the four significant forces in the macro-system which emerged in the project. Each of these macro-system forces, namely, *poverty, patriarchy, power struggles* and a *post-conflict status* is illustrated through selected quotations from participants in the project.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT (HRDD) PROJECT

The Human Rights, Democracy and Development (HRDD) project was an adult education and development intervention in seven rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal. Groups from the communities of Dalton, Tugela Ferry, Qanda, Estcourt, Trust Feed, Muden and Stoffelton participated in the project which ran for almost a decade from 1999. The project was a partnership between the Centre for Adult Education (CAE, a university department in KZN), the Tembaletu Community Education Centre (a non-governmental organization in KZN), the Embassy of Finland (a donor agency in South Africa) and the seven communities. The CAE was primarily responsible for educator development, materials development and research in the project. This article draws on much of this on-going research conducted by CAE as well as a detailed case study of the entire project (John, 2009).

The HRDD project involved adults in a combination of adult basic education and training (ABET) and income-generation activities within their communities. The HRDD learners and educators were predominantly women from communities characterised by high levels of unemployment and poverty, and low levels of education and development. Most of their communities were severely affected by the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal during the 1980s and early 1990s. The main aims of the HRDD project were to create literate, informed and active citizens who could advance development in their communities. In the context of a new democracy in South Africa, the project had a strong curriculum emphasis on the themes of human rights, democracy and development (hence the project name). The rationale for the project was to establish literacy classes and income-generating projects within marginalised communities as spaces for people to learn and practice democracy and development in a micro context, as preparation for

application and civic action in wider macro contexts.

Educators for the literacy classes, who served as development facilitators outside of class, were recruited from within the targeted communities. They were trained and supported over a number of years by Tembaletu and CAE. A key objective and challenge for educators was to facilitate critical reflection and dialogue amongst learners about their life circumstances and their futures. Such reflection was intended to serve as a catalyst of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991:99-118, 1998) which would influence personal and social transformation (Freire, 1970:96-150).

A comprehensive discussion of the HRRD project in terms of its history, activities, actors and what it achieved is presented in a case study by John (2009). In this article a conceptual framework developed from the case study of the project is presented. The key objective of such conceptual development is to highlight the situated nature of development interventions in rural KwaZulu-Natal and to highlight the importance of understanding the macro-system when planning such development projects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research using case study methodology was employed to explore the HRDD project in its entirety. Case study was deemed to be most suitable for a study which sought an in-depth and holistic understanding of the HRRD project and its multi-faceted character, activities and actors. A case study allows for "a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge" (Rule & John, 2011:4). This definition recognises the situatedness of phenomena under study and signals a special relevance of case study methodology for research into educational projects where the genesis and on-going development of the project is deeply tied to events in and influences of, its context. In this regard, Yin (2003:13) recommends that "you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions - believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study."

Data collection

Data collection for the case study included twenty eight in-depth interviews with learners,

educators and project partners. Complementing these interviews, which probed the life histories of key participants as well as their experiences of the HRDD project, observations of HRDD activities and documentary analyses provided additional data. The design of the study deliberately sought to give voice to the participants and this article uses these narratives of rural women to illustrate the contextual dynamics of their lives and project activities.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants in each group. Three criteria guided the selection of seven educators, namely, HRDD site, gender and length of participation. This allowed for specific community factors and dynamics to be captured for all seven HRDD sites; for inclusion of both male and female educators' experiences; and for inclusion of educators who had been involved for several years as well as those who had joined the project more recently. Educators were each interviewed twice at their HRDD site. The first interview focused on the educator and his/her life history. The second interview, a week later, focused on the educator's understanding and experience of the HRDD project. The interviews were conducted by the author and an experienced bilingual researcher. Each educator chose a pseudonym which is used throughout this article. Educators were encouraged to use their mother-tongue (isiZulu) during the interview and most preferred this option. The interviews were recorded on audio tape with the permission of the educators. The recordings were transcribed verbatim in isiZulu and then translated into English and checked by a bilingual research assistant for accuracy.

