

**“REASONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS’ WITHDRAWAL
FROM A PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRE IN
THE POLOKWANE DISTRICT”**

by

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This study is dedicated to my wife, Shereen, who has been a powerful motivational force, especially when I fell victim to the withdrawal phenomenon myself.

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ABSTRACT

The Limpopo Education Department, heeding the call of national policies and acts to implement adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes, established several ABET centres, now called Public Adult Learning Centres. In the year 2000, there were 17 such centres in the Polokwane District, but sadly this number dwindled to six in 2001. Mostly this resulted from the withdrawal of adult learners from these centres. This inquiry was conducted in order to establish the reasons for the withdrawal of adult learners at a particular centre in the Polokwane District.

Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who served as information rich cases. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used to collect data. The interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used: categories were constructed by comparing units of data and recurring themes from the data. The following categories served as the findings of this research: their needs were not addressed, classes clashed with traditional events and traditional roles and uncertainty as to whether provider was serious about the classes.

Respondents believed that withdrawals occurred because the need to improve their lives was ignored; they expressed the view that there was a dire need for skills training at the centre. It emerged that the provider did not do a thorough needs analysis. Literacy programmes were offered, but the perceived need was for skills and projects which would develop the learners. Learners were also recruited into the programmes on the understanding that they would later receive skills training. When this did not materialise, some withdrew. Finally, the Limpopo Department of Education closed this centre on a number of occasions without any reason given to the learners. This discouraged the learners, and some withdrew because they viewed learning as a non-important task.

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SECTION 1

BRIEF BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The significant number of closures of public adult learning centres in the Polokwane district of Limpopo province appears to result from withdrawals of adult learners from these centres. This section provides a background to the problem, poses a research question and puts forward a problem statement, together with the aim of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Kerka (1995:1) makes a distinction between the concepts “drop-out” and “stop-out”. Drop-outs, in Kerka's opinion, leave when their goals are realised; whereas stopping-out refers to one or more cycles of attending, withdrawing and returning. In this study the word “withdrawal” is used for both of these phenomena; dropping out refers to permanent withdrawal, and stopping out is a temporary withdrawal.

In the United States of America (the USA), a developed country which has one of the lowest adult illiteracy figures, the causes of adult withdrawal from organised learning have been the focus of many studies. These studies show that researchers in the USA fail to agree on a single main reason for the withdrawal of adult learners from organised learning. Kerka (1995:1) quotes Quigley as saying that attrition is the main reason for withdrawals in the USA with the following statistics. He reports that as many as 60% to 70% of adult withdrawals in state and federal statistics could be attributed to attrition. Further, (1998:2) she cites Quigley, Kambouri and Francis as confirming the fact that attrition (that adult learners will withdraw because they gradually lose interest) is a leading cause of withdrawal. Kaplan and Saltiel (1997:2), on the other hand, and to some extent Knowles (1978:16), hold that adults withdraw

because of the multiple roles that they play. The adult learner might be a grandparent, parent, housewife and, added to that, a learner. If these roles clash it is most likely that the learner role will be sacrificed. Hayes (in Kerka, 1998:2) attributes the withdrawal of large numbers of disadvantaged adult learners, to the fact that they experience a combination of barriers, the implication being that the two respective reasons given above cannot be separated.

In South Africa, a developing country, not much has been done to research the reasons that adult learners withdraw from organised learning, such as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes, when South Africa has one of the highest adult illiteracy figures. Statistics from van Niekerk (1996:2) indicate that 9.4 million adults in South Africa have low levels of initial education (meaning that they have less than nine years of schooling). In addition, The Transitional Development Trust (as cited in Weekly Mail and Guardian, 10 September 1999:10) revealed that some 40% of adults in South Africa are illiterate. These statistics justify that ABET programmes are urgently needed, and that withdrawals from such programmes cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed. There is a dire need to research the reasons for withdrawals from ABET programmes, whenever they occur.

The phenomenon of withdrawals of adult learners from ABET programmes is also prevalent in Limpopo province. A decrease in the number of public adult learning centres in the province is often an indication of the occurrence of withdrawals. According to an official in the ABET Unit of the Limpopo Department of Education, in the year 2000 there were 345 centres. In 2001 this number decreased to 214, and in 2002 the figures have dwindled to 169. Another sign of withdrawals is the concerning fact that, early in the year 2001, 1890 adult learners entered the Level 4 examination as prescribed by the National Qualification Framework (NQF), but at the end of the year only 460 wrote the examination.

That withdrawals occur in this province is of great concern. According to the Executive Summary Report on Poverty and Equality by May and Govender

(1998:2) the then Northern Province is considered one of the poorest of the nine provinces. The reason given for this is that the province comprises a vast number of rural settlements, inherited from the former homelands, Venda, Gazankulu and Lebowa. The October Household Survey by Central Statistical Services (1998:26) further indicates that 45% of the people in the rural areas in the province are unemployed compared to 38% in the country as a whole. It also reports that people who have not received any education at all make up 28% of the population in this province compared to the national figure of 17%. Thus in a province with high unemployment and illiteracy statistics, it is imperative that the phenomenon of the withdrawal of adult learners from ABET programmes, particularly in the rural areas, needs to be investigated, in order to keep these communities out of the "deprivation trap", a term coined by Chambers (1983:112).

According to his theory, the isolation (because of being illiterate) of this community, fuels the trap as it sustains poverty. Services do not reach these communities and they are not in a position to read information of economic value. Furthermore, isolation of this kind leads to physical weakness. The migration of the able-bodied (community members with potential) to urban areas leaves the remaining population physically weakened. Ultimately, isolation leaves the community vulnerable to famine and illness; and increasing powerlessness. If such circumstances prevail in a rural community, it will not share in the South African dream: participation in a model of democracy and transformation.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

My awareness and concern regarding withdrawals at this and other centres in the Polokwane district was raised in 2000 when I was alerted to this phenomenon by a district official. Of the 17 centres running, 16 were situated in rural areas. In 2001, the concern regarding the phenomenon was both justified and intensified, for I was informed by the same district official that the number of centres had dwindled from 17 to 6. What had happened to the learners at the centres which were no longer in operation? Why were they no

longer participating in ABET programmes? The research question can be very simply phrased: "What are the main reasons that adult learners withdraw from a public adult learning centre in the Polokwane district.

1.4 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most often the occurrence of adult withdrawals from ABET programmes is the reason for the closure of a public adult learning centre. The problem to be addressed, then is the perpetuation of withdrawals. Establishing the reasons for this problem necessitates an inquiry of this nature.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to establish the reasons that adult learners withdraw from a particular public adult learning centre in the Polokwane district.

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESSUPPOSITIONS

Prior to this investigation I held certain assumptions. I anticipated that adult learners would not be aware of the significance of the programmes offered at the centre identified in the Polokwane district. In addition, I expected to find that the provider, Limpopo (then Northern Province) Department of Education, had not done a needs analysis as to the needs of the adult learners at this centre. I assumed that most learners would be female. Because of the traditional belief that males are superior in a household, I also assumed that men might feel threatened in a situation where women might discover that their counterparts are not superior in this sphere of life. Furthermore, I expected that there would be continuous temporary withdrawals (stop-outs), because of seasonal events like ploughing (Temo) and harvesting (Puno), which would later lead to permanent withdrawals (drop-outs). I therefore presupposed that these could be the reasons for withdrawals at the particular centre investigated in this study.

1.7 ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH ESSAY

This essay reports on the main reasons why adult learners withdrew from a public adult learning centre in the Polokwane district. This first section focussed on the background and the statement of the problem, as well as the aim of the study and my assumptions and presuppositions. It is followed by the theoretical framework and literature review in section two. Section three presents the design of the field inquiry and the methods of data collection and analysis, while section four deals with the presentation of data. In the final section, the discussion of the findings takes place.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Section one provides an overview of the context of the problem, proposes the problem statement and states the aim of the study. It also reflects on the researcher's assumptions and presuppositions. In section two, the literature review defines the theoretical framework.



SECTION 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to elucidate the research question of this study, the literature review explores the link between Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Rural Development. Next, the reasons that adult learners engage in organised learning are discussed, and this part is followed by a discussion of what educators might do to nurture the initial motivation of adult learners. Lastly, certain possible reasons (which emerged from the literature review) why adult learners withdraw from organised learning, are discussed.

2.2 ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ABET) AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Historically, the majority of South Africans were denied access to free, compulsory and general education. Many people in this country did not have access to that educational foundation necessary for further learning, quality employment opportunities or even full and active economic, social and political participation (Department of Education, 1997:1). Until the mid-1950's education for adults was provided in so called "Night Schools" (Harley, 1996:7). This was followed by ABET-like projects and programmes offered by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's). A new ABET initiative was announced in September 1995 and introduced as "Ithutheng: Ready to Learn Campaign" on 11 February 1996 (Department of Education, 1997:IV). This initiative posed a challenge to providers within the state, civil society and the private sector to offer an integrated programme of education and training which would enable adult learners to make use of prior learning as they acquired qualifications that were nationally recognised and portable. The purpose of the initiative was to enable them to find employment and advancement along meaningful career paths. This was followed by the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training

(Department of Education, 1997:V) which seeks to bring about quality and quantity improvements in the delivery of adult learning.

According to the Policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (Department of Education, 1997: 5), ABET is defined as

the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts.

This definition implies that ABET programmes should aim at redressing the damage wrought by apartheid policies in the sphere of education. These policies often denied a large number of South Africans, especially black South Africans, access to free, compulsory and general education. Redress implies addressing literacy, numeracy and basic education along with training, which in turn would develop the skills of such deprived adult learners. Their development should enable them to participate in the process of transformation currently happening in South Africa. This will have social, economic and political implications for both the targeted group of adult learners as well as the nation at large. These intentions of empowering adult learners by participation in ABET, which in turn would enable them to be involved in social, economic and political processes of this country, would, however, prove futile if adults consistently withdraw from such programmes.

Since 1992 there has been a realisation in South Africa that ABET and development need to be integrated. In the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training (Department of Education, 1997:13) ABET is placed within a development framework. This means that "Adult Basic Education" indicates the educational foundation that is needed by adults who had received little or no schooling during the Apartheid era, to enable them to develop to the extent that they could participate and engage in the economic, social and political transformation of the country. Further on, "Adult Basic Training" indicates the basic training needed for income-generating or occupational skills in order to

improve the living conditions of these adults. Given the above discussion, the implementation of programmes, projects and strategies which could benefit these adults is imperative. In most cases, however, the extremely poor benefit only a little from such interventions intended for rural people. The reason for this is that donors and governments often view the provision of educational services to poor areas and vulnerable people as “having high costs and low payoffs” (Cleaver, 1997:30). Consequently, it is imperative to follow an integrated approach which involves sectors such as Health, Welfare and Finance, together with the business community, towards the implementation of ABET programmes and the development of poor rural areas.

Such an integrated approach should be implemented in rural areas more often, because, according to Cleaver (1997:22), the poorest people on the African continent live in rural areas. In most cases these poor people are, firstly, women whose husbands work elsewhere (for most men in rural areas migrate to affluent rural farms or to urban areas to seek employment) and, secondly, the elderly, the disabled and people in low rainfall areas. In the past, as is also the case in some instances at present, women were frequently denied education simply because they were female. In addition, women were mostly educated and trained to fulfil traditional roles which, in turn, perpetuated their oppression and vulnerability. Because of the above, the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the African National Congress (1994:62) upholds that ABET programmes should give special “attention to women trapped in rural areas”. These women are trapped because of the isolation and vulnerability due to their illiteracy, and this then perpetuates their impoverished conditions. Therefore, the rural poor and, more especially, women need to be engaged in ABET programmes.

