A COLLABORATIVELY CONSTRUCTED PROCESS MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

Bruce Peter Damons

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A COLLABORATIVELY CONSTRUCTED PROCESS MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL.

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

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QUALIFICATION : **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (EDUCATION)**

TITLE OF PROJECT : **A COLLABORATIVELY CONSTRUCTED PROCESS MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL.**

DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3., I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE : _____

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALS: Action Learning Set

DBE: Department of Basic Education South Africa

KAS: Key Advisors Set

SGB: School Governing Body

SMT: School Management Team

WSD: Whole School Development

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sought to explore how community volunteers could be recruited, supported and sustained to assist a community school operating in difficult socio-economic conditions in achieving basic school functionality. Through a collaborative process, the participants in the study attempted to address a significant gap in the literature, namely how this could be achieved in a way that would be beneficial both to the community volunteers and to the school itself.

Based on existing literature, the vast majority of South African schools are struggling to reach the basic functionality levels required in terms of legislation. My interest in this topic was piqued while serving as principal of one such school; hence the focus in this thesis on whether schools would benefit in terms of achieving functionality if they partnered with the communities in which they are located. However, communities are seldom actively involved in the schools and school activities on an ongoing daily basis. In this thesis, I argue for an opportunity for schools and the community to collaborate in a way that would be mutually beneficial. In this, I was guided by the School-Based Complementary Learning Framework (SBCLF) in gaining a greater understanding of how multiple stakeholders could support a school to obtain basic functionality. A key stakeholder is the community in which a school is located, and the multidimensional framework provided a framework to understand why the community would want to get involved in the school.

Following a Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) design, I recruited 15 community volunteers from the existing pool at my then school; some of whom had been volunteering for over twelve years. We formed an action learning set where we collaboratively sought to understand the processes and conditions needed to recruit, support and sustain community volunteers and their involvement in the school. From this action learning set emerged a key advisors' set, comprising five members of the action learning set, who were entrusted with the responsibility of planning, preparing and analysing the action learning set meetings. Transcripts and visual artefacts from the action learning set meetings and a focus group meeting of the school management team were analysed to generate data, complemented by secondary sources, such as documents. This participatory approach to data

generation allowed the voice of every participant to be heard; agency was increased through active participation; and the sense of affiliation to the group was deepened. The iterative design of the research process further ensured that the participants also engaged in a critical discourse analysis of the emerging data, of which the trustworthiness was enhanced through the use of dialogic and process, catalytic, rhetoric, democratic and outcome validity. The emergence of the data through this collaborative engagement was underpinned by the ethical values of mutual respect; equality and inclusion; democratic participation; active learning; making a difference; collective action; and personal integrity.

The findings revealed that community volunteers did add immense value to the school by supporting teaching and learning processes. However, the community volunteers also harboured expectations of material support and opportunities to develop skills. In addition, the study revealed that the hierarchical culture and structures present in most South African schools need to become more democratic and collaborative, with those working to make the school more functional, including community volunteers, being valued, acknowledged and supported. The participants also constructed their understanding of what a community school should be and do and how it should serve the interests of the children from the community. A process model was constructed from these findings regarding on ways to recruit, sustain and support community volunteers involved in community schools, specially designed so that schools could adapt it to suit individual contexts.

This study is unique; I am not aware of any similar study ever having been conducted in a community school in South Africa. Furthermore, the collaborative approach used in the study helped ensure that the methodology used could be of value to principals and other school stakeholders in addressing the various complex challenges that confront schools in these contexts. Also, the findings will add to the theoretical body of knowledge around volunteerism, especially in difficult socio-economic conditions.

Keywords: Community School, Participatory Action Learning and Action Research, School Functionality, Volunteer Process Model, Volunteerism

CHAPTER ONE

STUDY OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Schools located in the disadvantaged communities of South Africa require various complementary support systems in order to operate at levels of appropriate effectiveness. One such category of schools is the community school. One conceptualisation of a 'community school' is that it employs complementary support from a range of services to ameliorate those conditions that prevent schools from reaching effectiveness (Pacific policy research center, 2011). A key component of the community school model is engaging community stakeholders to support the work of the school.

In this study, I explored how unemployed community volunteers could play a role in supporting a community school to deal with the complex challenges confronting many South African rural and township schools. To do this, I engaged with a group of community volunteers to determine what motivated them to become involved and how they perceived they could contribute to the provision of quality education. I wanted to explore how the volunteers made sense of their roles and the tasks that they performed in the school and how their work could be sustained and supported by school management. The study attempted to sketch how, through a collaborative participatory approach, community agency could contribute towards school effectiveness in an urban township school in the Eastern Cape Province. I will introduce the context of and rationale for the study, before describing the theoretical framework and raising the problem statement. I will further link the research aims to the methodology and highlight measures to ensure trustworthiness. In conclusion, I will present the ethical measures taken, the significance of the study, and an overview of the chapters of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My interest in the study stemmed from my position as Principal in a community school, having worked with community volunteers for the past 12 years. It is through this collaboration, with the community, that I learnt to recognise the value that they could bring to making the school more effective. This, in spite of the difficult socio-economic conditions confronting the volunteers. This collaboration was further informed by my own personal philosophy of valuing the voice, ability and experience that all humans bring to the space of a school.

In his study of primary schools in South Africa, Spaull (2012, p. 3) found that many ' "ex-Black schools" that were "dysfunctional under apartheid remain largely dysfunctional today". This dysfunction could be seen as a crisis, centred around, but not exclusively confined to, the quality of teaching, and that extends to poor school infrastructure and inadequate support from the government, especially for the majority of black learners (Christie, Butler and Potterton, 2007). The socio-economic context in which many of such schools find themselves (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Prew, 2009) presents severe challenges for school functioning. Several factors have a negative effect on the functions of schools and children's development: high absenteeism due to ill health and malnutrition; child abuse and general neglect; a lack of hope for the future, caused by poverty; and a general apathy towards education (Witten, 2006).

The site of this study is the Sapphire Primary School, of which I was the Principal for 16 years. Sapphire is located in the township of Booysens Park in Nelson Mandela Bay. It is characterised by many of the challenges facing the vast majority of South African rural and township schools. A large number of the population is unemployed and relies on some sort of government assistance to survive (Housing Development Agency, 2012). This unemployment manifests in the large informal settlements around the school, the number of able-bodied persons that are at home during the day, and the significant amount of social welfare support offered by government and other non-governmental organisations in the area. This socio-economic status is recorded in the annual Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) survey conducted by the school. The high levels of unemployment have resulted in extreme

social challenges, which include disease, with a strong prevalence of HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis, substance abuse, and physical and psychological abuse. This we experienced daily at the school. Our caregivers – unemployed community members – have to intervene in these social challenges; in fact, a number of parents have voluntarily declared their HIV status and other health challenges, in the hope that they would be supported. These challenges have a negative impact on learners' development and learning.

The school is a primary school, with classes ranging from Grade R to Grade Seven. The learner enrolment for 2015 was 1198. Seventy-six of these learners were in Grade R and were being taught in an informal, four-roomed metal zinc structure, located in the community, about 3 km from the main school building. There are thirty-one Educators in the school, three Grade R practitioners, one Secretary, and one General Assistant on the staff establishment of the school, all of whom are paid by the State.

Although the challenges facing the school are typical of many schools in South Africa, little attention is being paid to understanding and dealing with the impact that these socio-economic conditions have on schools (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006). Schools, therefore, need to explore different holistic schooling models that can more effectively engage with the complex challenges mentioned earlier. One such model is the idea of a community school (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2009; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2011). I define a community school as a school that not only focuses on academic outcomes but also looks at the building of stronger communities through complementary support and partnerships. In South Africa, there are two distinctive models of schooling that use this definition of a community school: these are the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) of the World Health Organisation (WHO), and Unicef's Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) (UNICEF, 2009; Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). Both CFS and HPS encourage the engagement of available human resource to support the work of schools (UNICEF 2009; Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009).

More than twelve years ago, we started a community volunteer programme at our school to support the learning and teaching processes at the school. We sourced

this support, because we realised that we would never reach the targets of school effectiveness required of us by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (Department of Education, 2001), if we did not source such additional support. The roles that the volunteers filled at the School were those of teacher assistants, health workers, security personnel, toilet cleaners, general handymen and -women, administrative assistants, orphan and vulnerable children (OVCs) caregivers, clinic volunteers and vegetable gardeners (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). These focus areas each elected a leader and, together, these leaders comprised the leadership team of the volunteers. We recognised that without the support of these community volunteers, we would not be able to run an effective community school.

The school had become a beacon of hope for the community in general and for the volunteers in particular, many of whom had no formal qualifications. The school not only strived to meet the educational aspirations of the community for their children, but also sought to make a meaningful contribution to the development of the community through various programmes, one of which was volunteerism (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). All of the volunteers were unemployed, and feeding their families was a daily struggle. Many of them are involved in this work not only to support the school, but also to look for opportunities that would sustain them and their families.