The main criterion guiding the selection of learners for interviews was HRDD site. Of the seven learners interviewed, only one male learner was included. This learner was also the only male in his class. It was also important to gain the perspective of learners who had spent a reasonable time participating in ABET classes and community projects in order to tap into understandings of the project developed over some time. Learners were interviewed privately within their communities by the author and an experienced bilingual researcher. A single interview with combined foci on life story and HRDD experience was conducted in isiZulu with each of these learners. A similar process of pseudonyms, tape-recording, transcription, translation and verification, as explained above, was employed with learners.

Project partners largely self-selected for interviews as it was important to gain insights of the management and operational staff of the partnership organisations. Seven interviews were conducted in English with staff of the three partner organisations involved in the HRDD project.

Data analysis: generating and analysing narratives

The case study of the HRDD project made extensive use of narratives. Rossiter and Clark (2007:3) state that we "make sense of our experience, day by day and across the lifespan, by putting it into story form". The study began with a deep interest in hearing and analyzing the stories of people involved in the HRDD project. Generating a substantial part of the data in the form of narratives held the promise of satisfying the desire to see the project through the eyes of different actors and to understand the project in terms of these actors' understandings and lives.

Given the nature of the data, analysis was largely about making sense of the project through the narratives and perspectives of its main protagonists. Content analysis of themes rather than language form became the chief form of narrative analysis in this study. The translation process would have transformed the language form of the transcripts thus eliminating the possibility of other forms of narrative analysis such as figurative analysis and discourse analysis. A set of fairly typical analytic moves was adopted which included repeated careful readings of the data, deductive and inductive identification of themes and categories of themes, identification of relationships or patterns between categories and then moving such analysis to higher levels of abstraction and theorising (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:460-496). The inductive analysis was based on the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:28-52). The identification of themes and thematic categories in one narrative were constantly compared with such identification in other narratives. It was such constant comparison of themes across learners' and educators' narratives which allowed for the identification of poverty, patriarchy, power struggles and a post-conflict status as the most significant features of the HRDD macro-system, as reflected in the conceptual framework below.
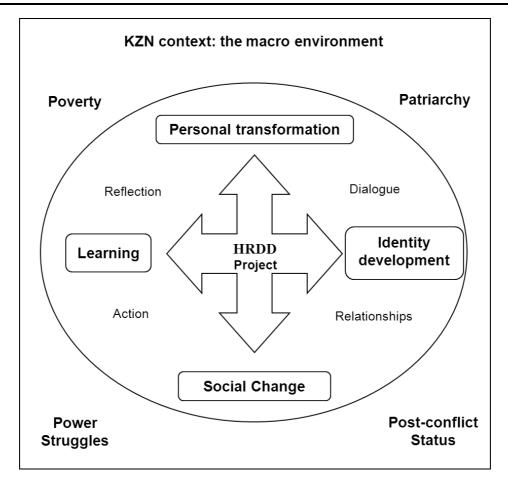
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE HRDD PROJECT

The framework in Figure 1 below presents the four key goals of the HRDD project as established from participatory research with local stakeholders prior to the project's inception and from on-going monitoring and evaluation studies (Centre for Adult Education, 1999). These goals were *learning, identity development, personal development, and social change*. Interspersed amongst these four goals are four pedagogical strategies adopted in the project to advance the project goals, namely, **reflection, dialogue, action, and relationships**. A further component of the framework is the four major forces of the macro-system namely, *poverty, patriarchy, power struggles, and a post-conflict status*. Together, these goals, pedagogical strategies and forces provide a holistic representation of the project based on the multiple perspectives of the project conveyed by project partners, educators, learners and the author as case study researcher. Due to length limitations, this article only provides extensive discussion of the macro-system forces of the framework.

The four project goals in the framework

Project documents such as funding proposals and evaluation reports and in-depth interviews with project partners identified four key project goals, namely, learning, identity development, personal transformation and social change. In Figure 1 these goals are represented in the inner part of the framework, within the circle. The four project goals together reflect the common agenda, ideology and transformative focal points of radical adult education interventions.

Learning   The HRDD project is foremost an adult education intervention which sought to foster learning within rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal. This goal of the framework includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, among different groupings of HRDD actors. This goal also covers different modes of learning such as rational cognitive learning via reflection and dialogue; social learning via practice, action and relationships; affective learning based on engagement with emotions; and learning through and in relationships. Learning is thus a major goal and outcome of the HRDD project and its connections to the pedagogical strategies is evident in the preceding sentence.