One of the six principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the African National Congress (1994:4) is to introduce sustainable development programmes. The question that arises, is how does one attain sustainable development in rural areas? Rogers (1992:122) states that in order to ensure permanent and sustainable development, the “full route to development has to be followed”. This calls for all stages – that is developing critical awareness, and a solid basis of knowledge, skills and understanding as well as engaging in a

programme of social action. He further emphasises the point that education and training of adults (ETA) is central to this route towards sustainable development and cannot be omitted. The ETA process must include attitude formation and change as integral parts. This assertion by Rogers is correct in my opinion because in the South African context ABET could play a pivotal role in developing adults who have had little or no schooling. The implication is that ABET (which should include change and attitude formation) should, for the most part, form an essential step in the process of attaining permanent and sustainable development. In addition, it is generally accepted that the inclusion of ABET, as one of the steps in the route to development, could serve to guide a rural community in the making of informed decisions. If the rural community where the study was conducted could follow the full route to development, they would have some form of control over the looming deprivation trap. Completing the Four Levels of ABET as identified by the National Qualifications Framework (Department of Education, 1997:7), should mean in the first instance that a particular learner would be able to assist in directing development programmes, as well as in making informed decisions within the community.

2.3 REASONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS ENGAGING IN ORGANISED LEARNING

Several studies have been conducted in the USA to research the reasons that adult learners engage in organised learning. Houle (as quoted by Jarvis, 1995:51) and Boshier (in Merriam and Caffarella, 1999:55) indicate that there are different reasons that adults decide to engage in educational programmes. In their research, Kaplan and Saltiel (1997:1) grouped factors which influence the decision by adult learners to participate in organised learning into three categories, namely family, work or personal issues. To begin with, changes in family situations often motivate adults to engage in organised learning. These changes have, for example, to do with the addition or loss of a family member and the impact that the change has on the family's economic viability and possibilities. In other words, the death of a spouse, divorce, disability, unemployment or remarriage account for most of these structural changes in the family.

Furthermore, a desire for education among adults in America is also created by changing occupational pressures.

Downsizing by industries, along with technological advances, force workers to confront limitations in their skills base. Enrolment in a programme of study that offers the opportunity to re-tool is often seen as their solution. The increasing use of educational credentials as a requirement for getting employment often drives adults to engage in organised learning. Moreover, the experience and feeling of stagnation in a career path often leads to the consideration of engaging in education as a solution. Lastly, individual factors that push an adult into education generally relate to role responsibilities and identity issues: adults often define themselves through their responsibilities and commitments. It is widely accepted that they choose their commitments based upon their estimation of their abilities, needs and likelihood of meeting with success. As a result, engagement in organised learning becomes possible for the adult who can see it as both worthwhile and attainable. The above reasons given for adult engagement in education in the USA could, for the most part, also be relevant to the South African situation. Additionally, it could be said that black African adults often engage in education because they were denied free and general education during the apartheid era (Department of Education, 1997:1).

From a second study by Houle (cited in Cross, 1981:82), it emerged that there were three groups of learners who were active in organised learning. The first was goal-oriented: learners who use learning to gain specific objectives, such as dealing with particular family problems. Amongst this group of adult learners, the motive to engage in learning is believed to begin with the identification of a need or interest. The second group was the activity-oriented learners. They participate primarily for the sake of the particular activity itself rather than to develop a skill or to learn subject matter. This group may, for example, engage in education in order to escape loneliness and boredom or to find a life partner. The third group identified by Houle are called the learning-oriented learners. These are adults who engage in learning merely for its own sake. In other words they have a primary need to know and to grow through learning. Most of the reasons given above are general reasons that adults generally participate in organised learning: such

reasons apply to adults who are needing to continue their studies, those in workplaces as well as those who need basic education.

Wedepohl (1988:20) focuses on the reasons that adults in South Africa engage in the first phase of ABET, that is learning how to read and write. Firstly, for the adult, literacy is considered to be a manner in which they can attain valuable information which, in turn, will assist them to become more independent and to have more control over their own affairs. Some quotations from her Cape Town learners on why they wanted to learn, were:

“You don’t want another person to know all your business, but you must ask someone else to write, you don’t always feel free to say what you really want to say” and “A train is standing in front of you but you do not know where it is going to because you cannot read. You have to ask people and they say: Can’t you see, it’s written up there?”

Secondly, literacy can develop their self–confidence over issues which made them feel ignorant and inferior in the past. Being literate, for example, might make them feel confident because they would be in a position to express themselves in writing, they might become somewhat independent and because of the fact that they would then be able to read valuable information.

The answer to the question as to why adult learners engage in organised learning can probably not be answered by any single or simple formula. This is generally the case as most adults have multiple reasons for engaging in education, and their motives differ at different stages and places in life. The next question (after adult learners have decided to engage in organised learning), is what can be done to nurture this initial motivation in order to keep them engaged in education?

2.4 WHAT EDUCATORS OF ADULTS MIGHT DO TO NURTURE THE INITIAL MOTIVATION OF ADULT LEARNERS

It is often assumed, when adults enter organised learning, that they are already interested and motivated enough to carry them through the entire education

process. This initial motivation, however, needs to be nurtured or else it may “die” (Rogers, 1996:87). Therefore, according to Rogers, one of the most important tasks of the teacher of adults would be to strengthen such initial motivation. In addition, they should also be aware of the factors that keep adult learners motivated.

Wlodkowski (1998:134) states that in order to help adults to develop positive attitudes and stay motivated, their educators need to work on how they present subject matter and, also, how they treat adult learners. Regarding the presentation of subject matter, Wlodkowski (1998:139) indicates that any negative conditions that are known about the subject should firstly be eliminated. This means, for example, that conditions such as anxiety about failing or being humiliated should be minimized or eliminated. Next, he states that educators, instead of rushing through learning programmes, should ensure that each adult learner in his class masters a given task before moving to another one. Implying that educators should be aware that some learners might take a great deal more time than others to learn something. The educator should encourage adult learners to believe that they are competent and that, given time, such competence would become apparent. Thirdly, Wlodkowski holds that educators should confront, and redirect in a positive way, negative beliefs and assumptions regarding education. This means that some learners have negative beliefs that support their negative attitudes towards education. One example of such a negative belief among adult learners, as cited by Wlodkowski (1998:143) is “If I make a mistake, I really look bad”. In addition, Rogers (1996:157) states that educators should encourage the “quitter”, a person who believes that “I can’t do it, so I’m not going to try”. On the other hand, he warns against the “joker”, who is often only there to either poke fun or pass time. He suggests that the “joker” should be “quietened”.

Legge (in Stephens, 1974:40) says that sensitivity, humility, integrity and sincerity, as well as enthusiasm, are general helpful characteristics that an educator of adults might reveal in order to promote effective relationships in class. These relationships, in turn, could help to nurture the initial motivation of adult learners. To begin with, sensitivity means that the educator should have patience, show tact and diplomacy, and know as much as possible about his/her learners. The fact

that the educator knows something of an adult learner's background might give the learner some sense of belonging and this might keep him or her motivated. At the same time humility, according to Legge, helps to build relationships. "Humility" means, for example, the patient acceptance of criticism, and tolerance of differences. An educator of adults has to know and acknowledge his/her own limitations and admit where he/she does not have an answer. The fact that the teacher does not know some things, acknowledges this and still continues to teach, might motivate some of the "quitters" (Rogers, 1996:157) amongst adult learners, eventually changing their belief that "I can't do it, so I'm not going to try" to "No one is perfect, but everyone can keep on trying". Humility in the educator, however, should not be faked. It must be real. Further, an educator of adults must have integrity and should be sincere. Integrity implies both the accurate presentation of information as well as unbiased fairness balanced against some form of firmness. It is widely accepted that tension would mount in a class where an adult learner feared criticism from a "hostile" educator, whereas he/she would instead be encouraged to try again if relationships of mutual trust and freedom existed between educator and learner. Finally, the educator should be enthusiastic: generally he/she should display to the learners the conviction that the work they are doing is worthwhile.

Hutton (1992:105) identifies some constraints that generally exist in ABET or literacy programmes in South Africa. Firstly, educators in ABET programmes are generally trained for too brief periods of time. These educators, according to Hutton, are most often trained at workshops that last for only 1 or 2 weeks. In comparison with educators for school-based education who normally study for approximately three years, educators in ABET programmes often seem to lack fundamental training which could help them to properly understand the adult learner. Secondly, for the most part educators of ABET programmes have less than a Standard 10 (Grade 12) qualification. Because of the above limitations, ABET educators might tend to be heavily influenced by their own experience of education. In addition, they might tend to implement the drilling system which, in some way, might be equated with the "banking method" described by Freire (1996:34). The "banking method" views the educator as "Mr/Ms Know All" who

deposits knowledge into learners who are deemed empty vessels. In addition, they might also prefer to teach that which is easy and repetitive.

The above constraints, however, could be addressed by lengthening the training period of educators in ABET programmes to around 2 to 3 years. In other words, it should become a field of specialisation. The lengthening of the training period might ensure that educators of ABET classes could also acquire the skills necessary for addressing relationships with adult learners which, in turn, could help to keep such learners motivated.

2.5 POSSIBLE REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

The existence of various obstacles and barriers to the participation of adult learners in educational programmes eventually results in learners' withdrawal from these programmes. Carp, Peterson and Roelfs (as quoted in Jarvis, 1995:56) and Johnstone (in Merriam and Caffarella, 1999:56) classify barriers into two categories: external or situational barriers; and internal or dispositional barriers. Cross (1981:98) however, groups these barriers under three headings: situational barriers and dispositional barriers, which correlate with those above, and institutional barriers. Situational barriers refer to those barriers that arise from the individual's conditions and circumstances in life. Lack of time arising from the multiple roles of an adult is an example of such a barrier. Such a barrier might be the cause of the withdrawal of rural women who often have to decide between learning, on the one hand, and caring for children, fetching firewood, ploughing and fetching water, which are done on a routine basis on the other. (Refer to figure 2.1 which indicates a normal day in the life of a typical rural woman.)

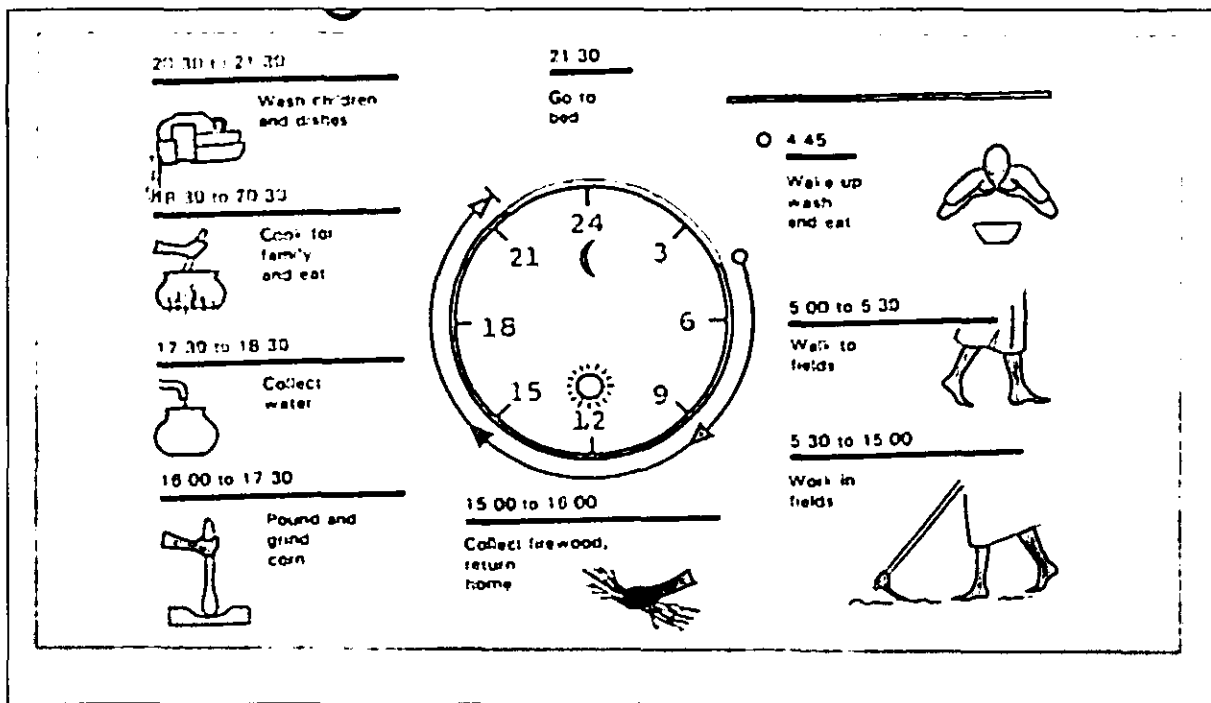


Figure 2.1: A normal working day in the life of a typical rural woman: from Morley and Lovel in Practitioners Training Course for ABET, by UNISA, (1995:97)

Dispositional barriers, according to Cross (1981:98) are those barriers related to attitudes and self-perception as a learner. Feelings such as being tired of participating in organised learning (emerging, for instance, from the fact that the same teaching style and content in learning programmes relate to those experienced during formal schooling), or fear of being too old are some of the obstacles mentioned by Cross under this heading. In the South African context, the fear of humiliation (that is fear that others might laugh at them if they cannot perform a task or does it wrong), as mentioned in the National Education Policy Investigation (National Education Co-ordinating Committee, 1993:20), could also be labelled as a dispositional barrier. For example, simply because in typical rural societies in South Africa males are seen to be superior to females, male learners in some rural areas will feel humiliated if the performance of female learners is better than their own. The task of the tutor would therefore be to show sensitivity in such cases, in order to avoid withdrawals. This implies that lack of sensitivity to culture or customs more often might lead to the withdrawal of adult learners.