The school was able, on the odd occasion, to source some sort of support in the form of food parcels. A local church that acted as a government implementing agency provided some of the volunteers with a monthly stipend. These forms of support were, however, extremely unreliable and not sustainable, as they could stop at any time and were not available every year. At one stage in 2012, only ten out of the forty-two volunteers who were active in the school received a stipend, which was rarely paid on time. Furthermore, the number of volunteers who participated in the various programmes at the school always varied. At its peak in 2014, we had more than sixty people volunteering. This was achieved when we had tangible incentives to offer the volunteers. The school was also recognised on various platforms for its community engagement programmes.

Recognition for the volunteer programme was given at local, national and international levels which I argue impacted positively on the quality of education offered at the school. Examples of this recognition included the awarding of a national school leadership award to me in 2008, by the DBE, for the model I introduced at the school. I was invited to present the school as a case study at a World Health Organisation sponsored programme in Canada in 2007, and in Kenya in 2009, and these presentations were featured in a publication on Health Promoting schools across the globe (Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). The volunteers were further instrumental in building a clinic at the school. In return, the school trained volunteers to support their work at the school, equipping them with skills that made them more marketable in the formal work environment. The contribution of the volunteers was so valued by the School Governing Body (SGB) that it decreed that they should be regarded as staff, albeit unpaid. This recognition, however, went beyond the material. The volunteer programme gave rise to voice, agency, celebration, failure – and a lot of learning. It is through this diverse, soulful, reflective and reflexive journey that we attempted to make sense of our roles and contributions. This, as we critically engaged with the challenging socio-economic conditions that confronted us, in our endeavour to provide quality education for our learners. However, the school had no clear strategy on how to recruit, sustain and support the volunteer activity in the institution. Although the value that such volunteers brought to the School had been recognised at various levels by government, organisations and the community (Damons and Abrahams, 2009), no study had been undertaken to explore, with the volunteers, the value that they brought to make the community school more effective. During the more than twelve years of using volunteers at the School, no study had been conducted to develop a deeper understanding of what motivated these volunteers to become involved in the school, how the volunteers conceptualised their roles and tasks and how such a volunteer programme could be optimally designed and sustained. It was, therefore, important to develop a conceptual and theoretical understanding in order to ensure that such form of support embedded itself in the operation and culture of the school, especially a school faced with so many challenges. This type of community support was manifest in various forms across the world.

Vince Whitman and Aldinger (2009), in their analysis of school health in twenty-six case studies across the globe, found that community volunteers engaged in a range of programmes at schools, varying from health promotion to personal skills development (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). Various authors emphasise the importance of matching the motivation of volunteers with the tasks that they have to perform (Johnson, Guinagh, Bell and Estroff, 1977; Houle, Sagarin and Kaplan, 2005; Smylie and Evans, 2006). Johnson *et al.* (1977) also suggest that key persons in developing successful volunteer programmes at schools are volunteer recruiters, school principals and teachers. One of the limitations of Johnson's study is the focus on volunteers in classrooms only. I contest that the recruitment of volunteers and programmes to support them should reach beyond the classroom and look at other areas of the school's operation that will influence its effectiveness, as was the case in the Whitman and Aldinger's (2009) analysis. It is, therefore, important to recognise who such volunteers could be.

One of the key stakeholder groupings normally identified are parents, as they are usually willing to participate in such a volunteer programme, based on their desire to contribute towards the effectiveness of their children's education (Damons, 2012; Lemmer, 2007; Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009). Lumby (2003) challenges a narrow definition of parents, arguing that it should extend beyond the biological description to include guardians who have stepped into the role of parents for many learners. This is particularly true in the context of South African schools in communities faced with harsh socio-economic challenges, where, in many cases, extended family members are raising children and the traditional family model of father and mother headed households has radically shifted. Yet, although parents and guardians are key potential role-players in dealing with the complex challenges of the school, there seems to be a lack of consistent, sustained involvement by them in the school (Lumby, 2003). There is, therefore, a need for a broader model of stakeholder involvement, which extends beyond the present one found in current legislation, which promotes only governance as the key responsibility of parents in schools (Lemmer, 2007; Prew, 2009). This model should involve parents, community members and other educational stakeholders in a number of activities designed to support school effectiveness. My experience working in community schools for more than twenty-four years motivates me to agree with the need for such broader model

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of stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, research does exist around the contributions, other than governance, that communities can bring to support schools to render them more effective (Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009).

School effectiveness has been defined mainly by scholars and the Department of Basic Education (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Department of Education, 2001; Prew, 2009). They identify responsibility and agency; effective leadership; teacher commitment, effective teaching and learning; safety; discipline; and a culture of concern as the key elements of effective schools. Langer (2004, p. 1) further describes effective schools as places that are able to display how learning happens, "how the professional knowledge and planning work" and the degree of community involvement in the school. Other scholars writing about school effectiveness focus strongly on the crucial roles of teachers and principals in contributing to learner performance (Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007). However, I could not find much literature concerned with how the community defines this effectiveness and what they perceive as their role in making schools more effective, especially in schools located in South Africa's township and rural communities. Furthermore, although alternative models of schooling are being followed (UNICEF, 2009; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009), not much literature exists on how schools located in these communities can go about recruiting the available human resources to support them in their endeavour to become effective.

Although Prew (2009) and Damons (2012) recognise the importance of volunteers, there is seemingly a lack of a detailed theoretical analysis of the underlying motives why these volunteers include themselves in school functioning and activities. Furthermore, it appears that most of the conducted research focused *on* the volunteers, instead of undertaking the study *with* them. Hunter, Emerald and Martin (2013) state that any engagement to deal with challenges, especially within education, must be principled on the values of inclusiveness and collective and collaborative action. These principles seem to align with what Macbeath and Mortimer (2001) have identified as some essential features of an effective school: having shared vision and goals; setting high expectations for everyone; cultivating an environment with positive reinforcement; and encouraging collaborative learning

where rights and responsibilities are understood and respected. This collaboration to create genuine spaces for change is important if we want to "respond effectively to complex issues in rapidly changing contexts, especially at present while we face unprecedented challenges as a consequence of economic, political, technological, social and ecological changes and natural disasters" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, p. 1). In my opinion, in a community like the one in which the school is situated, such collaboration is vitally important, because of our country's historical past. Any form of activism needs to include the community as active participants.

The collaborative approach followed in this study ensured that the voice of the community could inform new theory and practice, providing answers to some of the complex challenges confronting the school in the study and many other schools in South Africa. A collaborative approach was considered to be in line with my personal values of encouraging democratic principles and supporting the development of personal capacity for all who seek to contribute to meaningful change. It was, however, evident from this initial review of the literature on volunteers that a deeper understanding of volunteerism needed to be explored, especially as it related to the South African context, and in particular the community school. This study attempted to address this gap by focusing on giving voice to community volunteers involved in the action of volunteerism in a community school in South Africa. Through this collective agency, a more contextualised theoretical understanding emerged as to the recruitment of community volunteers and the support needed for volunteering and the perceived value that their actions added to the school. In addition, not enough research seemed to exist on how a school could develop a framework of sustained support for these volunteers. The study attempted to address these gaps.

In conclusion, the study further attempted to bridge the divide between theory and praxis to improve and develop the work already done at the school in the study.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.3.1 Complementary Learning Framework (CLF)

The Harvard Family Research Project (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008) proposes a systematic, multi-sector collaboration to ensure that all children succeed at school – the primary objective of effective schools. It proposed complementary learning (CL) as a possible framework to address some of these challenges. This framework argues that the various contexts of a child's life (the school, home, church and so forth) need to connect in order to ensure that the child fully actualises her or his full potential (Lohrmann, 2010). Lohrmann's (2010) ecological model of school health programmes, based on the principles of complementary learning, proposes the building of strong relationships between the community, family and school. Although complementary learning speaks of the interconnectedness of the various contexts of a child's life, the literature on complementary learning does not say how these contexts connect or who can connect them.

Witten (2006) proposes the school as one of the sites that is crucial in building relationships with families, community organisations, and other interested groups to support the holistic development of children. Building on the concept of complementary learning, he developed the School-based Complementary Learning Framework (SBCLF), in terms of which schools play a leading role in connecting to outside partners and stakeholders and building networks of support for children (Witten, 2006). One of the key stakeholder groupings is the community volunteer. I used this theoretical framework to determine the value of school-community partnerships and develop a conceptual understanding of what motivated people to volunteer.