FIGURE 1: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Identity development   The HRDD project sought to develop new identities, strengthen some existing identities and transform certain other identities. For example, the recruitment, training and support of a new group of community-based adult educators clearly involved significant identity development work for such educators. Likewise, the attempts to get members of local communities to reflect on their circumstances and to explore social action in the realms of family and community life, also involve strengthening and transforming identities of citizen, woman, leader, etcetera.

Personal transformation   Working mainly with women in resource-poor and vulnerable contexts, the HRDD project attempted to lever various types of cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal change amongst learners and educators. Personal transformation was an explicit goal of the project. Its visions of fostering transformative learning, empowerment and active citizenship relate, in part, to the personal level of HRDD actors.

Social change   The HRDD project was conceived at a particular historic moment in post-apartheid South Africa. It was fashioned to serve as a catalyst for social change within families, communities and the country. The different parts of the project namely, "human rights, democracy and development", reveal the aspects of social change envisioned by the project.

The four-way arrow connecting the goals

With the HRDD project located at the centre of the framework, the four-way arrow at the heart of the framework connects the four goals.

The four-way arrow depicts an interconnected-ness of learning, identity development, personal transformation and social change. Each goal of the framework influences the others in dynamic ways. Learning and identity formation are seen as simultaneous processes which influence each other and which in tandem create energy for personal and social change. Likewise,

personal transformation and social change (or the lack of these) influence learning and identity development. Such dynamic interconnectedness is highlighted by Manicom and Walters (2012:19) when reflecting on perspectives on feminist popular education which see "self- and social transformation … not as temporarily or analytically separate moments but as located within the same frame of praxis, co-implicated and mutually constituting". The four-way arrow represents the type of co-implication and mutuality described by Manicom and Walters amongst the four project goals.

As a heuristic, it is possible to use this framework to depict arrows of varying lengths to reflect the relative strength of the relationships between the different goals. Future studies may thus also harness such heuristic properties of the framework for purposes of evaluation of educational projects and for theorization of such interventions.

The four pedagogical strategies in the framework

Interspersed amongst the four goals and surrounding the four-way arrows are the four pedagogical strategies. Interviews with project partners and examination of project documents such as reports from partners and project proposals convey insights into the theoretical and educational underpinnings of the project. This allowed for the identification of four key pedagogical strategies, namely reflection, dialogue, action, and relationships. These strategies were envisaged as fostering and supporting the realisation of project goals and thus constitute an enabling pedagogical environment within the micro-system of the project.

Reflection   The project placed emphasis on fostering critical reflection on the life circumstances of actors; their roles and potential roles as citizens in a country embracing freedom, democracy and human rights; their positions as women in marginalised contexts; their practices in ABET classes and livelihood projects; and a range of other activities within and outside of the HRDD project. The on-going research activity in the project was also part of an overall design of reflective practices. In these ways, reflection is a pedagogical strategy which mediates the goals of learning, identity formation, and personal and societal change (Mezirow, 1991:99-118). Reflection becomes a source of new meanings, for becoming learners,

educators, active citizens, leaders, assertive women (identity formation), and thus can facilitate change at individual and social levels (Freire, 1970:96-150). Reflection on such change, or the lack of it and/or the need for further change, all provide new material and experiences for further learning and identity development.

Dialogue   The concept of dialogue operates as a pedagogic strategy in similar fashion to reflection. The HRDD project set out to create spaces for dialogue to occur throughout the project and amongst various actors and community groups (Rule, 2004). Some project activities also sought to create dialogue across the boundary of the HRDD project. Dialogue is integral to the four goals in the framework. Dialogue mediates learning and identity formation as actors construct shared and new meanings. Dialogue shapes the becoming of learners, educators and active citizens (Freire, 1970:60-95). Dialogue allows for action to be tested, planned and evaluated and thus mediates personal transformation and social change. Change or the lack of it also foster further dialogue amongst actors.