The category of institutional barriers consists of all the practices and procedures which discourage and exclude adults from participating in educational programmes. Here the question is whether a particular institution caters for adult learners. To begin with, if the institution for example does not offer what Knowles (1990:121) calls "animal comforts", such as easy access to rest rooms, comfortable chairs and desks, but instead seats adult learners on chairs suitable for primary school learners, withdrawal might be considered as an option. Furthermore, the scheduling of times for educational programmes can be a barrier, as programmes are often offered at unsuitable times, which makes it difficult for adult learners (especially females) to attend. Given the information in figure 2.1, the only suitable time for a rural woman might be after 21h30, but then the safety issue would need to be considered.

Another obstacle which could also be placed under the category of institutional barriers, is the frequent lack of a needs analysis process in the planning of ABET programmes in South Africa. Needs analysis as determined by Vella (1994:3), in her twelve principles for effective adult learning, could be addressed by applying the concept of "WWW" (Vella, 1994:49) when preparing programmes for adult learners. The underlying question of the above abbreviation is "Who needs What as defined by Whom?" This concept implies, firstly, that an ABET programme should determine beforehand the needs of adults attending the programme. In other words, the answer to the question "Who needs What as defined by Whom?" could be that "certain adults" ("Who?") identified the need for "skills training programmes" ("What?"). This need could either have been defined by "themselves" and/or "the provider" ("Whom?"). In a programme that is predetermined by the provider, however, without consultation with the adult learners, the answer to the question might be found in the statement that the adults need a literacy programme as determined and defined by the provider alone. Secondly, the concept implies that in the case of a literacy programme planned for adults, a needs analysis should be done in order to determine whether these particular adults really need literacy education.

A thorough needs analysis is therefore needed in rural areas before ABET programmes are implemented. It must, for instance, be determined whether the

need is for course content in adult and non-formal education, to include practical skills such as agricultural farming (National Education Co-ordinating Committee, 1993:20). Firstly, agricultural training might be helpful in order to modernise agricultural methods used during seasonal events such as ploughing and harvesting. Then a variety of practical skills such as dressmaking, baking, and arts and crafts, where the final products could be sold to generate money, could prove to be more important than mere literacy. Literacy, however, cannot be left out entirely, as it would be futile to generate funds and yet not be able to fill in a bank deposit slip or count the money generated. This illustrates the point that whatever the content of the course, it should be relevant to the needs of the particular adults.

Another point is that as a result of various myths about literacy, adults might initially engage in a programme as prepared by the government (for example), only to find out later that it was not what they were looking for, which will result in their withdrawal from the programme. One of these myths discovered along the way by adults already participating in programmes is that they find that learning to read and write does not automatically secure them a job or change their lives totally (Jenkins in Wedepohl, 1988: 23). In other cases adult learners become impatient and expect to read and write too quickly (Hutton, 1992:23). Thus, many adult learners often leave the literacy programmes they were engaged in because they realise that reading and doing exercises in the book in class does not necessarily enable them to write letters, fill in forms, read the Bible aloud in church, take minutes in a meeting or get a qualification (Hutton, 1992:266).

2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, firstly there needs to be a link between ABET programmes and rural development. Consequently, ABET should form a fundamental part in the process of attaining sustainable development in rural areas. Secondly, it emerged that adult learners engage in organised learning for various reasons. Some of these reasons are that, in general, they turn to organised learning whenever conditions within the family and/or work have changed. In addition, adult learners engage in literacy education in the hope that they would become enabled to read valuable

information, which might save them from possible misery and, consequently, help them to take control over their own lives. It is thus imperative for educators of adults to nurture the initial motivation of adult learners in order to keep them in organised learning programmes. This could, for instance, be done by showing them that they have the ability to learn and that their experiences are important. If they are sufficiently motivated by their educators then the withdrawal phenomenon might be limited and adult learners could be retained in ABET programmes. The next section discusses the design of the field study.



SECTION 3 DESIGN OF FIELD STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework underlying this inquiry was discussed in Section 2. The research problem has been explored and illuminated via the literature review. This section examines the selection of the sample and the data collection methods used in the study. The method of data analysis applied is discussed next, and finally the provision of trustworthiness and the ethical considerations of the study are considered.

3.2 SAMPLING

Sampling involves the selection of a research site, time, people and events (Burger as cited by Merriam, 1998:60). This refers to the selection for research purposes of a part of the whole population relevant to the research problem.

The following background explains the reason that the centre that was investigated, was selected as a site for this inquiry: On the 5 September 2001, I went to the Polokwane district office to scrutinize some of the attendance registers of the public adult learning centres (PALC's) in order to select a research site. While I was busy with this exercise, a female tutor came in and informed the district official that adult learners were not attending classes regularly. According to the tutor, the reasons that some of these learners gave for their non-attendance or withdrawal, were that they were busy with family responsibilities or selling. I asked the tutor to which centre she was attached, at which she mentioned the centre which was later investigated in this study. Examination of the attendance registers, the fact that this centre is situated in a rural setting and taking into account the above information gathered from the tutor, it was decided that this particular centre would be suitable for the study.

Having selected the site, the next step was to select the respondents. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of participants who could give “rich information” (Merriam, 1998:61). This means that participants were selected who could provide information which could be useful in learning more about the issues which are central to the aim and purpose of the study. Le Compte and Preissle (in Merriam, 1998:61) prefer the term “criterion-based selection” to that of “purposive sampling”, for in order to begin this type of sampling, one must first determine which selection criteria are essential in choosing the people and the sites to be studied. The first criterion used to select respondents was to select learners who had recently dropped out, the reasoning being that they would constitute information-rich cases. The second criterion used was to select tutors who had been attached to this centre for more than 3 years, because they knew learners who withdrew from the centre. Thirdly, tutors who had previously been attached to the centre investigated were selected, because they have had information of cases of adult withdrawals. The sample, then, consisted of the following participants:

Sample of:	Number
Learners who had withdrawn from the selected centre	8
Tutors attached to the selected centre for more than 3 years	2
Tutors previously attached to the selected centre	2

Figure 3.1. THE SAMPLE.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In this study semi-structured focus group interviews were used to gather data from the adult learners who withdrew from this centre, as well as tutors who were currently and previously attached to this particular centre. These interviews were audio-taped. The interviews were conducted in Sepedi for the learners and for the tutors a mixture of English and Sepedi was used. An explanation of the meaning of semi-structured focus group interviews, the reasons why this type of interview was chosen as well as a description of how semi-structured interviews were used

to gather information, is given in this section. To begin with, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:65), mentions that focus group interviews can take different forms, that is they could be very structured, semi-structured or very unstructured. As mentioned earlier the focus group interviews with both the adult learners and the tutors were semi-structured (therefore called semi-structured focus group interviews), implying that interview guides were used and that the role of the interviewer was, somewhat, directive. According to Flick (1998:94) an interview guide forms the "core of a semi-structured interview". These guides (refer to figure 3.2(A) and 3.2 (B)) included two questions, which were not used in any particular order. These questions were followed by "probes" (Merriam, 1998:80), comments and questions

<p>INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS HELD AT [.....] CENTRE ON 23/10/2001 AT 14h30</p> <p>1. What are the main reasons why you withdrew from this centre? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possibility of probes: _____</p> <p>2. What could be done to limit these withdrawals? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possibility of probes: _____</p>
--

that follow up something already asked. These comments and questions cannot be predetermined.

Figure 3.2 (A) THE INTERVIEW GUIDE (Used for interviews with adult learners).

<p>INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS HELD AT [.....] CENTRE ON 24/10/2001 AT 10H30</p> <p>1. What according to you are the main reasons for the withdrawal of adult learners from this centre? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Possibility of probes: _____</p> <p>2. What could be done to limit these withdrawals? _____</p> <p>_____</p>
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FIGURE 3.2 (B) THE INTERVIEW GUIDE (Used for interviews with tutors).

Furthermore, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:65) in focus group interviews the role of the interviewer is, more often, somewhat directive, implying that the interviewer should mostly ensure that the interview does not end-up in a talk-show without any focus. The interviewer also need to be somewhat directive in order to avoid some individuals dominating the interview and others not responding. Patton (in Flick, 1998:115) refers to the focus group interview as an interview in which small groups of people share their impressions on a specific topic. Patton (in Flick, 1998: 335-336) further indicates that groups are typically between six and eight respondents who participate in the interview for one and a half hours. As far as the interviews with the adult learners were concerned, both the number (which was eight) and the time frame as specified by Patton could be complied with. As far as the tutors were concerned, however, only 4 tutors were interviewed, but no damage was done to the inquiry, for rich information was still gained.

Semi-structured focus group interviews were thus chosen above other methods of interviewing because it was considered necessary that respondents regulate themselves as they gave their respective views, meaning that the group could, for the most part, be in a position to rule out false statements. Consequently, although researchers like Rubin and Rubin (1995:27) and Flick (2000:130) mention that one of the weaknesses of the focus group interviews is that participants might not reveal all the information, they do agree with Patton (as cited by Flick, 1998:335) that this type of interview is a good method as it provides quality control in data collection. This means that respondents will provide checks and balances to each other, which in turn may rule out extreme and false views.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from audio cassettes were transcribed immediately after the respective interviews. Subsequently, the data were analysed using the "constant comparative method" described by Maykut and Morehouse, (1994:126). This means that recurrent themes were continuously compared and ultimately grouped together to form categories. A more detailed discussion on how this method was applied will follow in the next section.

3.5 PROVISIONS FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness, according to Merriam (1998:88), should be maintained in order to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research, meaning, *inter alia*, that qualitative research should be conducted in an ethical manner. Most qualitative researchers accept the principles of reliability and validity, however, because of the fact that these terms are closely associated with quantitative research, some use other concepts (Neuman, 2000:170). Reliability is, in many cases, replaced by the term consistency, meaning that qualitative researchers would therefore try to be consistent in the description of social life rather than giving reliable measurements. Instead of seeking for validity in the traditional sense qualitative researchers are more interested in authenticity, which implies giving a “fair, honest and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives it everyday” (Neuman, 2000:171). Maykut and Morehouse (1994:145) hold that qualitative studies must be trustworthy for additional reasons, the first of which is to ensure that readers have confidence in the outcome of the study, and that consequently, the extent to which these readers believe the report of the research is positively influenced. Consequently, throughout this study there is an awareness that the credibility of the inquiry relies on the credibility portrayed by the researcher, who is both the “instrument of the data collection and the centre of the analytic process” (Patton, 1990:461).

In order to enhance reliability (consistency) and validity (authenticity) in this study, the researcher’s own assumptions and presuppositions are openly discussed in the initial section of this essay. Furthermore, the researcher aimed at presenting an “audit trail” as outlined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:146). The original data which was audio-taped, the interview transcripts, the unitised data are available to anybody who want to “inspect” the process followed.

Another measure taken to enhance consistency and authenticity of the study is peer examination (Merriam, 1998:204). I requested an official in the ABET unit of the Limpopo Department of Education to look at the findings and inform me whether they are viable.