1.3.2 Multidimensional Framework

In terms of the multi-dimensional, complex approach to engaging with this possible community resource to assist schools in becoming more effective, Sherr (2008), in working with social workers and volunteers, proposes a multidimensional theoretical framework to understand the phenomenon. Schuurman (2013), in her study of

volunteers in a South African non-profit organisation (NPO), states that this multidimensional approach should provide sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about practice-based situations, without drawing exclusively on what Sherr (2008, p. 46) terms "predisposed biases". Schuurman (2013) zooms in through three theories: the ecological, developmental and role-identity theories. Sherr (2008) includes a number of other theories: systems, conflict, empowerment, phenomenological, social learning, life span (developmental) and life course, social exchange, and self-actualisation and self-transcendence theories. Various studies conducted in the volunteer sector support this multidimensional view (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2/2009; Johnson, Guinagh, Bell and Estroff, 1977; Schuurman, 2013; Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). However, Schuurman (2013) states that very little literature exists around the application of these theories within the South African context, and a further search indicates even less application of these theories in studies on community schooling. This study attempts to bridge these contextual, conceptual and theoretical gaps.

1.4   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many schools that serve urban township and rural communities in South Africa face challenges in reaching the degrees of effectiveness required by the DBE in respect of delivering quality public education. Such inability to be relatively effective, as prescribed by the DBE, will continue unless these schools start looking at creative alternative models to address the challenges confronting them. A high level of community involvement, especially in schools faced with these harsh socio-economic conditions, is important in enabling schools to deal effectively with these challenges that impact negatively on the quality of education provided by them.

The available human assistance in the relevant communities, faced as they are with high levels of unemployment, presents a wealth of local knowledge and support that these schools can access. This can be accessed through the recruitment of unemployed community members to volunteer in these schools (Damons, 2012; Prew, 2009). The concept of volunteerism is strong across various organisations and sectors in society, and evidence exists that volunteers add value to organisations that they serve. The school in the proposed study, of which I was the Principal, had

been using volunteers from the community for more than 12 years, and some evidence exists that these community volunteers added value to the school.

The problem, derived from the above discussion, is that no scientific study had been conducted with the volunteers to create an ontological and epistemological understanding on what motivated volunteers, how they viewed their contributions and what strategies could be employed to recruit, sustain and support the continued involvement of those who volunteered at the school. The exploration of such questions needed to be done in a participatory way, to ensure that the knowledge generated, would be relevant to the volunteers themselves.

1.5   PURPOSE OF STUDY

Through this study, I attempted to give a critical voice to the community volunteers working in the school, which seemed to be absent in most studies reviewed. Using a participatory action research approach, we endeavoured to develop a framework that could be used in schools to recruit, support, and sustain the work of volunteers. This exploration through research aimed to ensure a change of practice as we attempted to impact on the delivery of quality public education, within the context of difficult socio-economic conditions. I hope that the findings of this study will connect theory and practice and in so doing develop practices that are logical, fair, sensible, informed, satisfying and sustainable to our purpose.

1.6   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Derived from the problem statement, the following research questions were formulated:

Primary research question

How can the community school recruit, support and sustain the community volunteer?

Sub question 1:

What motivates the community volunteer to do this work?

Sub question 2:

How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school?

Sub-question 3:

How can this knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer work in a community school?

1.7 RESEARCH AIMS

The primary aim of this study was to explore and understand, with the community volunteers, the motivation, the perceptions of the value that they added and how their work can be supported and sustained. Objectives to reach this aim were:

- To collaboratively understand what motivates community volunteers to be involved in a community school.

- To collaborate in a humanising way with the community volunteers in developing an understanding of what they perceived as their key roles and responsibilities in the school and what support they needed to improve on present practice.

- To explore whether their acts of volunteerism had an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.

- To develop a contextual process model for sustaining volunteerism that could be of use to other schools operating within similar contexts that desired to involve volunteers.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the scientific method used to generate data to be analysed for the purpose of justifying one's findings (Struwig and Stead, 2010). Since my choice of methodology was strongly influenced by my paradigmatic assumptions, I will first outline these.

1.8.1   Paradigmatic Assumptions

The epistemological paradigm informing this study is critical and emancipatory. A paradigm is a belief system of what knowledge is (ontology) and the ways knowledge is constructed (epistemology) (Scotland, 2012). This study is rooted in a paradigm that seeks to give voice to a group of community volunteers as they actively contributed to the development of the relevant school, themselves and the broader society. A critical, emancipatory paradigm meets this requirement. A critical paradigm has its origins in social justice, while "advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge" (Zeus, 2004, p.11) and is well suited to action research. The paradigm aligns with this study, as it aimed to give a critical voice to the participants and, in the process, advocating for equal power between the researcher and the participants (Henning, 2004). Critical theory also assumes that knowledge can be viewed as subjective (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Through this critical understanding of knowledge construction, a deeper ontological understanding was developed about how we could take charge of our own personal emancipation. This emancipation occurs within the context of not only changing or improving or liberating our own practices, but also impacting on those unequal external factors in the broader social context (Esau, 2013). Esau (2013, p. 4) states that knowledge should be critically looked at, "in terms of how it is socially constructed and how it, in turn, shapes and hopefully changes reality".

A participatory methodological paradigm was deemed appropriate to create appropriate spaces to meet the aims of this study. I wanted a methodology and design that would encourage voice and agency among the participants and also support my own development, as well as that of the participants (Freire, 2007; Zinn and Rodgers, 2012). I viewed this approach as important, as it would challenge the traditional approach of research *on* people, instead of research *with* people. The design and methodology have to be a gateway that provided an opportunity for reflexive practices and growth to engage with the existing challenges confronting not only the volunteers at the school, but the broader community as well (Freire, 2007; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Freire (2007, p.17) posits that this objective could be achieved if participants are allowed to 'participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing'.

A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study, because: it would honour both the perspectives of the researcher and participants; take place within the context where the phenomenon being studied; and given the action nature of the study, would consider the interrelatedness of the events being researched and actioned (Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge, 2007; Struwig and Stead, 2010).

1.8.2 Research Design

For this study, I adopted an action research (AR) design, using a form of AR called Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) (Kearney, Zuber-Skerritt and Wood, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). This research design was informed by my desire to be an agent of change and by the theoretical framework of this study (Mouton, 2003). Action research is a cyclic process that allows for a rigorous theoretical and methodological engagement, regarded as a 'practice for changing practice' (Hunter *et al.* 2013). Action research further encourages collaboration through the integration of theory; practice; research and action (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010). Through this collaboration, the participants in this study were able to examine how we did things and become cognisant of how we used language and became aware of how we worked together, as we attempted to address matters of real concern to us, as it related to volunteerism (Hunter *et al.* 2013). This examination of practice through various cycles usually includes planning, acting, observing and reflecting (McNiff and Whitehead, 2010; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). In this study, this iterative process took place through a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) design (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011**)**.

PALAR encourages a process in terms of which people take ownership of their problems and devise a means to resolve it through the combined processes of action research (AR), using action learning (AL) and participatory action research (PAR) (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). By following this approach, the participants in the study will be able to tell their stories, as well as develop themselves and the organisation that they serve. In PALAR, participants are regarded as co-researchers. Baxter and Jack (2008) further state that this equal sharing of power will allow the researcher to view the findings from both the researcher's own perspective as well as the perspectives of the other participants, which was an important philosophical underpinning of this

study. These perspectives are informed by the ability of the research participants to learn from and through their lived experiences and because of this they are then mobilised into action (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). This action learning applied throughout the cycles of the research process, leading to further experimental learning and action informed by the knowledge that is out there and knowledge emerged during the course of the study (Hunter *et al.* 2013). The experiential and experimental learning that informed this study was the bridge where theory met practice, which in return allowed us to reconsider our own practice. The learning further enhanced the full participation of all participants in this study.

PAR, a central component of PALAR, according to Kearney *et al.* (2013), entails the involvement of all participants in the study as equal partners in the knowledge generation process. Hunter *et al.* (2013), citing Kemmis and McTaggart, have identified the following seven key features of PAR:

- a social process
- participatory
- practical and collaborative
- emancipatory
- critical
- recursive (reflexive, dialectical)
- aims to transform both theory and practice

These seven features were extremely important for this study and complemented its multidimensional theoretical framework. It is through this participatory approach that I proposed to employ the collective voice and agency of all involved in the study.

1.8.3   Explaining My Position in the Study

My positioning in this study as a full participant is important, because not only was I the principal of the school, but it was also informed by my own political and philosophical beliefs (Hunter *et al.* 2013). Among these personal beliefs, that I need to state upfront (Hunter *et al.* 2013; Zuber- Skerritt, 2011) are the values of Ubuntu[1] (Mabovula, 2011), personal and organisational transformation. These are

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[1] *tolerance, humanity, respect*

complemented by personal agency and engaging prevailing social injustices in society, through activism in a school. I draw on the idea of Participatory Activist Research (PA^{t}R) to explain my role in the study. A PA^{t}R researcher is

> …a participant working within a collective for shared understanding and action. You are an activist, with your politics honest and explicit, working deliberatively for change. You are a researcher within a specific context where being informed about theory and practise means they come together as praxis rather than being kept separate and distinct (Hunter et al., 2013, p. 8).

PALAR allowed me to participate in the study by working within a collective, navigating through understanding our own ontological and epistemological assumptions of how we made sense of the work we did. This navigation required employing appropriate research methods.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODS

A research method refers to the strategies used to collect and analyse data and how trustworthiness of the emerging data will be ensured (De Vos., Delport, Fouché, and Strydom, 2011).