Action   The HRDD project is an action-oriented project. It sought to develop active learners and educators who would feel confident and able to take action to improve their lives. The project activities were designed to provide safe spaces for people to consider and take both individual and collective action, and thus develop the capacity to take action in the wider world. Action, together with reflection, makes the HRDD a space for learning the art and power of praxis (Freire, 1970:41-44) in order that personal and social change become lifelong endeavours for HRDD actors. People learn and become through acting within the HRDD project and the wider world. The project's goals of human rights, democracy and development provide a social vision and catalyst for action in the project. Action in the HRDD project is seen as being primarily about personal transformation, social change and social justice.

Relationships   Relationships were an important aspect of learning and identity development in the project. Relationships also shape personal and social change. The learning theories of Freire (1970:125), Mezirow (1991:168) and Wenger (1998:125-126) all point to the importance of relationships in the learning environment. Learning is directly related to relationships in families, organizations,

communities and broader societal structures. Learning activities in the HRDD project create new relationships. Relationships also shape identity formation by being tied to learning. The potential and capacity for personal and social change can also be seen to be tightly connected to notions of trust, reciprocity, and the rules which flow from relationships and networks, as discussed in social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986:46-58; Putnam, 1993; John, 2011).

The four macro-system forces

The area immediately outside the HRDD circle represents the macro environment in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The four significant forces operating in the KZN context are poverty, patriarchy, power struggles and its post-conflict status. The four goals are all tightly framed by the KZN context, where these forces simultaneously propel (by virtue of serving as a rationale) and constrain (by virtue of serving as barriers) the project. This latter property endows the framework with dialectic properties in that the forces can have dual, sometimes opposing effects, of being both constraining and catalysing.

A discussion of each of the four macro-system forces follows. To illustrate how these forces emerged in the study selective quotations from learners and educators in the project are offered. While most learners and educators provided several rich and powerful statements about the effects of poverty, patriarchy, power struggles and the post-conflict status of KZN on their lives and participation in the HRDD project, due to article-length limitations only a few illustrative quotations on the different forces are included.

Poverty   The extent to which poverty features in the narratives of learners and educators highlights it as a major force in the HRDD macro-system.

In the case of the learner Zinhle, her promising school career was cut short because of poverty and the way in which her poverty was stigmatized in her school and used as a basis of exclusion. Zinhle's reflections below also show the close links between poverty and education levels of rural women and how disadvantage is reproduced from generation to generation.

During our time each person bought their own book. I was told to leave the class due to not having a book during the lessons. The teacher said I am disturbing other learners because I do not have books. All those things led me to take a decision to leave school so that I can work and fend for myself. Eventually my parents died and I looked after my siblings. I could not support their schooling because I earn little money here in the farm … It was not my parents who said I should leave. I took the decision to leave because I realized I was not learning anything … I was very disturbed during class time because even the other children were laughing at me when they saw me sitting outside during class. They were laughing at me because I did not have anything. I was like a fool because each and every lesson I was sent outside.

Malindi, an educator in the project, echoes these painful memories of poverty and how it affected her schooling:

I wasn't happy at all. I wish I was accepted for who I was. I had no uniform, no books, no shoes, you see? … Teachers had a very bad tendency of looking down upon us just because we were poor. Maybe we were not lucky to have good teachers. If you did not have uniform you would be made to stand in front.

Rural families often become locked in poverty traps that are hard to break out of and thus acquire an intergenerational character. Zinhle and Malindi were marginalised and discriminated because of their family's poverty. Zihle, a woman farmworker, and Malindi, a part-time educator in the HRDD project, were looking to the HRDD project to assist them in trying to break the cycle of poverty in their lives. They both spoke of these motivations for participating in the HRDD project and of wanting their children to have better futures. This is an example of how the forces in the macro-system serve as a propelling force in a project by motivating people to participate. Poverty is, however, also a barrier to participation as is evident when the need to earn better incomes often took learners and educators away from the project.

Patriarchy   Most learners expressed regret about the termination of their own schooling and the cause of their low level of literacy attainment. Learners reported that they enjoyed

school but were often forced to drop out because of a combination of factors such as poverty, gender discrimination and the generally low value placed on education within the family. For the girl child, patriarchal values strongly influenced the amount of schooling which they were allowed. Many of the learners' narratives, like that of Dora's presented below, involve implicit critiques of the patriarchal value systems which led to them being denied an education.