Internal validity is essential in order for external validity to be realized (Guba and Lincoln as quoted in Merriam, 1998:207). There was an effort in this essay to ensure external validity, which refers to the extent to which the findings of one study could be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998:207). Merriam also discusses the importance of “rich, thick descriptions” and in an effort to be consistent with this, I aimed at providing sufficient description, which will help readers to evaluate whether the findings may be generalised to other similar situations.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants in this study were given the assurance that they were not participating in an interrogation session, and that their names would not be mentioned. In addition to not mentioning the names of respondents, the name of the centre under investigation was also not mentioned. The tutors, on the other hand, had no problem with their names being mentioned in the study, but this was not done as it might have given a clue to some readers and could consequently expose the adult learners who did not want to be named. In addition, there was a continual reminder to both researcher and respondents that the questions were not intended to change their feelings but merely to gather information. In analysing the data and in coming up with the findings of this inquiry it was ensured that no relevant information was deliberately omitted. This is mentioned because opportunities do exist for researchers to exclude relevant data, which may contradict their own views. It should further be noted that participants were not forced to say or do anything against their will.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Section three describes the design of the field study, the sampling and data collection methods, as well as the method employed for the analysis of the data. It also outlines the provisions for trustworthiness and the ethical factors taken into consideration. Section four consists of the presentation of the data collected in the field study.

SECTION 4 PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Section three mentions that the “constant comparative method” described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:126) was used for data analysis. This method involves the construction of categories through the search for recurring patterns in the data (Merriam, 1998:179). In other words, there has been a search for relevant information from the data that was repeated and/or had elements in common. The constant comparative method takes an inductive approach to data analysis (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:126), implying that data which are related to the focus of inquiry, were firstly collected and audio taped, (through interviews with adult learners who withdrew from this centre as well as tutors currently and previously attached to it). Further on, in terms of data analysis, data were not grouped in predetermined categories, but rather information came to be grouped according to the characteristics of the data itself.

In this section, explanations as to how the data from the semi-structured focus group interviews with adult learners were organised, how the various steps were followed during the analysis process, and the categories which emerged from these interviews are given. Then an explanation follows as to how the same steps to analyse the data from the semi-structured focus group interviews with tutors were implemented. Finally, the categories of the two semi-structured focus group interviews are compared in order to come up with final categories which, in turn, form the answers to the research question of this inquiry.

4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH ADULT LEARNERS

This sub-section illustrates how unitisation and categorising were done. It starts with a presentation of the transcript of the interview, followed by the different processes followed in order to organise and analyse the data.

After transcribing the interview, the research question was written on a large sheet of paper labelled "Focus of Inquiry" which was pasted on the wall (figure 4.2).

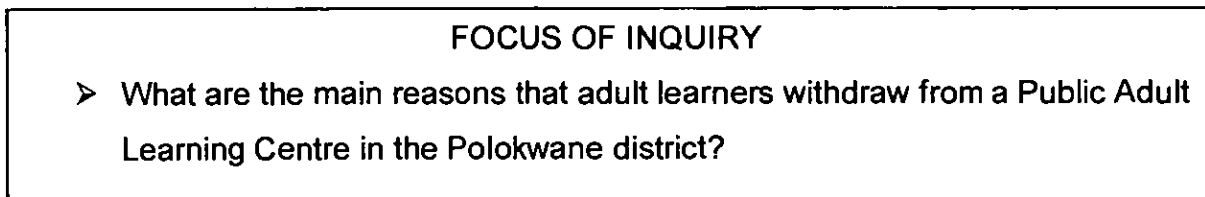


Figure 4.2: Focus of the inquiry.

A second page was labelled "Discovery Sheet" and pasted on the wall next to the one, labelled "Focus of Inquiry". The two sheets ("Discovery Sheet" and "Focus of Inquiry" page), which were later used during the data analysis process, were also pasted on the wall. Now it was possible to organise the data and continue with the constant comparative method of data analysis. Before using the constant comparative method of data analysis, the transcript was coded. This means that each page of the transcript was marked TFG1 up to TFG3 in the top right hand corner. The T in TFG3, for instance refers to the fact that the data are from a transcript, while FG stand for "semi-structured focus group interview" (with adult learners), and the 3 thereafter indicates the page number. Subsequently, the process of preparing the data was taken further by the making of two sets of photocopies of the original transcript. The reason for having two sets of photocopies was in case of mistake-making.

The analysis process began with a reading of the transcript in order that a holistic view of what emerged from the data might be gained. The main ideas were then written on the "Discovery Sheet" (figure 4.3).

DISCOVERY SHEET

Matšatši a fokotšwe/ Reduction of days

Sekolo se tšwalelwa gantšhe/ Classes are suspended a lot of times

Tša diatla/ handwork Need for skills

Go ithuta/ Need for literacy

Figure 4.3: Discovery sheet.

Further on, units of meaning were identified from the copies of the transcript, the process of which is also called unitising (Lincoln and Guba cited in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:128). A unit refers to the smallest piece of information that can stand on its own and yet be meaningful without additional information. It could be a single word, or one or several paragraphs. Each unit identified revealed information relevant to this study. As soon as a unit from the transcript was identified, a line was drawn across the page to separate this particular unit from the next one. TFG1 up to TFG3 was then written in the left margin, in order to indicate where a particular unit was located in the data source. For example on page one TFG1 is written in the left margin and beneath this “RD” which stands for “reduction of days”. The next unit was also marked TFG1 and beneath it “SC” stands for “suspension of classes”. The “need for skills” was annotated “NS” and the “need for literacy”, “NL”. Thereafter, the units of meaning were cut and pasted on 5”× 8” record cards.

Next, units of meaning were compared to provisional categories, which emerged from the main ideas on the discovery sheet, and ultimately fitted into the respective provisional categories. A new category, “Poverty” was created, as this unit did not fit anywhere else. After comparing the category “reduction of days” with the focus of the inquiry, it was changed to “classes clash with multiple roles”. The following provisional categories were the interim result of this process namely: “classes clash with multiple roles”; “need for skills”; “need for literacy”; “suspension of classes” and “poverty”.

The provisional categories were subsequently refined. This was done by writing rules of inclusion to define and give meaning to the data contained under a category. The respective categories were compared with each other, resulting in the emergence of the following four categories: “classes clash with multiple roles”; “the effect of suspension of classes”; the two provisional categories “need for skills” and “need for literacy” were merged into one larger category namely “need for skills and literacy” (in order to develop themselves) and “poverty”.

4.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH TUTORS

A similar process to that described in the previous subsection was followed with this interview. In other words, the transcript was also coded, a holistic view was formed, and semantic units were identified and constantly compared. As a result the following categories emerged after rules of inclusion were determined.

<i>Provisional Category</i>	<i>Rule of inclusion</i>
Cultural Events	Traditional events keep learners from attending
Poverty & Deprivation	These phenomena hamper attendance
Recruitment	Learners are recruited on the basis that they will gain skills or do projects
Unemployment	Learners only attend while looking for a job
Suspension of classes	Abrupt suspension discourages learners
Gambling	“Mo-China” (or “fafi”) is giving them hope of developing
Over-working women	Multiple roles of women keep them from classes
Don't know purpose	Lack of awareness of the purpose of ABET
Skills and projects	Want to learn things which develop them

Figure 4.11: Second provisional category group

4.4 FINAL CATEGORIES

Ultimately, these categories were compared with each other as well as with those which emerged during the analysis of the interviews of adult learners. Three final categories emerged from these rigorous comparisons. These categories had to be refined in order to reflect the purpose of the research; that is, they had to answer the research question of this inquiry.

The first category was that adult learners withdrew from this centre because “their needs were not addressed”. A second category that emerged was labelled “classes clashed with their traditional events and multiple roles”, implying that they withdrew because the times of the classes clashed with some of their traditional events and multiple roles. Finally, a category emerged which was labelled “Doubt whether provider was serious with these classes”, meaning that they withdrew from this centre because the abrupt suspension of classes by the provider resulted in frequent stop-outs, which ultimately led to permanent withdrawals.

4.5 CONCLUSION

A detailed explanation of the analysis (by the process of unitisation) of the data collected, together with the different emphases arising within the adult learner focus group and the tutor focus group was set out in section four. Provisional categories for data from each of the focus groups were itemised, and the final categories arrived at were explained. Section five presents the findings of the field study.

SECTION 5

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the main reasons why adult learners withdrew from a Public Adult Learning Centre (PALC) in the Polokwane district. After the data analysis process was completed, three final categories that reflect the “answers” to the research question emerged from the data. In this section each major category will be discussed, implying that excerpts from the interviews will be quoted and discussed in the light of relevant literature. This discussion will be followed by a conclusion drawn from the findings, as well as proposed recommendations.

5.2 THEIR NEEDS WERE NOT ADDRESSED

It emerged from the field study that adult learners withdrew from this PALC because their needs were not addressed. A need as coined by Knowles (1990:128) and Kaufman and English (1981:8) refers to the gap between where the adult learners are at present or their current development level, and the desired outcome which they want or competencies specified in learning programme. In this study, the implication is that the provider wanted the adult learners to engage in literacy programmes and this did not correlate with the needs of the learners which are to improve themselves. The following excerpts from the interview with adult learners as well as tutors support this statement: “Re nyaka tša di atla. A ke re nyaka go ekhola” (“We want work done by hands in order to improve or develop ourselves”). Apparently this centre did not contribute towards the development of these learners and, as a result, they withdrew. For them development in this case meant that they needed skills training which, in turn, could lead (for example) to income-generation. “Re nyaka tša de atla” (meaning “We want that which is done by hands”) and “A ke re re nyaka go khola” (“Because we want to develop”) are excerpts from the interviews with adult learners (who withdrew from this centre), which substantiate the fact that the adult learners wanted skills training programmes which could have led to their

development. These programmes could have included, amongst others, sewing (“go roka”) and baking (“go baka”). In addition Vella (1994:5) indicates that listening to adult learners’ needs will most often help to shape a programme with immediate usefulness for adults. The implication is that adult learners want to learn what they need in their lives and therefore this must be taught. Meaning that if a particular course does not meet the needs of adult learners they will simply walk out.

It also emerged that some adult learners withdrew from this centre because better opportunities came their way. These opportunities showed more potential to develop the adult learners than the literacy programmes offered at this centre. In addition they frequently stopped-out to go and play “fafi” (“fafi” or “Mochina” is a lottery-like game normally run by the Chinese) , which was believed to offer at least a slight chance of winning the money needed for their development. The fact that only the tutors mentioned this reason for temporary withdrawals, not only illustrates that the adult learners might have had guilty consciences (that gambling “fafi” is wrong), but also that they had sacrificed the literacy programmes for something which could improve their lives.

The second opportunity which came to some of the adult learners, and contributed directly to their permanent withdrawal, was the fact that job opportunities became available. Because the centre did not offer programmes which could lead to income-generation, adult learners who found employment withdrew from the centre in order to work for a salary. The excerpt which supports this is that where a tutor stated that “most of them they do attend while looking for job, when they hear that there’s job opportunities ... they used to drop-out”. One might, in this instance call these adult learners who withdrew goal-oriented learners (Houle in Cross, 1981:82), meaning that they initially engaged in these ABET programmes to gain a specific objective, this being to obtain skill training essential to their development. According to the adult learners and the tutors, however, this objective could not be achieved through literacy programmes alone, and as a result adult learners withdrew from the centre. These adult learners knew what they wanted to learn and why they wanted to learn it, meaning that these learners are dependable (Winburg, 1995:9). Being dependable implies that word could

have been taken when they said they needed skills training. So, because the objective of developing themselves did not seem achievable they withdrew from the centre. Furthermore, the needs of these adult learners could not be addressed because no appropriate needs assessment was done before the centre was started. This means that not much has been done in order to identify, justify and select gaps (or needs as viewed by the adult learners), which in turn had to be closed (Kaufman and English, 1981:8). Evident to this is the fact that adult learners saw skills training (or work done by hands) as the means of closing the gap between their current misery (poverty) and the desired outcome (improving their lives), as opposed to the entirely literacy programmes which this centre offered. With a more appropriate needs assessment it could have been discovered very early that skills training could have been used to pursue or incorporate literacy programmes. Literacy programmes are very essential for these adult learners, however, they identified skills training as priority. As a result when some of them discovered that the centre did not offer skill training, which they viewed as essential for their improvement, they withdrew.