1.9.1 Recruitment of Participants

The volunteer leaders of the various projects active in the school under study were purposefully recruited as participants in this study. This purposeful sampling approach brought in the voices from the various volunteer areas in the school, in the expectation that they would provide useful and rich insights, comparisons and perspectives (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Mouton, 2003). The participants were organised into an action learning set (ALS) (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). My role as a participant in the study was confirmed by the methodology that I employed (Hunter *et al.* , 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). In qualitative research, the researcher is regarded as the main data-collecting instrument (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Savenye and Robinson, 2011; Suter, 2012). In this study, the 'researchers' comprised all the members of the ALS. PALAR advocates that all those involved in the process have to take collective responsibility

to identify, research and recommend areas of improvement of the phenomenon under study (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). A secondary group of participants, comprising School Management Team (SMT) members, was identified to recruit their views on the effectiveness of the community volunteers serving at the school. These SMT members were not regarded as co-researchers.

1.9.2 Data Generation Strategies

This study, through iterative cycles, attempted to employ various methods to generate data. The methods employed had to give credence to the theoretical framework, as well as reinforcing my personal philosophical belief of giving critical voice and agency to all involved in the study.

1.9.2.1 Action learning set (ALS)

The 17 participants in the study, including myself, formed an Action Learning Set (ALS). The dialogical and dialectal engagement in the set became the primary data generation method, through the recordings and transcriptions made (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The space allowed for collaborative engagement with the research topic. The underpinning values of the space were: mutual respect; equality and inclusion; democratic participation; active learning; making a difference; collective action; and personal integrity (Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, 2012). The ALS was furthermore characterised by mentoring; coaching; and soulful, humorous constructive engagement. The action learning set also birthed the key advisors set (KAS).

The KAS was important for the logistical, intellectual and critical support during the research process. KAS compromised four members of the action learning set; their role is explained in more detail in Chapter Four.

1.9.2.2 Personal reflective journal

My personal reflective journal allowed me to critically reflect on my learning as I grappled with the often contradictory roles of Principal, researcher and participant. The entries in this journal were guided by the seven principles of participatory action

learning and action research (PALAR): communication; commitment; competency; character building; critical reflection; collaboration; and coaching (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The journal allowed me to construct my narrative as it related to my learning and I could bring this to the engagement sessions. The questions and issues raised, through the journaling, contributed to further learning and change in practice, through reflexive dialectic (Winter, 2002). This personal journal complemented a summary journal that was completed by me at the end of each action learning set session.

The summary journal was used to record critical incidents that I observed or experienced during the course of the study. The immediate summary of the engagements further allowed me to engage with the data as it was emerging, which assisted in the process of reflection.

The keeping of descriptive and reflective journals as well as the transcriptions of the audio-recorded sessions were important data generation strategies in this study. This allowed for the construction of a detailed explanation of events and, through reflection, we were able to analyse our own learning and reflect on events as they unfolded during the study (Savenye and Robinson, 2011).

1.9.2.3 Focus group

I conducted a focus group with the School Management Team (SMT), where I posed the research questions raised in the study. The SMT is an important stakeholder group and provided additional data on the impact that volunteers had on the school. The focus group technique was useful because it allowed me to generate data from a larger group (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). The data generated by the text, through the above methods, was triangulated with the literature reviewed and secondary data sources.

1.9.2.4 Secondary data sources

As the concept of community volunteerism was not new to the school, I explored various documents and artefacts at the school, acquired over the years, related to volunteerism (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). Examples of some of these were:

photographs; observation notes; articles; artefacts of past projects completed by volunteers; minutes of meetings where the issues related to volunteers and volunteerism at the school were discussed; notes from the various stakeholders; newspaper articles; information relating to the school; and legislation relevant to the study (De Vos *et al.*,2011; Yin, 2003). This means of data generation allowed for an unobtrusive way to gain further insight into how the process of volunteerism had evolved over the years at the school (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Savenye and Robinson, 2011). This analysis was important to understand the contribution of the volunteers to school effectiveness, as well as to develop an understanding what the school had done to support the sustained involvement of volunteers.

The organising and interpretation of generated data were important to give credence to the findings of this practical study. However, these interpretations needed to be viewed critically, because of the possible subjective nature of the emerging text (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The text in this study, therefore, lends itself to different forms of analysis (Hunter *et al.*, 2013).

1.9.3   Data Analysis

The overarching structure of the analysis was a critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is used to investigate power relations and ideologies involved in knowledge and the practice of such knowledge.

CDA's structure was important for this study, because of the existing hierarchical nature of the school structure, as well as the different class, political and social elements at play in the community surrounding the school (Hunter *et al.*, 2013). This multi-pragmatic, phenomenological approach to text analysis allowed me to gain insights into the actions and the things that I took for granted by virtue of doing my job (Lester, 1999). The approach further ensured that all voices who participated in this study would be heard and understood (Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). It was important to understand that our actions were informed by various reasons and through this, we were able to develop rich local understanding through our dialogical, dialectical and hermeneutic engagement, within our social context (Henning, 2004; Taylor and Medina, 2013). The interpretation of this engagement was coupled with

the need to consider critically and impact on the conditions that influenced our ability to deliver quality education (Taylor and Medina, 2013). Equally important was the need to be mindful of the diversity of the participants in the study (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Zeus, 2004). These perspectives included possible bias as it related to age, gender and racial background. Even my own bias as the researcher, Principal and learner needed to be placed under the same microscope.

Data was coded around emerging themes, which were then validated with the primary participants through the iterative cycles of engagement. The emerging data from the action learning set, as mentioned earlier, was then triangulated with data that emerged from the focus group of the SMT, secondary data resources and the literature (De Vos *et al.*, 2011; Struwig and Stead, 2010).

The voices and participation of all participants in verifying the correctness of the analysis were important, in assuring that accurate themes were identified from the text. Furthermore, the data was not used only to respond to the research question, but also influenced the practice of participants in the study (Hunter *et al.,* 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Through this learning, allowed the ALS to recommend and discuss areas that required improvement or development in existing practices at the school. This participatory analysis was conducted through regular member checks, as highlighted in the various cycles of the research.

1.10 METHODS TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Authenticity and the ability to realise the mutual benefit for all the participants in the research is an important requirement of the PALAR process. As recommended by Hunter *et al.* (2013), I did my best to ensure that I did not monopolise knowledge during the process. I did this by regular member checks, as well as through the journaling technique, which allows for self-reflection. I endeavoured to create a space that honoured honest and critical dialogue, to ensure that my voice would not become dominant, and, as the study will show, this proved challenging (Freire, 2007; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). My overlapping roles of Principal, researcher and participant provided the biggest challenge in the study. I had to ensure that the responsibility to do 'my job' did not create bias in trying to generate authentic text or compromised

the humanising space I hoped to achieve with this study (Savenye and Robinson, 2011; Struwig and Stead, 2010; Suter, 2012).

I did this by surrounding myself with a number of critical friends. In the end, as the study will describe, the key critical friends were my fellow participants. In addition to the participants, I was part of a national and international PALAR Group that met from time to time to further develop and advance the methodology. During our engagements, I would check in regularly with them around matters related to my study. The keeping of a reflective journal further assisted me in monitoring my overlapping roles during the course of the study (Yin, 2003). The concern about bias could probably extend to the other participants in the study as well. However, there is an argument by Yin (2003) that participant observers are less likely to report erroneous text, and through the meticulous triangulation of generated data, this biases can be addressed (Savenye and Robinson, 2011; Suter, 2012). Furthermore, regular member checks with participants in the ALS provided a means of ensuring that trustworthiness would be achieved.

We spent a lengthy period collecting the text, on the site that was easily accessible to us, which assisted us in lending credibility to the findings (Savenye and Robinson, 2011). In addition, that fact that we worked, understood and grew in the site provided us with a deeper understanding when we interpreted the data.

1.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical matters were considered on two levels. On the one level was the institutional requirements of the relevant University. This meant getting permission from, the School Governing Body (SGB) (Appendix – 8), the Ethics Committee of the University and the District Office of the Department of Basic Education (Appendix 9) to conduct the study. Participants provided written consent to participate and expressed the desire to have their names mentioned in the study (Appendix – 9). This led me to be mindful of my own personal ethical considerations, which included mutual respect; equality and inclusion; democratic participation; active learning; making a difference; collective action; and personal integrity (Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, 2012).

1.12   SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The study sought to contribute towards a body of academic knowledge and understanding about the motivation and roles of community volunteers in a school setting. Also to show how, through mobilising available human resources, schools could become more effective. The study will potentially also provide an opportunity for schools to learn how to develop a framework of support for these community volunteers. Although the findings of this study are limited to one specific school, it is assumed that other schools in similar socio-economic contexts will be able to use and adapt the learning from this study to their own settings. The research should, therefore, contribute to the discourse of improved school effectiveness by providing practice-based information that could potentially assist other schools, communities and the DBE in providing support for schools in similar situations. The study further attempted to create a space for the voices of volunteers in the school to emerge, to explore their own understandings, agency and sense of community, based on the research questions raised in the study.