We were staying at my granny's at Mpolweni. My father was drinking one day. When he was drunk he saw little girls of my age playing with the boys. He said his child would do the same and vowed to take us out of school…In the olden days, husbands were the only people who could give a final word, the wives could not argue. He came to school, I was with my younger sister, he took me out of class in standard 6 and my sister in standard 5. We went out of class and stayed at home until today. I'm now keen to attend adult classes because I like to have knowledge even though I'm old.

The case study findings showed that such early experiences of patriarchal power were followed by similar discrimination and subjugation in adult life. Learners' participation in the HRDD project was also controlled by patriarchal values and prejudice as revealed in the following statement from an educator Malindi, who was concerned about how her learner's domestic situation was affecting learning.

… it was affecting me because this person was a learner you see and she would arrive in class and was very quiet. I realised … this person has a problem. Some days she would learn, other days she would battle to learn. Then I asked, "Exactly what is your problem?" She said, "Miss, I have a problem at home. Things are not going right". Then I told her that I used to notice [that she was troubled] but that I ignored it. I asked her why is she not saying anything. She said she can't, she is a woman and she is married. Ja, then I saw that and I was hurt because it was also affecting me to find that, no, this is my sister; I need to help her so that she can live better.

Power struggles   Power struggles between different political parties and systems of governance in local communities are a feature

of the KZN context. This is a force that is often hidden yet extremely powerful and debilitating. In the contest for leadership positions, influence and material rewards, several power struggles emerge and constrain the development arena. Development gains become a bargaining tool and a way of entrenching one's own leadership position.

A learner, Nothando, invokes a powerful image of the futility and reward-less nature of power struggles in her community through the metaphor of animals competing for a meatless bone:

The politicians … Inkatha, ANC, NADECO, they stop whoever brings development in the area because everyone wants to bring development under the umbrella of their organizations. This is what disadvantages us …. There should be no fighting over a "meatless bone" through politics, because it takes us back.

Another learner, Phumzile, is also critical of how political differences affect development and forge division. She argues for solidarity in her community and for identities which transcend political affiliation:

The community must unite and leave politics aside because it is not always needed because the community involves everyone, whether you stay in a particular area, where[ever] you work, but you are needed by the community. The community needs individuals not politics.

Development interventions, whether initiated by the state or civil society rarely play out according to the collaborative, participatory, partnership models envisaged in policy and funding documents. Development in resource-constrained and divided contexts are highly political.

Post-conflict status   The province of KwaZulu-Natal was gripped by devastating political violence during the 1980s and early 1990s (Aitchison, 2003a:47-72; 2003b:73-94). The fact that KwaZulu-Natal now carries the status of a post-conflict context is often forgotten and ignored in development planning. This is another of the hidden forces of the KZN development context. Yet this status and its consequences are an ever-present reality for local communities and development practition-

ers. According to Aitchison (2003a:47) during this war "thousands of people had lost their lives and homes and a deep bitterness had infected the life of the province". Dubbed the "Natal War" this period of violence claimed the lives of approximately 7500 people and left a wake of destruction and trauma (Aitchison, 2003a:47-72; 2003b:73-94; Jeffery, 1997).

A number of learners survived violent experiences as children and adults in both home and community contexts. Political violence has meant that learners have been displaced (sometimes repeatedly). Many lost their meagre possessions through political violence. Such loss, trauma and displacement are features of family history in KwaZulu-Natal as recounted by this learner, Dora:

> I didn't stay even a year in my new place when the political violence started. The people from Sobantu used to attack the people in Sweetwaters. [I] felt unsafe because I am from Sobantu. We decided to relocate to Emkhambathini at Ntembeni just underneath Maqongqo Mountain. My husband was busy working on a site when he was approached by four men. They asked him why we relocated. They said to him that he must not build any further because they will kick all the new residents out. They said we would be the first one to be kicked out. We had bought all the building material at the time. We left everything there and relocated to Howick.