One of many needs assessment methods could have been applied. However, to conduct some of them could be very costly for the provider. One of the simplest and more cost effective way of having assessed the needs of the adult learners at this centre could first of all, have been to get acquainted with the context and secondly to apply Vella's (1994:94) "Who need What as defined by Whom" (WWW) principle of needs assessment.

The adult learners at this centre are predominantly Pedi women, therefore before doing a needs assessment one needed to know some issues that are important to Pedi's. Among these important issues one has to understand, respect and acknowledge the role of the chief as head of the clan. The role of the chief is amongst others that he is responsible for the general welfare of those over whom his office grants him authority (Mönnig, 1988:218). Therefore, the chief had to be consulted and made aware of the needs assessment to be done amongst his people and if it carried his blessing and he viewed it as being in the interest of his people's welfare, the process of needs assessment could have been successful. Another factor which needed to be considered is the role that the "kgoro" could

have played in the needs assessment process. "Kgoro" refers to a dwelling unit in which several families live. The "kgoro" is also a structure upon which the "social, political and jurai" (Mönnig, 1988:218) organization of the community is based. In other words one could say that almost the whole tribal life hinges on the "kgoro". Consequently, the "kgoro" could have been acknowledged in the process of needs assessment in order for it to be successful. Had appropriate needs assessment been done in the case of the centre, which was investigated, the question: "Who needs What as defined by Whom?" could have brought forward the fact that "certain adult learners" (Who?) identified, the need for skills training or "work done by hands" (What?) as defined by themselves and the provider. This implies that the adult learners could have been involved in determining their own needs. As a result the centre could have offered more relevant skills training that could have been viewed as important by the adult learners and they might have been retained in this centre.

One more point is that, when recruitment was done by the provider adult learners were promised that skills training and projects would form the basis of programmes to be offered at this centre. This initial promise was therefore, relevant to what the adult learners deemed to be their need. They engaged in the literacy programmes with the understanding that skills training programmes and projects would follow very soon. When a year passed and skills training programmes and projects were not forthcoming they withdrew. One excerpt from the interview with tutors attached to the centre, which was investigated, reads as follows:

According to me its this thing ... we started mobilising in some villages ... they promised learners projects especially to say that ... our co-ordinators said within ABET there's projects, so they mobilised people with that ... people came in large numbers with that ... they will do projects , but at a stage they learned that things do not materialise as they thought, because they must start by doing a course so that they can learn a lot ... so they can know ... so that they can calculate. We will start with academic then from there ... maybe ... after mastering a number of things like how to write ... how to take records, and after that they will start with skills. The worst part of the story was that at the end of the year there was no tangible sign

of projects. Then starting January the numbers deteriorated, then that's where we faced the problem. We then started ... we did mobilise again and now it will depend on when the department is allocating us the percentage of money for projects.

According to Vella (1994:21) accountability is one of the most important principles of adult learning. This implies that programmes offered to adult learners must be accountable to them. In addition accountability therefore would mean being taught what was promised to be taught. The implication, in this study, is that adult learners were recruited with the understanding that the literacy programmes would be followed by projects or skills training, and as soon as the adult learners discovered that this does not seem to materialize they withdrew.

Kerka (1998:2) suggests that in order to retain adult learners one has to embark on a strong recruitment drive. In addition she indicates that the same energy that is put in for the retention of adult learners should also be invested in the recruitment drive. This implies that recruitment and retention should not be seen as separate entities. However, in this study, it emerged that a strong recruitment drive will more often prove to be useless if it is based on false and unaccountable promises, which are more often made only to lure adult learners. The recruitment drive became useless because very soon adult learners discovered that there was no sincerity in the promises made by the provider, and as a result they withdrew from the centre.

5.3 CLASSES CLASH WITH TRADITIONAL EVENTS AND MULTIPLE ROLES

The second factor which surfaced as causing the withdrawal of adult learners from the centre, was that the classes often clashed with the traditional events and multiple roles which are very important in the lives of adults living in rural areas. Traditional or seasonal events like ploughing and harvesting, for the most part, initially resulted in stop-outs amongst the adult learners who withdrew from the centre. Moreover, these gradual stop-outs later led to permanent dropouts from the centre. The Pedi's distinguish between four seasons which are "Marega"

(Winter: literally meaning the time when things dry up), "Seruthwane" (Spring: literally meaning the time of little warmth), "Selemo" (Summer: literally meaning ploughing season) and "Lehlabula" (Autumn: literally meaning the time of plenty of sweet and tasty things) (Mönnig, 1988:148). The last two seasons are very important in the lives of the Pedi's. The ploughing season ("Selemo") and the season for harvesting and threshing ("Lehlabula") depend largely on the rains, and in good season ploughing ("temo") would be done from October to November and harvesting and threshing ("Puno") would follow from January until April. However, if rains were late, they would plough in February and harvest round about May or June (Mönnig, 1988:148). According to Mönnig (1988:143) ploughing and harvesting is usually done by women, because (in the culture of the Pedi), it is the function and responsibility of women to provide for their families. As a result, if women intend to exclusively attend literacy classes and not plough, then their families might end up facing starvation. As a result, in this study it appeared more sensible for adult learners to frequently stop-out and provide for their families than to be engaged in literacy programmes that does not seem to benefit them "Re a mašemong. Re hlagola mabele pele a e hwa" ("we go to the ploughing fields, and we hoe the weed between the mealies before they die") and "go tlo tla nako ya go buna. Ge o sa bune ka pela pula e senya mabele" (there will come a time to harvest. If you do not harvest quickly the rain will destroy the mealies), are excerpts from the interviews which support the fact that these events were more often viewed as more important than literacy classes. As a result, where these events clashed with the literacy classes, frequent temporary withdrawals occurred which later led to permanent withdrawals by adult learners.

In addition, rural women have multiple roles to play, and being a learner is only one of them. Where the classes clashed with these roles the role of learner was sacrificed. Rogers (1992:43) indicates that adult education is a secondary activity, meaning that if there were other tasks to be relegated in order to have enough time to do other things which are imperative, the literacy programmes would be the first. In addition Merriam and Caffarella (as cited by Gravett, 1997:7), Dirkx and Prenger (1997:2) and Edwards (1993:17) state that adult learners are already occupied with other responsibilities, and if pressed by time dropping some of the responsibilities would be guided by the merit of each of these responsibilities. The

multiple roles played by the adult learners who withdrew from this centre are, amongst others, "re ya mašemong" ("we go to the ploughing fields"), "Ge bana ba boya sekolong ra ba apeela" ("when the children come from school we cook for them"), "re boyele re ye ma kgonyeng" ("and then we fetch fire wood"). Added to this, information was gained from the tutors about the role of the "water crisis". This refers to the fact that water taps in the area opened at twelve o'clock and closed at six in the evening. These factors illustrate that some of these multiple roles often clashed with the literacy classes and thus ultimately contributed towards adult learners' withdrawal. The fact that these adult learners requested that the days on which these literacy classes were offered be reduced "Be re re matšatši a fokotšwe, a be a mararo goba a mabedi" (we were requesting that the days be reduced, to three or two days), further indicate that these adult learners more often would have wanted to attend these literacy classes but were pressed by time which was spend on other responsibilities. Section 2 (figure 2.1) includes a sketch illustrating a normal working day in the life of typical rural woman, an example which, in general, is similar to the working days of these adult learners.

Where similarities were seen in the example of a rural woman's normal working day, as depicted by Morley (UNISA, 1995:82) and the adults at this centre, it implied that these learners decided to collect fire wood and water, instead of coming to literacy classes. The clashes between the literacy classes on the one side and the traditional events and multiple responsibilities of the adult learners on the other could be attributed to the fact that no appropriate planning has been done.

According to Vella (1994:23) in order to plan course design one needs to use the "simple Seven Steps of Planning", which include the answers to the following questions: "Who, Why, When, Where, What for, What and How?" Asking the first question: "who?" actually requests one to know who these learners are. In addition, by asking this question first implies that one starts with the learners as subjects of this learning process. The answer to the question, for instance, in this study could have been that these are rural Pedi women. From this answer a brief study could have been done on expected responsibilities of these women in the lives of their families and community. "Why?" would have referred to the problem

that calls for this course, in other words why is a literacy programme essential and how could this be incorporated into the adult learners' need for skills training, while "When?" and "Where" might have implied agreeing at a suitable time and place for this specific group of adult learners. In addition "What?" could have called for the content of the course and "How?" might have referred to the learning programmes. The fact that these adult learners experienced clashes between time for their other responsibilities and time of the classes suggests that these learners were not involved in the decision to determine the times and days on which these classes should be offered. The implication is that if these seven steps as indicated by Vella (1994:23) were followed the number of days and the times of the classes would have been mutually agreed upon prior to opening the centre. However, the responses by the adult learners who participated in this inquiry suggests that no appropriate planning was done, and if at all it was attempted the planning session did not include the adult learners. Added to this, when the request by the adult learners to have a reduction of days for these literacy classes so that they could cope with their other multiple responsibilities was not heard, they withdrew.

5.4 UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER THE PROVIDER WAS SERIOUS ABOUT THE CLASSES

The last reason for adult learners withdrawing from this PALC, was because classes were often suspended by the provider, meaning that the classes were stopped (for an indefinite period) without any prior notification. This initially caused great disappointment as well as doubt amongst these learners as to whether the classes were considered important by the provider.

The provider of the ABET classes was the Limpopo Department of Education. The Department was said to have closed this and other centres at random. Although the reasons for the closure of the ABET centres might have been valid and justifiable by the Department, note should be taken that it discouraged the adult learners. The disappointment caused by the abrupt suspensions was mentioned by both the adult learners and the tutors. One adult learner said that:

"Le gona sekolo se sa rena se tswalelwa ga ntshwe, gaye re tsware gabotse" ("And our school closes regularly and this disappoints us"), while

another adult learner said : “Deklase de se stope” (The classes should not be stopped).

The implication here is that the adult learners would like the suspension of classes stopped; their discouragement and disappointment will otherwise result in withdrawals. One of the tutors also mentioned that the number of learners at the centre, which was investigated had already gone down because of the suspension of classes.

“One other thing e dereleng gore [.....] may be numbers tša yona dee fase, ke taba yela ya de klase ba disuspendile. So ... and thereafter ke ge ba mmušo bare e mang nyana ... ge bare e mang nyana gora gore batho bale a ba sa kwišiša gore ke tsa nnete go ba bjang ... ke mo go be le eng destroy gona (“One other thing which caused a drop in numbers at [.....] was the suspension of classes ... thereafter, the government said let’s put a hold on these classes ... when they said let’s put a hold, it meant that those people no longer knew whether these are real things or what ... that is where the destruction came”).

Vella (1994:21) mentions that when adult learners are deeply engaged in a learning programme, it is often difficult to “extricate” them from the pleasure of this learning process. In this instance, it implies that adult learners that were invited into learning programmes and at a later stage they might have been deeply involved in it. However, if adult learners are just about to experience this deep involvement in a learning programme and classes are abruptly suspended it would then be very difficult to convince them to re-engage in learning programme again. This means that the literacy programmes intended by the Limpopo Department of Education should have been consistent and continuous in order to ensure that these adult learners could be retained.

Knowles (1990:100) states that “no educational institution teaches just through its courses, workshops and institutes.” This means that the Limpopo Department of Education, in their actions of abruptly closing this centre, was teaching adult learners that it is acceptable for them to abruptly stop participating in learning programmes. Such a situation creates an environment that will inhibit learning.

Examples, in support of the fact that an institution also teaches through its actions, are given by Knowles (1990:100):

If a young executive is being taught in his corporation's management-development program to involve his subordinates in decision-making within his department, but his own superiors never involve him in making decisions which management practice is he likely to adopt.

If an adult church member is being taught to "love thy neighbour", but the total church life is characterized by discrimination, jealousy, and intolerance, which value is likely to be learned.