1.13   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: **Study overview**

Chapter Two: **A theoretical discussion of the concepts informing the study: effective schools; complementary learning framework; school-based complementary learning framework and community school**

Chapter Three: **Theoretical discussion of volunteerism, role of the volunteer in a community school and multidimensional framework to understand volunteers**

Chapter Four: **A theoretical justification of the research design**

Chapter Five: **A critical discussion of what motivates community members to volunteer**

Chapter Six: **A critical discussion of the perceived value that community volunteerism brings to a school**

Chapter Seven: **Discussion of findings to inform the development of a theoretical process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer involvement in a community school**

Chapter Eight: **Summary, recommendations and conclusions**

CHAPTER TWO

A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPTS INFORMING THE STUDY: EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS; COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING FRAMEWORK; SCHOOL-BASED COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING FRAMEWORK AND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provided a broad overview of the study. As my research focused on the work of community volunteers in a school and their contributions towards the improvement of the functioning of that school, I will begin this chapter by locating the study in the broader literature on school effectiveness. Following this, I will explore the Complementary Learning Framework (CLF), and in particular, the School Based Complementary Learning Framework (SBCLF), as a theoretical lens that explores complementary ways of providing support for learners to achieve their full potential. I will then discuss the community school as a model of schooling that employs the notion of complementary learning to achieve effectiveness.

2.2   EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING

As a school leader with more than fourteen years' experience, the concept of school effectiveness has always been a challenging one for me. I agree with Drucker, (2008) who makes a clear distinction between effectiveness and efficiency. 'Efficiency' means doing things right, whereas 'effectiveness' means doing the right thing. In my opinion, schools tend to focus more on doing things right (efficiency), instead of doing the right thing (effectiveness) in their context. This effort to be 'efficient' is informed by the way the Department of Education (DBE) conceptualises school effectiveness.

This conceptualisation by the DBE appears to be informed by the literature around the concept of effective schools. An effective school, according to Macbeath and Mortimer (2001), should have a shared vision and common goals; set high expectations for everyone; cultivate a positive environment; and encourage

collaborative learning, in terms of which rights and responsibilities are understood and respected. Langer (2004) further describes effective schools as places that are able to display how learning happens, 'how the professional knowledge and planning work' (p. 1) and the degree of community involvement in the school. Other scholars writing about school effectiveness focus strongly on the crucial roles of the teachers and principals in contributing to learner performance in school (Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007). They identify responsibility and agency; effective leadership; teacher commitment; effective teaching and learning; safety; discipline; and a culture of concern as the key elements of effective schools.

The National Department of Basic Education (DBE) developed the Whole School Development Model (WSD) (Department of Basic Education, 2001), which provides a checklist that aims to regulate this conceptualisation of 'effectiveness' around nine performance areas. These nine performance areas focus on the basic functionality of the school; leadership management and communication; governance and relationships; quality of teaching and educator development; curriculum provision and resources; learner achievement; school safety, security and discipline; school infrastructure; and parents and community involvement. This WSD model is uniformly applied to all South African schools, irrespective of their socio-economic circumstances, to ensure that they achieve high academic standards. The evidence suggests that this attempt to achieve high academic standards has not been successful in the vast majority of schools, especially in these schools situated in rural or urban township areas (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Spaull, 2012). In my opinion, it is the standardised application of the policy that coerces schools to strive to be more efficient rather than more effective. School leaders tend to want to fulfil policy requirements, rather than adapt their actions to suit their unique context. For example, we are required to optimally utilise resources to support the curriculum, but these resources are never sufficient or are of an inferior quality, as the DBE tends to do bulk buying for previously disadvantaged schools. The products of the bulk buying are invariably of such an inferior quality that resources that are supposed to last a school for a year, are usually depleted within three months of arrival. The impact of this and various other conditions is such that these schools perform at different levels of effectiveness. Consequently, most black schools, particularly in the

urban township and rural communities, are regarded as not being functional (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Spaull, 2012).

Christie, *et al.* (2007), in a research report commissioned by the South African National Ministry of Education, confirmed the importance of some of the essential features of effective schools mentioned above. These researchers further established that schools in previously disadvantaged areas that performed well academically were focused on the task of learning and teaching, carried their tasks out with competence and had strong accountability systems. However, they emphasised that these characteristics were present in the minority of South African schools only. This view is supported by Spaull (2012), who found that 90% of black South African schools were regarded as not meeting basic standards of effectiveness, based on the results that they were producing. Christie *et al.* (2007) concluded that inability to reach this basic level of effectiveness could, inter alia, be attributed to the fact that not enough attention was given to the socio-economic challenges that many of these schools found themselves in – a view with which I concur.

In my perspective, there is a lack of understanding of the true impact that these socio–economic challenges have on schools in their endeavour to reach the standards of effectiveness required by the Department of Basic Education. This is especially the case for those schools located in the rural and urban townships of South Africa (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006). These authors describe, among other factors, high unemployment rates, harsh social conditions, crime and substance abuse as some of the social factors that impact negatively on school performance. As a principal who practised in an area faced with all of these challenges, I agree that it is impossible for a school located in such a community to meet the efficiency required by the Department of Basic Education, unless attention is given to the factors that hamper effective school functioning and impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

I am also of the view that even the purpose of a school should be redefined by the specific context of a school. The mission statement of the Sapphire Road Primary School – the school participating in this study – is the *'Liberation of the mind from*

mental inferiority'. The school therefore not only sees itself as a centre that strives for academic excellence, but also endeavours to impact on the conditions that prevent it from achieving this excellence. The schooling community has recognised that the impact of poverty can enslave the minds of the community, hence the commitment to impact on the context through the various skills programmes offered by the school (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). The general lack of acknowledgement of context or the development of a deeper ontological understanding of the impact of context has led scholars and practitioners to explore schooling models that look at complementary ways of supporting schools faced with such challenges.

In my view, the goal of a schooling model should be to provide the space for efficiency to meet effectiveness. If efficiency means trying to get learners through the system; ticking off all the boxes (for example, having an SGB, sufficient teachers, submitting reports on time, having learning materials and the right committees), at the expense of attempting to address the socio-economic challenges that present barriers to achieving this efficiency, then performance is not likely to improve. The structure might be there, but the quality will not improve and the liberation of the minds of learners, educators and the community will not materialise. Hence, efforts to achieve efficiency should be equalled by efforts to effectively engage with the contextual challenges confronting the school.

This meeting of efficiency and effectiveness should ensure that schools are able to deliver quality education, within the context in which they serve. The question that needs to be addressed is how schools can achieve the provision of quality public education if they are faced with multiple and complex challenges, especially if located within rural and urban township schools in South Africa (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006). One possible lens to look at this question is through a systematic multi-sector collaboration framework, such as that proposed by the Harvard Family Research Project – the Complementary Learning Framework (CLF) (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008).

2.3 COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING FRAMEWORK (CLF)

The CLF argues that there is a need to connect all the elements of a child's life to ensure that the child actualises his/her full potential (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008; Lohrmann, 2010). This complementary support should be provided through the connection of community, family and school. Pedro Noguero (2003) argues, albeit from an American perspective, that this complementary support is particularly needed by learners from deprived socio-economic contexts. The integration of these complementary components can be quite complex, depending on the understanding and definition of the concepts of community, family and school.

2.3.1 Community

There seems to be a lack of general consensus of what defines community (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). Block (2007) recognises that community is a place of belonging, while Prew (2009) contends that this sense of belonging is particularly true within the South African society. This may be because of our rich sense of identity and heritage across the racial divide. This is observed in the way we, as a country, can celebrate one another's cultures, but also our uniqueness of a united nation, as celebrated on Heritage Day, each 24 September (van Aardt, 2015). This sense of belonging is usually accompanied by the need to pursue a common purpose that is in the interest of the demographic where a group of people are located (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). As far back as 1986, McMillan and Chavis (1986) identified the value of community as a powerful source of social cohesion. They argued that community could be a force for good or bad, citing the infamous Ku Klux Klan movement in America as an example of a bad force. However, they emphasise the power that community can bring to a broad range of social engagements to strengthen the fabric of a society characterised by increasing social disharmony and fragmentation. Although first mooted more than 29 years ago, this emphasis is still relevant today, in a world faced with so much turmoil and conflict. This is even more evident here in South Africa, where we are faced with daily conflict and strife, increasing political tension, corruption and social disharmony in a country that presents with a huge social divide between rich and poor (Rossouw, Claassens and Du Plessis, 2010; Hunter Q. , 2015).

In spite of the contradictions that may be evident in a society, the argument is that the concept of community can be used to strengthen the fabric of society through creating a sense of 'faith, hope, and tolerance, rather than of fear, hatred, and rigidity' (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 20). It is through these values that families, who form an important part of the community, can play a significant part in fostering the holistic development of children.