These painful narratives of learners were very similar to those of educators in the project, as revealed in the following statement by Nokthula:

> We stayed in our shack … behind the Stadium… violence erupted. Where I was staying….whenever I went to school there were these boys who were always asking me why I was not coming to them when they were calling me. They accused me of being anti-ANC... One day they decided to necklace me with a car tyre … fortunately there was a person who was my mother's friend…that person saw me….the painful part is that eventually they killed that person. My mother decided that we should leave … since she was about to lose me too.

EFFECT OF MACRO-SYSTEM FORCES ON THE HRDD PROJECT

Experiences of political violence and power struggles in KwaZulu-Natal appear to hold a historical and contemporary significance in learners' and educators' lives. Following massive and enduring deprivations and dislocations caused by colonial and apartheid rule, the period of political violence in the 1980s and 1990s compounded and extended the material, social and psychological vulnerabilities of people in KwaZulu-Natal.

The narratives of learners and educators in the HRDD project are strongly marked by political violence. This historical and contemporary presence of violence in the lives of adult learners and educators highlights the post-conflict character of KZN.

As indicated earlier, the history of the violence is not just a background contextual factor in the lives of educators. The violence, embedded in personal remembrance, is a sad and painful experience which is seen as being critical to who the learners are, what they have in material and educational terms (economic and cultural capital), how they relate to those around them, and in what they can do as citizens and community members. The violence continues to influence their present lives. The violence thus has everyday implications and features in the foreground of the HRDD stage. The stories told by leaners of their violence-wracked lives are significant for understanding their roles, learning and identities within the HRDD project.

Several learners and educators spoke of the absence of trust and solidarity in the communities in which they conduct their HRDD work and of how these conditions hamper their efforts. Many have to contend with ongoing suspicion and fear about their motives and the purpose of their work. Their political allegiances are often questioned and this constrains their development efforts. The political tensions make recruitment and on-going participation of learners a serious challenge. Development planning must be mindful of these highly divided and fearful contexts, as illustrated in the following statement from an educator in the project called Cosmos:

> Our committee is not working … People focus on the politics … because the members of our committees are not of the same party … you find that I come from

A, another from B, another comes from C. So we hate each other. Right here in the committee, so where is progress if we hate each other? We must love each other first, then we can work together. We can't work together if we hate each other … Here, it is mostly politics that divides people. Only politics I see as a stumbling block to development. It is just it. There is no harmony.

Welcome, another educator, was sceptical of the politicians' influence in discouraging learner participation in the project, saying:

Because they [councillors] are the ones who want to come up with everything. They don't want somebody else to come with his own idea. They are the ones who want to come up with everything. If somebody comes up with other things they think he is going to overpower them...
I wish that maybe politics should be put aside for a while in order to carry on with development.

While poverty and patriarchy are better accounted for in the development literature, scant attention is given to how power struggles and the post-conflict status of KwaZulu-Natal act as powerful shapers and inhibiters in the development terrain. Project planners, funders and scholars should pay more attention to these more hidden and more corrosive aspects of the macro-system. This will allow for a better understanding of the socio-political dynamics of the macro-systems within which family, community and organisational life is situated.

The experiences of learners and educators discussed above provide reminders of the layered oppression and marginalization faced by adult learners and educators in the largely rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Such a milieu must be expected to be a well-spring of barriers to participation in education and development initiatives. Learner narratives reveal that the economic, social and educational deprivation experienced by learners in their early years was followed by similar and often worse conditions in adulthood.

CONCLUSION

South Africa requires more attention and resources to be devoted to development initiatives, particularly in rural communities.

Such development planning must not only focus on the development goals and processes. It is critical that attention is also given to understanding the local context and how the socio-political dynamics of such macro-systems are likely to shape development plans. In such exploration of the context, underlying forces such as power struggles and the post-conflict character of an area must be identified alongside other forces. Development interventions attempting important and much needed change can benefit from identifying all significant forces in project planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. Scholars of such work can likewise contribute to the field by including such forces in their conceptual frameworks.

This article presented a conceptual framework which allows for development goals, pedagogical strategies and macro-system forces to be explored in relationship to each other. While the framework was developed from a specific project in the KwaZulu-Natal context, it can serve as a heuristic for other development interventions. In this way the framework may serve as a conceptual device for exploring initiatives aimed at improving livelihoods in rural communities.

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