The above quotations imply that the educational institution or provider more often teaches through everything it does. More often it teaches opposite lessons in their organizational operation from what they intend to teach in their educational programmes. This means that the educational institution must for the better part serve as a role model for those it is supposed to influence (Knowles, 1978:102). In the case of this inquiry adult learners are expected to engage in a literacy programme not to withdraw. The Limpopo Department of Education, however, abruptly suspends classes. The question to be addressed is whether these learners were learning how to read and write or whether they were gradually being taught that the classes were not serious. Evident from the data is the response: "Ga sa tšeba go re ke tša nnete naa" (I do not know whether these things are serious or real). Therefore, if something does not seem serious to an adult learner he/she would most certainly withdraw. In addition, a good and continuous institutional climate in which self-improvement is highly approved and encouraged is likely to increase the adult learners' motivation to engage in learning activities (Knowles, 1978:122). However, in this study the abrupt suspension of classes by the provider decreased motivation amongst adult learners and resulted in them being disappointed, discouraged, having doubt, stopping-out and ultimately withdrawing from the learning activities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this report, the reasons for adult learners' withdrawal at a particular Public Adult Learning Centre in the Polokwane District was researched. Respondents mentioned that withdrawals mainly occurred because of the fact that the need to improve their lives was not met. They had a dire need for skills training. Further on, it emerged that the provider (Limpopo Department of Education) did not do a thorough needs analysis. Literacy programmes were offered whereas adult learners had need for skills and projects. Learners were also recruited into the programmes with the understanding that they would get skills training, and when skills training was not offered some withdrew. Lastly, The Limpopo Department of Education suspended classes without any reasons given to adult learners. This discouraged the learners and some withdrew because they viewed learning as a less serious task.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is acknowledged that this inquiry was conducted in only one centre and that the situation might differ from centre to centre, the following recommendations might be useful to other centres in other rural areas.

- Needs assessment should precede all ABET training programmes. This will ensure that most learners will be offered programmes that would benefit them. A vigorous awareness drive should go hand in hand with this needs analysis. Learners should know from the start how they could benefit from the programmes. Needs assessment would also mean that programmes are based on negotiated dates and times, so that the cultural events important to, and other roles to be filled by, learners would be taken into consideration.
- Because rural communities are deprived and, in most cases, poor, it should be ensured that programmes lead to growth, income-generation and development.

- Teachers of adult learners should be properly trained. A Primary Teaching Diploma (PTD) for instance, is not sufficient to teach adults. The word Primary (in PTD) indicates that these teachers have only been trained in understanding the dynamics of primary level learners, and not necessarily gained any training in the teaching dynamics relevant to adult learners. According to Knowles' (1978:120) "process model" the implication could be that the teacher of adult learners more often need training in handling the following: how to establish the correct climate for adult learning; applying mechanisms for mutual planning; assessing the needs for adult learning; setting programme objectives for satisfying the need for adult learning; creating a pattern of learning experiences; applying suitable techniques and material and at the end assessing the learning outcomes.

- Lastly, it is strongly recommended that an investigation of the same magnitude as the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) into the reasons for adult learners' withdrawals from ABET programmes be conducted, as a matter of urgency. All the well-developed policies for Adult Basic Education and Training will otherwise prove futile if there are no adult learners to attend ABET programmes.

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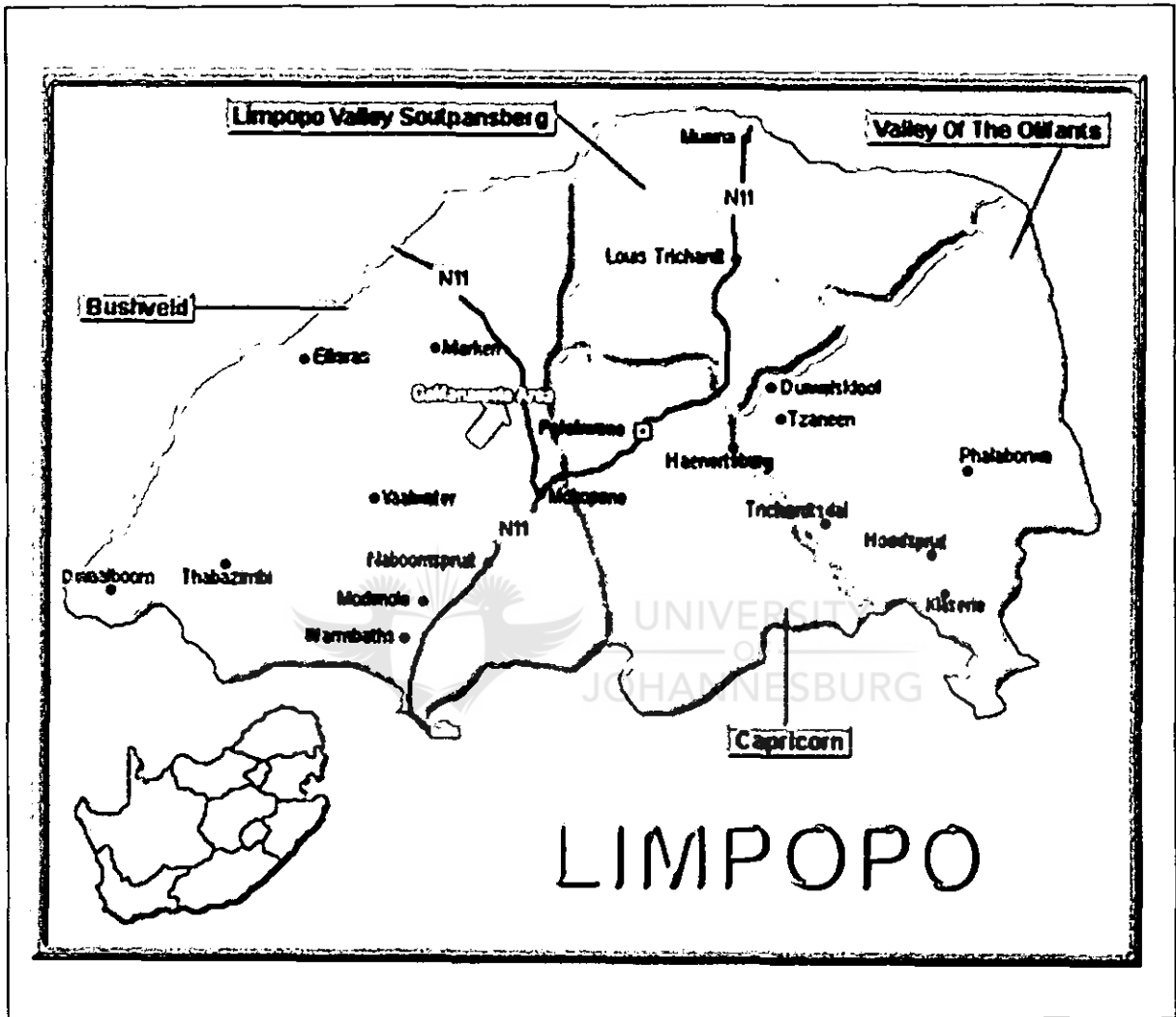
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APPENDIX 1

MAP OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE



The public adult learning centre selected for this study is situated in the GaManamela area of Limpopo province.

APPENDIX 2

2.1

TRANSCRIPT :	TFG 1
<u>SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH</u>	
<u>ADULT LEARNERS FROM THE CENTRE.</u>	
<u>DATE: 2001-10-23.</u>	
I = INTERVIEWER	
R= RESPONDENTS (8 IN TOTAL)	

I: Are thomeng ka thapelo. (Opening prayer by one of the facilitators)

I: Thobela bomme, lehono re na le Mr. Stander, o atlang go nyakisiša gore ke ka baka la eng le gogela morago mo Kgwaredi. Ka mantswe a mangwe re Kgopela gore a le gatiše.

Pause

I: Le bona e ka ba lebaka le legolo e ka ba e le eng? Are boleleng taba ye. E tla thuša lena, e tla thuša rena ka mo. Ba re rometše gore re tle re hwetše mabaka mo go lena gore naa bothatha bjo bogolo e ka ba eng. Le tswenywa ke tshetele goba bakgalabje ba gana kwa gae naa? Gobane ke bona le le bakgekholo fela.

Pause

R(1) Be re re matšatši a fokotšwe, a be a mararo goba a mabedi. Gobane re a de kgonyeng, re ya mašemong, ge bana ba boya sekolong ra ba apeela, re boyele re ye ma kgonyeng.

I: (Translation) Reduction of days, instead of four let's have three.
Re a leboga mma.

R(2) Nna ke bona ye ya go fokotša matšatši. Le gona sekolo se sa rena se tswalelwa gantšhi, ga ye re sware gabotse.

I: Suspension of classes, ABET classes, causes a disappointing thing ... you see ... to them. They become disappointed and discouraged. So, the main concern they have is for these classes to continue. These classes, levels must be continuous. Le bona ba nyama. Just abrupt suspension causes learners to be discouraged. I'll stop it.

R(3) Nna be ke kgopela gore matšatši a fokotšwe.

I: Ge matšatši a fokotšwa mereko o ka se fele. Maybe, re lebelle nako.

R(4) Deklase de se stope?

R(5) A re oketšeng nako. Nako ke ye nnyane.

I: Aa gona ba badulang kgole?

R(6) Aowa.

I: Naa bjale taba ya kua gae ... Bakgalabje ga ba gane, goba bana a ba le botšise gore ke ka baka la eng le tsena sekolo?

R(5) Mo bakgalajweng. Re a kwana. Ba tšiba gore re ya sekolong.

I: O re mothlomong le rena ka mmušo ... Mmušo ba tšea dilo ba di lahlela mo go lena. Ka mo le boneng, dilo tše le ithutang tšona di tsamaya tsela etee le se le di naganang, se be gona. Ke gore di thuto le di swereng mo le bona nka re di swanetše di išwe pele goba di tšhentšwe? Dilo tse le ithutang mo di a le khola naa?

R(2) Re nyaka tša diatla. A ke re re nyaka go ikhola.

I: Tša go swana le eng?

R(8) A ke re tša go roka.

I: They want skills rather than what they're doing. They want something they can do. Ge le re matšatši a fokotšwe ...

R(1) Re ya dikgonyeng, gona bjale dipula di etla, re ya mašemong. Ene ... Re hlagola mabele a pele a e hwa. Ene ... go tlo tla nako ya go buna. Ene ... geo sa bune ka pela, pula e senya mabele.

I: Ke a leboga mma. Taba ye nngwe ka laboraro ka tša dikereke.

R Ee.

I: Se sengwe kwa Seshego se ke se bonang ke ge re tšhaisa bošego, bašemane ba kitimiša basadi ... "either" ba ba swara poo "or" ba ba reipa. A e hlage mo?

R(8) Aowa. Ke ditaba tša kwa toropong tšseuwe.

I: Se sengwe e ka ba eng, gore le ikgogele morago?

R(6) Ee, Ge re sa homane tša matsogo, gobane re nyaka go ikhula.
Re tsofetše, bana ba nyaka go tsena sekolo.

R(8) Ga re bereke, ke nto ye ke gatalelang gore re e dire. Re nyaka go roka le go paka.

R(4) Go paka, go na le "problem" gobane meetse a felela.

R(5) Nna ke bona gore ke nyaka go ithuta. Ge o sa kgone go bala o tlo dira di-measurement bjang. Diselipi kwa pankeng o tlo di tlatša bjang?

I: Re a leboga bomme.

To the facilitators: Lena le di bona bjang?

R(F) Nna kebona gore gonyakega tša di atla. "Problem" ke bodidi mo.

I: A ke tsebe gore go sa na le se sengwe. Re ka se bolawe ke phefo ka mo go.

Pause.

Re a leleboga gobane ge letlile mo le kwa phefo. A re fetšeng di taba tša rena ka thapelo.

Closing Prayer.