2.3.2   Family

Family, in the classical sense, has always being regarded as a unit of mother and father with children (Collins English Dictionary Online, 2014). However, there has been a gradual shift from this definition, evolving to include what can be regarded as single-parent-headed households. In countries like South Africa, one also finds the phenomenon of child-headed households as a result of the scourge of HIV/AIDS (Meintjes, Hall, Marera and Boulle, 2010). Census 2011 indicated that of the children in the age bracket 0-17, more than three million had either lost one or both parents (Statistics South Africa, 2012). The largest percentage of these children is found in urban township and rural schools; this phenomenon has had an obvious impact on the classical definition of family. Many of these schools are in the lowest socio-economic areas in our country and as many families see education as the liberation from these economic conditions, schools can and should become beacons of hope to these communities (Damons and Abrahams, 2009).

This multi-tiered family structure and low economic status may also directly impact on how these families relate to the school that their children attend. The absence of a traditional and stable family structure makes it difficult for schools to identify and meet the needs of children from such families; caregivers may not be as willing/able to access the school as biological parents would have been.

2.3.3   School

Schools, especially those located in communities faced with extreme socio-economic challenges, besides trying to be efficient, as required by the Department of Basic Education, have the responsibility to try to meet the expectations of these

communities. However, research is indicating that most schools in these areas are failing to meet both the expectations of the DBE and those of the communities (Christie, *et al.,* 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Spaull, 2012; Witten, 2006). The question that should be asked is whether the schools are structured and operating in such a way that they are able to deliver on their main mandate - providing quality public education, within the challenging socio-economic conditions within which they find themselves.

Schools are regarded as spaces of dynamic interaction between students, teachers and the curriculum (Department of Education, 2008). The historical legacy of schooling in South Africa is such, however, that many schools became much more than spaces of pure academic engagement, especially in the rural and urban townships, where the majority of the black population resides. The Soweto student uprisings in 1976 bear testimony to the fact that schools were often sites of ideological battles, as students fought against the very curriculum that was being imposed on them (Ndlovu, 2006). Since the advent of the democratic dispensation in 1994, schools continue to face multiple challenges, some of which were highlighted in the report referred to earlier (Christie, *et al.*, 2007). These include the systemic dysfunctionality of the South African schooling system; the sense that we as leaders comply to this dysfunctionality, for the sake of seeming to be efficient; the impact of context on the operation of the school; and the lack of adequate human and material resources to deal with these challenges confronting us (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006;).

The argument is, therefore, advanced that schools, especially schools faced with these challenges, should then become spaces that should develop processes of complementary support in order to achieve the required degree of effectiveness (UNICEF, 2014; WHO, 2014). The school-based complementary framework provides a framework for such integrated engagement.

2.4 SCHOOL-BASED COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING FRAMEWORK (SBCLF)

In the SBCLF, the school plays the key role in connecting to parents, community members, clinics, libraries, businesses, universities, etc. around programmes that will enable it to deliver on its core mandate of providing quality education to its learners (Witten, 2006). As noted before, the traditional understanding of a school is that it is a space where dynamic interaction occurs between learners and teachers and the curriculum. In the SBCLF, this core work extends to involving many other key stakeholders in building networks of support that serve to strengthen the learners' psychosocial well-being and their cognitive development. According to the SBCLF, if schools and their leaders want to build effective partnerships, then they will have to change the ways in which schools are managed; teachers and other stakeholders are supported and developed; resources are raised and allocated; and the way in which welcoming and inclusive school cultures are nurtured (Witten, 2006).

2.4.1 Leadership

The leadership of the principal is critical in all programmes required to make a school effective (Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006). Principals are recognised as the principal change agents in their schools, because of the strategic positions that they occupy (Harris, 2003; Johnson *et al.*, 1977). The complex multidimensional nature of leadership is highlighted, as the leader has to perform multiple roles in a school (Damons, 2012; Le Grange, 2007). If I reflect on my roles at school, I found I had to be, *inter alia*, an instructional leader, a security analyst, health advisor and nutrition consultant.

These multiple roles also require a degree of emotional intelligence, as one is constantly faced with the challenge of dealing with organisational change (Bush, 2007). This emotional intelligence forms an important part of being an effective change manager, especially within a complex organisation like a school. The complexity, in my experience, includes high staff turnover, increased socio-economic challenges and changing family structures. This complexity forces leaders to rely

significantly on their own knowledge and intuition to bring about meaningful change in their institutions. However, it is acknowledged that leaders cannot do this on their own and that a more distributed leadership approach is required to run schools (Damons, 2012; Grant, 2006). Furthermore, one of the essential skills that a school leader has to develop is the organisational management that will enable effective school functioning.

2.4.2   Organisational Management

In their research, Christie *et al.* (2007) found that effective schools that were achieving academically, in spite of the various challenges confronting them, had some key characteristics embedded in their organisations. They had leadership teams who were focused on the core business of learning and teaching, complemented by the ability of team members to carry out their tasks with competence. This, coupled with an organisational culture characterised by a strong work ethic and accountability to a range of stakeholders, contributed to the success of these schools. However, as the report emphasised, this was evident in the minority of schools, especially schools located in rural and urban townships. While smooth running organisations had these characteristics present, underperforming schools seemed to lack these characteristics (Christie, *et al.*, 2007). It is further apparent that besides good leadership and effective management, schools also require the support of various stakeholders.

2.4.3   Stakeholders

The value of support from both internal and external stakeholders is recognised by various authors (Damons, 2012; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2011; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). Internal stakeholders are parents and community members that have a direct affiliation with a school, by virtue of their children attending that school (Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009). External stakeholders are those whose interests are not as direct as that of the internal stakeholders, but who have an interest in supporting the learning and teaching processes in a school. These external stakeholders include businesses that provide financial and material support. Research institutions, for example universities, can provide intellectual support for various programmes in

the school. In addition, churches and other organisations provide spiritual guidance and wellness support to the schooling community. Other government departments, like Health and Social Services, provide essential services, through the school, which are important assistance in poor communities in South Africa (Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). All these collaborative projects were evident in the school in the study (Damons and Abrahams, 2009).

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is a key component of the complementary learning framework. However, the challenge is how to develop a synergised programme to include all stakeholders effectively, to constructively contribute to the learning and teaching programme of the school. This challenge does not, however, negate the potential that they bring to increase the resource pool of the school.

2.4.4 Resources

The very nature of how a school is structured requires an extensive pool of both human and material resources. This is even more pronounced in schools in under-resourced areas, particularly in South Africa (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Prew, 2009). The South African government, in an attempt to create a more equally funded system, introduced a staged funded quintile system, which attempts to give a larger financial allocation to poor schools (Department of Education, 2004). It is apparent that even this increased funding does not compensate the many schools in the rural and urban townships of South Africa adequately for the various challenges that face them. All the elements stated above need to be synergised into a complementary system of support, characterised by a sound school culture.

2.4.5 School culture

School culture is recognised as the way in which all voices occupying the space called school identify and care about and celebrate and speak about matters that they view as important for the school (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004). The Centre advocates for a school culture that supports the values of building relationships, is caring and creates a climate of trust that assists the school in meeting its obligation of providing quality education to its learners.

These values are usually negotiated and agreed to among the various stakeholders of the school (Center for improving school culture, 2004). However, to arrive at these commonly agreed values can be extremely challenging, because of the contested nature of schooling (Damons, 2012)**.** The question, that needs to be addressed, is how a space can be created so that a community of common purpose can be established through voice, agency and community (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012).

The SBCLF advances a collaborative approach to schooling to look at creating such a space, but the limitation of the argument is that it is not very specific in how schools can actually make this part of their daily operational programmes. The community school model does, however, offer some insight into how this multi-sector approach could be facilitated.

2.5   THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The concept of the community school has different understandings for different contexts. One definition conceives a community school as a school that is established and run by communities, with some support from government and donor agencies. These community schools seem to arise mainly in developing countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa (Naidoo, 2009). In more developed countries, such as the United States of America (USA) and now in some European countries, the concept of community schools is focused on government-funded schools that have opened their doors to community engagement that strive to actualise the full potential of the child (Blank, Melaville and Shah, 2003). This community engagement includes support of the academic programmes of the school and extends to programmes that support the capacitation of the community in which the school is located. In America and Europe, some schools focus on in-school and after-school programmes to support learners (National Center for Community Schools, 2011). Further research has found that the term 'community school' has been adopted and adapted in more than sixty-nine countries across the globe, including South Africa (National Center for Community Schools, 2011). Although there are various definitions of the concept community school, for the purpose of this study I defined a community school as a school that focuses not only on academic outcomes, but also looks at the building of stronger communities through complementary support and

partnerships (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2009; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2011). This conceptualisation not only recognises the need for the holistic development of the child, but also strives to position the school as a beacon of hope, for the development of the community.