APPENDIX 2

2.2

TRANSCRIPT :	TTFG 1
SEMI-STRUCTURED FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH	
ADULT LEARNERS FROM THE CENTRE.	
DATE: 2001-10-24.	
A. TUTORS CURRENTLY ATTACHED TO THE CENTRE: R 1, R 2.	
B. TUTORS PREVIOUSLY ATTACHED TO THE CENTRE: R 3, R 4.	
I = INTERVIEWER	
R= RESPONDENTS	

I: "The tutors from [.....] ... What according to you are the main reasons for drop-outs?"

R1 "Ere ... According to me ere ... its this thing ere we started mobilising in some villages ere they promised learners projects especially to say that ere our co-ordinators said within the ABET there's projects, so they mobilised people with that ... people came in large numbers with that ... they will do projects, but at a later stage they learned that things do not materialise as they thought, because they must start by doing a course so that they can learn a lot ... so that they can know ... so that they can calculate. We will start with academic then from there ... maybe ... after mastering a number of things, like how to write ... how to take records, and after that they will start with skills. The worst part of the story was that, at the end of the year there was no tangible design in sign of projects. The starting January the numbers deteriorated, then that's where we faced the problem. We then started ... we did mobilise again and now it will depend on when the department is allocating us the percentage money for projects. One other thing ... doing something like fundraising ere fundraising proposal because the question of time. One other problem is of most people in rural areas are ... facing problem of ere they running short of jobs. So, most of them they do attend while looking for job, at times when they failed they come back. So, that is where ... our ere. Another thing is males, Males don't attend ABET..."

- R1 "... Schools, but in most cases, I try to ... to, to get ... the reason why. They got the inferiority complex. They are not interested in doing that. Males usually think that they are masters, so, they don't feel alright attending schools with ere adults which are their grannys and mothers. So, that's where I think they don't attend school"
- I "Ere, as I understand you they have got a problem. Maybe at home, let us say the husband and wife must go to ABET school. Now, he is got a problem. In the house he is the boss and kua sekolong a kgone one plus one."
- R2 "So ...ere ... the partner she is going to learn that the boss is not a master as he used to say. And not forgetting problems of the cultural side. The ere ... at times, especially during ere rainy seasons they don't attend any lesson, but even the figures will drop a lot and even the academic side ... ere ... there is no progress. At times we judge ... they could do much with projects, any maybe, sustain a bit ... (not clear). At the village called [.....] area where the centre is they got a water crisis, whereby Thursdays the ere lessons does not go well because they ere open water taps around twelve o'clock ... around six p.m., six in the evening. So, they will collect water maybe in drums in ere quite ere problem. So, we start to suspend classes or not to attend, and use rather another day. We have a problem whether it is Friday or Saturday. If it is Friday, people have a problem with funeral things ... and they can't attend ... our partners ... we don't know."
- I "Lena le bona bjang?"
- R2 "Ke gore thokong tša matsogo bona ba nyaka ge be re ka dire tša matsogo gore ba kgone go ekhula. Ene ... se sengwe ke lebetše go roka. Ke gore ba nyaka go roka, ge ba ka re thuša ka motšhene."
- R4 "Ga nšhi ke ba ... especially di ... projects. Re ba ... focussed. (not clear)."
- I "Now, in comparison with [.....] which is a rural centre"
- R4 "Before that ere e re ke oketšenyana."

- I "Alright, alright gae tšowenye."
- R4 "One other thing, e dirileng gore [.....] may be numbers tša yona diye fase, ke taba yela ya diklase ba di-suspendile. So, ... and thereafter, ke ge ba mmušo ba re emangnyana, le a bona ... ge ba re emangnyana go ra gore batho bale a ba sa kwišiša gore ke tša nnete go ba bjang, le a bona ke mo go bileng destroy gona. One other ke recruitment. Ke kwišiša gore ge re recruta re le mo gae re le banna ba mo gae ... that may be to come to our villages and help us in recruiting. Those people would understand them ere they may come in larger numbers."
- I "So, in other words there must be a strong recruitment drive, which is also spearheaded by the department. How about for this recruitment drive ... do they sometimes use the radio. Do have ant knowledge whether ... they use the radio to promote ABET classes?"
- R1 "Ja ... we tried it once together with Mr. Mojalefa, but ere ... they don't listen to the radio. Maybe some of them are ... they ere ... shepherds. They go and collect their cows ... they go on their daily outings. So, I ... I (not clear)."
- I "Now [.....] as you said its cultural, traditional its rural, but ere now in terms of ... is there not a chief. There's a kgoši."
- R1 "Ja."
- PAUSE
- I "Ja. ... I was ... this ... thinking, I know a little bit of the rural areas, so in your mind were they consulted, or was this been done through them ... is it not another way how we can do ... or the recruitment drive can be done."
- R1 "I may say ere. We've done it through the indunas, then ere there's where they do ... they come in large numbers, then only after that they dropped. Now, I don't know maybe we can try it again but we ... try to (not clear). Usually, attend gatherings ... forcing them to go there (not clear). Later, when they come ere. The main problem I think is awareness, they must be aware, how important is their awareness of the issue."

- R4 "To solve that problem of drop-outs ... because our chiefs are co-operating. Ge re ka bolela le bona ra kgopela ba mmušo gore ba kopane ere a re ka re ka gare ga beke le kgoši, tša rena ba botše setšhaba ba ba fa date ya go etela and then the people ge ba ka kwišiša gore go tla ba mmušo ... ba ka tla in large. (not clear). Because there's something that may cause problems in our areas ... Mo-China. There's Mo-China ... something called Mo-China. Batho gona bjale ba re baya Mo-Chineng. Go na le kgonagalo ya gore Mo-China o ka ba khula. Gobane e ke tšebe gore ke Mo-China or Fafi"
- I "Ya go bapala dinomoro ... tša dead man ... wa wina."
- R4 "Gantšhi o tla ka bo-4, ke nako ya diklase go ra gore those people ga ba šome ba e tše ya gore ge ba petšhitše Mo-China ke mo ba ka khulega fela. So, the department eswanetše e dire something, go lemoša batho ..."
- I "Bjale ga re ekweng tša mo urban centre ... [.....] centre. What are the main reasons for drop-outs?"
- R3 "The main reason for drop-outs is that when employers, is moving from Pietersburg to cape Town ... to Cape Town ... is the main reason because the learner ... ke gore morutwana mo toropong o tlile toropong ka go bereka ... a ke re u dula kae ... o dula Mmamabolo and then makgoa a gagwe a huduga a huduga Cape Town a ka se tle sekolong. Bothata ba gaggwe e tlo ba ... travelling ene then engwe ke gore ... ke gore e no ba bowe gore makgoa ... motho a sa le bisi to-six. O homana e ba fa problem. Problem ya di-employees ... employers."
- I "They must also become aware of ... gore gohlaga eng."
- R3 "Ye nngwe ... mara ase drop-out. Mokgalabje o mongwe o re laetše a re: le s'ka bona nkare a ke sa bonagala ... o tla homana ke bereka di-country."
- I "Ye ba e bitša stop-out."
- R3 "Mara ... ye ba tsamayang ba mova gantšhe. Ke mosadi o mo tee."
- I "Ggona problem ya safety?"

- R3 "Ba tsena ka-4."
- I "Ba tšhaišša ka nako mang?"
- R3 "Ka6. Go na le mosadi yo mongwe, maloba onkgopetše gore a tsamaye ka pela ... ke gore o tsamaya le ba bangwe ge ba tla kwa pele yena o sa tšwelapele, a nkgopela gore a tsamaye ka pela."
- I "That's where we differ with the rural centres. Ere, engwe from the urban areas ... did the government ever call you to say ... this is the type of work that you are going to do ... were you consulted? Or you just got them and you had to implement them. Le a nkwišiša."
- R3 "Le ra ba re file dissilabas?"
- I "A ke re ... the programme ... let's say literacy programme ere was there a circular given ene saying how we want to do it ... can you add or subtract ... were you consulted?"
- R1 "Actually, ere the ere what did we, we did is ere we always, ere we always may be the ... the teacher or tutors or the ... let's say ourselves. We just may be ere mobilise after the mobilising we got the partner for ... for ere learners (not clear). Then when we gathered a certain number we go to the co-ordinator then and from there they will grant you a post, one ... one tutor for 25 learners. But there was nothing like a contract or something like even our job description. There's no explanation ene what do we, what ere at which level must ere stop ere like boundaries ere ... contract."
- R3 "Ene then go swana le ere le ... le dibuka, go swana le ma-level 1 re ... re no ithomela ... se swanela ... a ke re gantšhi ma-level 1 re rutha Sepedi re ba rutha go ngwala. Ke gore wena o swanetše o stragele o bone gore o nyake material, o nyake material go ba rutha."
- R1 "Like I have ere I got (referring to a book) from a certain man. I am going to ... to duplicate it ... So, there is no relevant material. But we just look at the situation ja ere, thinking level ... a number of things out of what we can determine the type of lesson. So, there's ere proper, you know material, we can use. We are not provided with material ... only I think ... Where I think ... things do run smooth is only in the level 4, whereby we do know that we use Grade 8 and Grade 9 syllabi. So, there ...

- R1 "... we are a bit sure, though we use our own material that ... but for level 3,2 going down to 1 ... There we struggle. There we use our own discretion to decide ... of what to do and what not to do ere. In level 1 there ere, the tutor ... if the tutor is not creative enough or the tutor does not ... did not do something like SPD it's very hard ... or PTD."
- R4 "The department be ba šwanetše ba direle unit standard. Mo unit standard ke mo ba hlalolang di-programme or so ... ene go ya kae, go fetla kae. Ke lemogile gore e ba bothatha ge ba ngwala test (not clear). Mo barutiši ba no ngana mo klaseng ... ha gone go kawara that scope ... e bile gabotse ga tsebe gore ba lokiša in time ... the. One other time ba swanetše gore ba e lebelele gore ba kwišiše ... Ke gore our learners attend for a limited time. So, when setting examination, you must consult with the tutors ... so that ... is the only problem that I see."
- R1 "And ere ... according to me the very same problem of ere material ere materials, I think as times goes on in future might cause drop-out. Most people do believe ... do think that the, if they better learners is the one who used to pass test or examination they don't think that they are bad ones. So depend on them ... (not clear). If those people they happen to fail that might create a fear in their brains ... ere. They might say, if so and so fails then what about us. We are going to fail. We are useless we better leave ere, there's no way they're going to pass our ... Our level or ere and I think this might cause a very serious problem. It might determine or deteriorate the figures ... Cause a lot of problems."
- I "Are there any other ere in general ... any reasons ... for them dropping out? Have we missed something?"
- R4 "Nna e lengwe ... Nkile ka bona. Mosadi o mongwe o bereka gana mo toropong then, ngwana wa gagwe a hlokofala as no belegwa. Then yaba taba ya gore o tšea ngwana o la kua gae a tle a mo hlokomele. Then ere ke yona ya go dira gore e emenyana ... ka gore o godiša ngwana o la. A ke re ka mo o a bereka and ka moo accomodatele le ngwana o la wa gagwe. Mara, o tlile sekolong a re laela ... gore o tlo boya ka morago ga nako. Ke kwišiša gore o tlo boya ka morago ga le baka ... Ngwana o la."
- R1 "Ntoe ye nngwe ke – povert, ere."

PAUSE

- I "You cannot go to class while you are hungry."

- R1 "Ja ... You don't even know where ere the next day ... you are going to see. Then, you only get academic ... then nothing that you can get while doing writing or making that ... without getting something at the end of the day, at the end of the month ... There's no progress."
- R4 "Another problem is over working of women, of women they're working ... the rural women have a very big load of work. Ba thoma gobereka ka bo-5 go fetlela ba robala. So, mešumo ka bontše bagona ... ke bona e ba paletšang ... ba lapa."
- I "May be [R4], can you take me through may be a normal day what you see as ... Ba tsoga ka-5, ba dira eng ... ba dira eng. For example, it does not have to be in a specific order."
- R4 "Ba tsoga ka-5 ba ya dikgonyeng, ba swanetše go hlatswa, ke mešongwana-šongwana ye mmalwa, ba dira nabo, ba konekta meets ... time and distance, baa pea, ba hlokomela bana, b tliline."
- I "Bana ge ba boya sekolong?"
- R1 "During, ba boye ba kolekta dikgonye. During the afternoon ba swanetše go attenda diklase that thing e affekta tša sekolo."
- I "I read somewhere that the working day (in the rural areas) is tight. So, where do you still fit in classes, at which those classes are not bringing in something for your home. You see I didn't want to spearhead it. Alright, we have looked at the problems what can we say although we have touched on some of them ... What can we say about it. How can we limit or curb these withdrawals or what can be done to stop it. Maybe not to stop it but to limit is."
- R1 "I think maybe, ere ... the projects ere projects. That will bring something ere to learners especially those who are suffering ... Who does not have something ere to bring home at the end of the day, those who are not working ... Who are breadwinners and even ... the department ..."

- R1 "... Will give us a small amount or a funders, if there's money, whereby we'll do satellite projects ... then this thing will have a purpose and ere ... of the department ... will ere send experts to rural areas whereby they'll come and motivate people and even make aware to ... an awareness drive, whereby people will know exactly ... of ABET is all about ... What is it that ... you know. Most people are illiterate. They don't even know the purpose of this ... its only if the experts in this thing can come and advise ... guide them ere at closer range. They will the purpose ... (not clear)."
- I "Sometimes some of them just go there because a friend is going. No real purpose ... Does not go there with a reason."
- R1 "Is just going because others are going. My neighbour is going so he/she is competing with his/her neighbour, because ... My neighbour might be better than me. My neighbour might look down on me. So, I rather go there and compete. Not going there with real purpose."
- R4 "I think the Department of Education and Health and Welfare ba ka kopana ba kwana the ba rekrute learners. Because I realisethat many people in the rural areas go ba tsebe selo ka-health awareness. So, go direga gore batho ga ba dire family planning ... malnutrition. Go be bohlokwa gore batho bale ba be ka diklaseng. Ba ruthwe ka dilo tšeo. So, ke kwišiša ba kua Department of Health and Welfare ba ka tla diklaseng ... ge (not clear)."
- R1 "Not forgetting taba tša budget. The department don't use to budget for ... for ABET in particular because at times we used ... re kwa dilo tša gore ... we ... when we start, we're busy, we stop ... then somewhere we start again. Then even, we are frustrating the learners. So, then they start doubting ... this thing ... what is this thing ... It might start, it might stop ... at any time. They do lose interest. Even the budget for the whole year may be ... ere may be ere ... the budget for two years ... for two years."
- I "Still on how to limit ... le ebona bjang?"

R1 "Ere concluding ... Even this latest thing that the department e tlile le yona ere ya-ratio, in some cases you find you have 25 learners. I was saying ... the people in most cases are not in one level, ranging from level 1 up to level 2, after maybe ... realising everything ... 10 is for level 4, that number for level 1. Then, how can one tutor, teach 4 levels within 2 hours, being one. It's a serious problem unless may be ... if they say you must have 25 learners in level 1 of which is impossible at this time. Adults are not just children ... If may be we have to make joint ... the distance ... unless they go back to the ratio 1:15 is something better you might find 15 learners for the level. (not clear) ... Especially in my case I got three levels."

PAUSE

I "Anything else?"

R4 "I have something. Now, we have the problem of drop-outs of learners, but I realise as times goes on tutors are also going to drop-out. Due to these reasons. The government now allows us to work for 24 hours. Which means we claim only 24 hours and if someone might get a job somewhere it means he'll leave those learners. So, that's a problem that I foresee. And I think something must be done because we are working over hours, but we are paid for 25 hours. This is what I wanted to say."

I "Let's make it practical. You are working Monday to Thursday and then you only claim for 25 hours."

R4 "Yes."

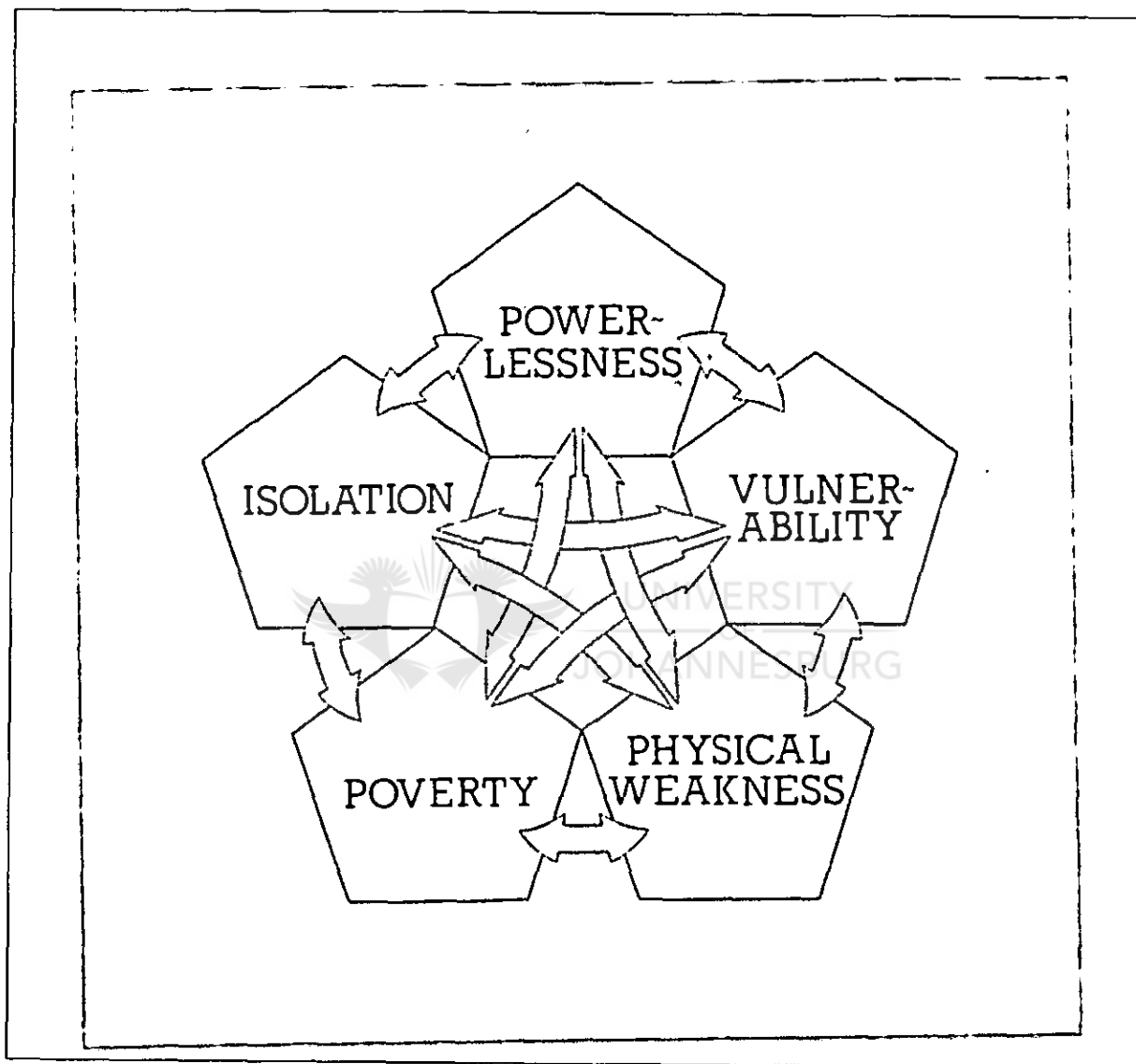
R1 "At that time when I'm trying something like projects ... We might may be decide to add another day ere which ... We work more hours ... our concentration ... aiming to enlarge ... people ... learners must get mush from us ... So,... we sacrifice for another hours for which we are nor paid and the ... during ... at times we push ip some scope, especially for the final level. So, we are just working for communal, that's all

- R1 “So, but if may be the department decide other way round, they just meet us halfway ... Because if they put us at stake ... when you see ... that there’s another may be offer in other place you think twice of your position for the people’s sake, not for what we paid for. We do feel pity for them because our grannys, fathers and mothers do need it. So, we just do it to help our fellow relatives ... There better offer (not clear).”
- I “I think we have covered a lot. Unless anyone wants to say something. Once again thank you for sacrificing. This also shows your commitment. You are saying you’re working for nothing and you’ve come here for almost nothing.”



APPENDIX 3

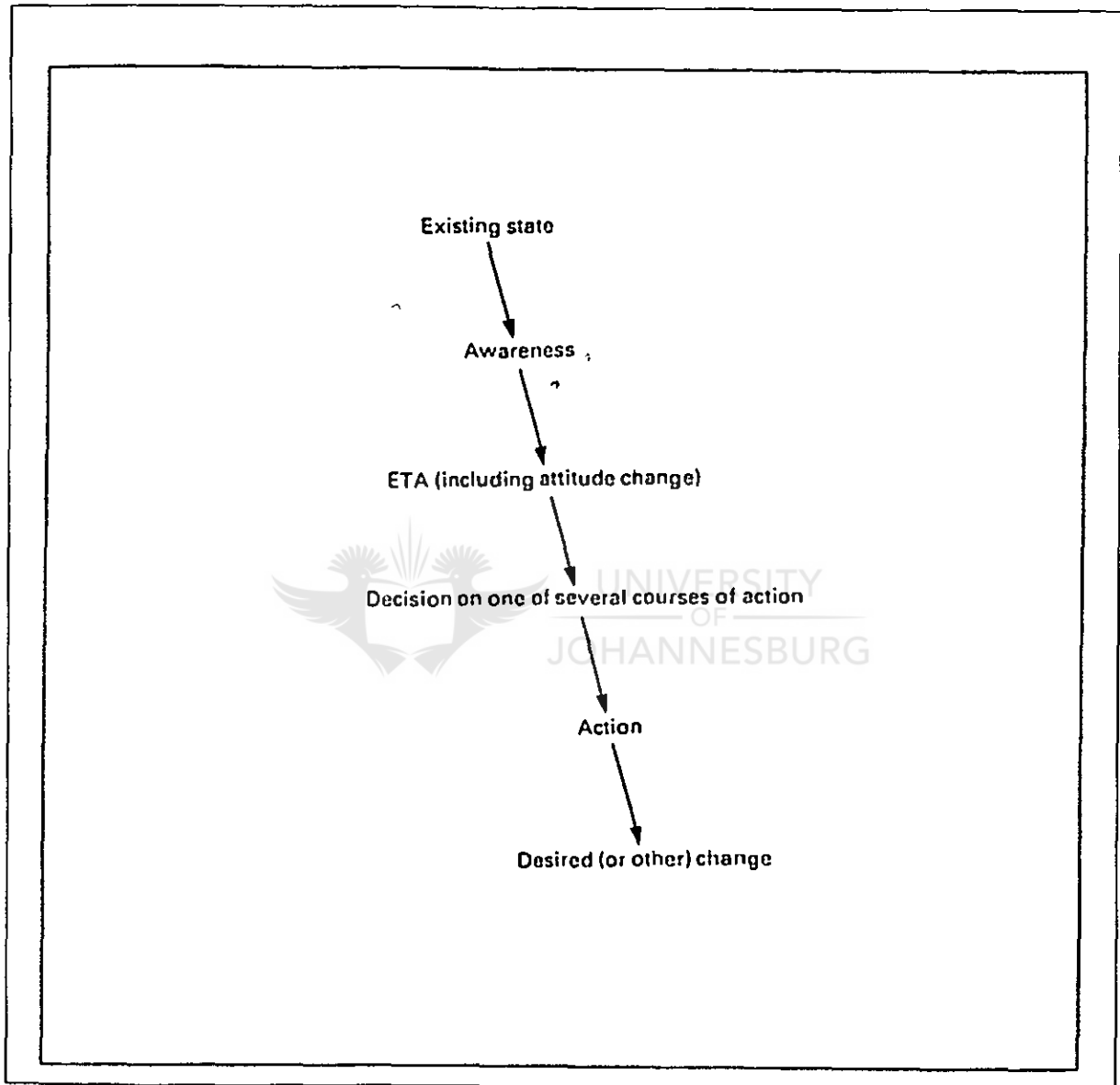
THE DEPRIVATION TRAP



Chambers, (1983:112)

APPENDIX 4

THE ROUTE TO FULL DEVELOPMENT



Rogers, (1992:125)