These various concepts of the community school implement the common principle of complementary learning as the golden thread that winds through their mode of operation. Complementary learning is the outcome of systematic, multi-sector collaboration to ensure that all children succeed at school – the primary objective of effective schools (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008). I define this success as not only the successful achievement of academic outcomes, but also the holistic development of children to enable them to cope with the multiple adversities they face within socio-economically challenged communities. This complementary learning, through mutually beneficial engagement, aims to assist schools in achieving the key elements of school improvement, which include proactive and progressive school leadership; a vibrant holistic educational curriculum; capacity building of all stakeholders in the school; and strong family and community ties (Department of Education, 2001; National Center for Community Schools, 2011). The various elements that characterise a community school are strong ownership of the education process by the community; the use of additional resources without placing a heavy burden on the school and its staff; the holistic development of children through a focus on academic excellence and non-academic activities; the use and support of the local community, families and stakeholders to strengthen this holistic development; and the opening of the school for the development of the community (Blank *et.al.*, 2003; Naidoo, 2009; National Center for Community Schools, 2011). The DBE places a strong emphasis on the academic outcomes of learners, but recognises the important roles of other stakeholders in achieving these outcomes. This does not differ dramatically from the conceptualisation of the community school, except that a stronger emphasis is placed on the community involvement in the school and with a lesser emphasis on the school's involvement in the community. I found, as Principal, that both these elements were important if we wanted to make our school both efficient and effective, especially within our socio-economic contexts.

Although the literature reviewed provides an overview of how community schools can attain efficiency (doing things right) and effectiveness (doing the right things), Naidoo (2009) argues that there is not enough literature on community school practices in Africa. Most of the studies conducted seem to focus on the global North, suggesting the need for further investigation to conceptualise the government funded community school in the global south context. Furthermore, Naidoo (2009) states that the literature seems to focus mainly on the positive, with very little or no critique of the practices prevalent in these schools. This critique could also be levelled at the school in this study, as most publications about the school focused on what we were doing right rather than doing a more in-depth analysis of its success and failures (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). This study attempted to ensure that the school leadership would take a more critical look at school effectiveness and efficiency so as to address some of the concerns raised by Naidoo (2009) about the sustainability of community involvement and understanding the contribution to knowledge that a participatory research approach can make towards attaining this aim.

Globally, various models, especially those used in the developed Northern context, showcase the effectiveness of community schools, as highlighted in the reports from both the National Center for Community Schools and the Coalition for Community Schools (Blank et. al., 2003; National Center for Community Schools 2011). I will, however, focus on two models that have found their footprint in South African schools, namely the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Health Promoting Schools (HPS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Child-Friendly Schools (CFS).

Both the WHO and UNICEF recognised the importance of creating structures that allowed children across the world to actualise their full potential (UNICEf, 2014; WHO, 2014). Both the WHO's Health Promoting Schools (HPS) and UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) were embraced by the DBE and the Department of Health in South Africa as distinctive models that could enhance the complementary support processes at schools (UNICEF, 2009; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). The argument is for a multi-systemic approach, which recognises health as a holistic concept, covering mental health, educational health, physical health, environmental health, spiritual health and emotional health, as key to the holistic development of all

children (Pacific Policy Research Center, 2011; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2009; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). I would argue that this multi-systemic approach would be particularly relevant for developing children living in harsh socio-economic conditions, such as the site in which this study was conducted. The WHO's argument is that HPS foster health and learning with all the measures at their disposal and use all stakeholders available to achieve their health goals. HPS not only focus on the development of the learners, but also the development of the stakeholders who contribute towards the holistic development of the learners (WHO, 2014). It is argued that this is best achieved by focusing on: programmes that promote personal awareness and emotional wellness; the building of capacity to deal with the multiple complex challenges that confront all stakeholders on a daily basis; developing programmes that deal with daily health challenges; and challenging behaviour that results in negative health outcomes. This is particularly true in the context of the school that formed the focus of this study, and that of many rural and urban township schools in South Africa, where learners are faced with challenges such as HIV/AIDS; lack of facilities to maintain basic hygiene; unhealthy social and physical environments; and severe physical and emotional trauma (Damons and Abrahams, 2009; Meintjes *et. al.,* 2010; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006).

The collaboration between health, social engagement and education is also a focus of the UNICEF concept of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS). The CFS model advocates that schools should be places that enhance children's health and well-being; guarantee them safe and protective spaces for learning free from violence and abuse; maintain teacher morale and motivation; and mobilise community support for education (UNICEF, 2009). This multi-systemic understanding informs my view that in order for schools to be effective, they will have to address all the factors that impact on their ability to deliver quality public education to what I perceive as the most vulnerable sector of our society.

However, closer collaboration is needed between the health and education sectors if this multi-systemic approach is to be effectively implemented (Rowlings and Jeffreys, 2006). These authors caution that failure to recognise that the context of schools matters will result in the generic implementation of programmes that will have no relevance to schools, thus dooming them to failure. Effective health promotion will

not only recognise the context, but will also acknowledge "the participatory process, the multi-strategic action and the dynamic cyclic process" (Rowling and Jeffreys, 2006, p.709).

The Sapphire Road Primary School was recognised as a Health Promoting School by both the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Health. In 2007, it was evaluated by the national Department of Health and found to be one of the more effective schools in health promotion in the country. As a result, they asked me as Principal to represent the school at two WHO-sponsored conferences in Canada (2007) and Kenya (2009), culminating in the school featuring in a publication of global case studies (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). It was from what I learnt at the WHO conference in 2007 that I was induced to suggest the Intsika[2] Model (figure 2.1) of school improvement to an organisation that school leaders formed, called Active Schools[3]. This model was centred on seven pillars of school improvement, modelled around the components of the HPS.

FIGURE 2.1: Intsika model

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2 Intsika is an isiXhosa word that means 'pillar'.
3 Active Schools comprised representatives from ten schools in socio-economically disadvantaged communities that met on a regular basis to conceptualise how we could improve their schools. This organization operated during the periods 2008-2011 until it merged with another organisation.

The limitation of the HPS model was that its components4 (Whitman and Aldinger, 2009) focused only on systems that would support the educational process, but not the educational process itself. Active Schools tried to make the Intsika model contextually relevant, as advocated by Rowling and Jeffreys (2006). The key inclusion was what we termed 'sound educational practices', which we regarded as the core business of our schools. All programmes from the other pillars had to inform pillar number one. In other words, all health promoting activities should be able to contribute to learners' academic achievement, support classroom practices to achieve these outcomes, and provide the enabling physical conditions for this to happen. Active Schools dissolved to merge with other schools in 2011 to form the Manyano Community School Network5. The Manyano network strives to improve school effectiveness around five key areas: curriculum development; capacity development of stakeholders; psychosocial support for learners; school infrastructure; and community-focused projects.

All the models discussed above advocate for the required complementary support to the education process. Key to the success of all these models is the involvement of available human resource to ensure successful implementations of the complementary support. The value that the available human resources can bring to the community school is recognised by all authors who advocate for the concept of complementary learning (Naidoo, 2009; National Center for Community Schools, 2011; Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). They regard this engagement as especially important in schools located in communities faced with harsh socio-economic conditions. The available human resources could possibly include the parents of learners at the school and unemployed community members who can contribute towards the effectiveness of the school. I acknowledged the vital importance that such human resources can play, especially in urban township schools in South Africa, in my masters thesis (Damons, 2012). This contribution by community members was further endorsed by Prew (2009) in his study of ninety-six townships schools in Soshanguve in South Africa. He found that the schools benefited by including the broader community in developing school improvement plans. These

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4 1. School health policy 2. Social Environment 3. Health and Mental Services 4, Skills Based Health Education 5. Improved Health and Learning 6, Pupil Awareness 7. Stakeholder Collaboration
5 A school network comprising the leadership of 14 urban township schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, South Africa, which aims to bring about school improvement in these schools.

benefits included "the mobilisation of untapped human and monetary resources in the community for the school, the generation of employment for community members, and a gradual increase in parental and community involvement in the school including involvement in the pedagogical process" (2009, p. 843).

The call for increased stakeholder involvement in education was heard as early as the late 1960's (Sanders, 2003). Sanders defined these stakeholders as coming from the broad spectrum of society, ranging from individuals in communities to formal and informal organisations. Furthermore, although the literature speaks to the role communities can play in addressing some of these complex challenges, there is a need to further explore how these community volunteers can be effectively engaged to support the work of the school.

2.6   SUMMARY

This chapter sought to distinguish between the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness as they relate to schools in poor socio-economic areas in South Africa. It then established a link between this and the statutory requirements of the Department of Basic Education pertaining to school effectiveness. The chapter further explored the complementary learning framework and the school based complementary framework as frameworks that could provide some theoretical support, through a practical model of community schooling, to achieve a degree of school efficiency and effectiveness, especially in communities faced with many challenges. This included a discussion of the various components of the framework and examples of community school models implemented globally and in South Africa.

The following chapter will engage with the various dimensions of community engagement pertaining to volunteerism in general and schools in particular. As volunteers play an important role in the community school model of schooling. I will review the literature on volunteerism, specifically in relation to schooling and the contributions that volunteers make towards organisational functionality. I will conclude my discussion by identifying some of the gaps in knowledge relating how

volunteers interact with schools in the South African context. It is envisaged that this proposed study will contribute to addressing some of these gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF VOLUNTEERISM, ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND VOLUNTEERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two focused on school effectiveness and community schools as a model of schooling using the School Based Complementary Learning Framework (SBCLF) as a framework of engagement to promote complementary modes of support for such schools. The SBCLF suggests that if schools truly are to be places that allow children to develop to their full potential, they will have to look for support beyond their gates to achieve this. This applies particularly to schools situated in circumstances characterised by extreme socio-economic conditions. In order to link this concept of complementary support to supporting learner achievement and holistic development at school, it is essential to discuss the role that community volunteers can play.

The discussion of the existing literature on volunteerism in this chapter focuses on past and present research, based on areas that I identified as important to understand volunteerism. Integrating the experiences of the school in this study, in this chapter, I will interrogate the definition of volunteerism; the demographic profile of volunteers; volunteerism at schools; different ways to recruit, sustain and use volunteers; and potential barriers to the successful implementation of a volunteer programme. The multidimensional framework is then explored as a possible means to understand why people choose to volunteer (Sherr, 2008).

3.2 LOCATING AND DEFINING VOLUNTEERISM

As noted in Chapter Two, research indicates that the majority of South African schools, especially the poor urban township and rural schools, are not delivering on their core mandate of providing quality public education to their learners (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Spaull, 2012). The evidence suggests that this non-delivery could be

attributed to the many complex challenges that confront these schools on a daily basis (Witten, 2006; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010). Teachers alone cannot handle all the socio-economic challenges confronting schools (Witten, 2006). If additional human resources could be sourced from the community, then many issues that fall outside the scope of teaching and learning could be addressed. These issues include support for the provision of nutrition; taking care of orphaned and vulnerable children; maintenance of school buildings; health related issues; extra administrative support; and any other support that might be required in the various contexts (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). However, the extensive use of this available human resource is not a practice that is commonplace in South Africa, especially not in schools in under-resourced contexts.

Volunteerism has been defined as an action, with little or no compensation, characterised by benefit for self, another person, group or cause (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Schuurman, 2013). This definition was crafted into the following resolution, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2001:

> …volunteerism covers a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor (United Nations, 2014, p. 3).

In his State of the Nation Address to the National Assembly (Houses of Parliament) in 2003, the then President of the Republic of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, made an appeal to all South Africans to offer their time and skills to assist with the reconstruction and development of the country (South African Government, 2014). This was and still is, necessary if we as a society are to effectively engage in the reconstruction of a South Africa that is still dealing with the legacy of Apartheid in all sectors of society, including education. Many areas require redress in the country, and it is vital that we become creative and proactive in dealing with these challenges if we are to contribute towards the growth and reconstruction of our country. Volunteerism provides the opportunity to create an active citizenry that can contribute to this reconstruction, and schools could be one of the spaces in which this could happen.

However, the concept is much more complex than just simple engagement. The various factors that motivate people to volunteer, have to be interrogated and understood so that they can be maximised to induce people to give of themselves, their time, skills or money. This is especially crucial when we are dealing with resource-scarce contexts, such as is the case of the majority of schools in the public education system in South Africa. Why should people who have very few resources themselves, even consider volunteering to help others? Motives for volunteering are dynamic and change over contexts and time (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Lumby, 2003). These diverse motivations affect the decisions about whether or not to volunteer, and the roles and tasks that volunteers will engage in. Most studies seem to concentrate on volunteerism in a more resource rich context.

3.3   DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES IN VOLUNTEERING

International literature reveals that there are diverse reasons why people engage in the act of volunteerism, and these reasons differ according to the demographic profile of the people involved. Some of the demographic profiles include factors such as employment status, gender and age.

3.3.1   Employment Status

Research seems to indicate that motivators for people who are working and those who are unemployed to become involved in acts of volunteerism differ. Volunteerism in the Western World seems to be mainly prevalent in the working middle class, with many who volunteer occupying full-time jobs, although they generally clock fewer volunteer hours than the unemployed (Vézina and Crompton, 2012). These volunteers, who have sufficient income, are usually guided by altruistic motives, such as empathising with others less fortunate than themselves or wanting to contribute to a peaceful and secure world (Vézina and Crompton, 2012; Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). In spite of so-called altruistic motives, these types of volunteers are usually termed self-interest volunteers (Schuurman, 2013). They are therefore not driven only by the need to contribute, but also by the need for some form of personal fulfilment (Vézina and Crompton, 2012). This is juxtaposed against the motivation of unemployed persons.

Unemployed persons seem to be motivated more by the desire to feel valued and to bolster their own belief that they are contributing to society. Schuurman (2013) points to the positive correlation between poverty and volunteerism in South Africa. The motivators for these volunteers could be aligned to what is referred to as symbolic consumption (Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). Symbolic consumption is regarded as a substitute for work: in the absence of being able to contribute to the mainstream economy, these volunteers give their time as a form of non-market activity (Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). Schuurman (2013) argues that this contribution is often made in the hope that they may acquire skills to enter the formal work environment, to become economically viable. Besides the desire to skill themselves, this symbolic consumption could be further linked to what Schuurman (2013) terms connectedness. Connectedness is the link that volunteerism has with some personal purpose in volunteers' lives, rather than merely being a means to add value to broader societal matters (Vézina and Crompton, 2012). An example of such connectedness is of parents volunteering at the school that their children attend. High school learners' volunteerism is often linked to some academic activity; in Canada, some students need to complete a volunteer activity to complete their high school career (Vézina and Crompton, 2012). Besides the adding of value, Wymer Jr and Samu (2002) rank the pursuit of friendship and happiness high among unemployed volunteers.

In addition to employment status, two other profiles that play role in the decision to volunteer, are gender and age.

3.3.2   Gender and Age

The assertion from literature is that females are more inclined to volunteer than males (Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). Furthermore, gender plays a role in the decision to engage in different forms of volunteerism, with females more likely to volunteer as a means of achieving accomplishments and for personal fulfilment, while males tend to volunteer simply because they enjoy it (Wymer and Samu, 2002).

Besides gender, age seems to be another important factor in the decision to volunteer (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009). Davila and Diaz-Morales (2009), in their

study on volunteerism in Spain, highlighted that the age of volunteers impacted on the various motivations; like making friends, values, and protection motives. They found that protective motives (for example, the need to reduce negative feelings, and social motives) the need to strengthen social relationships were higher among older volunteers. Younger volunteers were more inclined to volunteer to make friends. It, therefore, seems to imply that older people volunteer to improve their emotional state, while younger people do it to make friends.

However, there seems to be a lack of extensive literature on motivators for volunteerism, especially within the socio-economic context of the school in this study and, as Schuurman (2013) remarks, in South Africa in general. Although volunteerism is recognised as an important national and international phenomenon (Schuurman, 2013), rendering a service without any form of compensation could be extremely challenging in communities faced with high unemployment and a plethora of social challenges, as was the case of the school in this study and many other schools in South Africa.

A look at the demographics of the volunteers active in the school during the course of my study seems to agree with the findings in terms of gender. At the commencement of the study, of the 45 volunteers active at the school, 40 were female and five were male, but all were unemployed. Their ages varied. The findings of these studies, therefore, provide an important lens in trying to develop a conceptual understanding as to why these volunteers would get involved in the school.

3.4   VOLUNTEERISM IN SCHOOLS

While literature speaks generally to motivation and roles in different settings, a deeper understanding of the roles of volunteers is needed, especially in the context of disadvantaged communities in South Africa. In addition, there seems to be a further lack of a substantial body of literature that speaks to the ontological or epistemological understanding of motivation to engage in volunteerism in the community school. For this reason, there is a need to develop a clear empirical

understanding as to what motivates people from a socio-economically challenged community to volunteer in a school.

In South Africa, as part of the post-democratic transformation of society, the government wanted to ensure that parents, especially those from disadvantaged communities, were afforded the opportunity to become more involved in the education of their children (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004). This regulation of parental involvement is done through the South African Schools Act (SASA) (South African Schools Act 1996, 2014). The Preamble of the Act states that, besides advancing the general values in the South African Constitution, SASA attempts to promote the responsibility of all stakeholders (learners, parents and educators) to support the government in achieving these values. The limitation of the SASA is that it seems to narrow the role of parents to that of governors of a school only. Research has indicated that the broader involvement of parents in their children's education leads to improved educational outcomes, school attendance and social behaviour (Lemmer, 2007). Prew (2009), in his study in (township) schools in South Africa, therefore argued for a broader model of stakeholder involvement.

Parents are seen as key stakeholders who are willing and can participate in such a volunteer programme because of their presumed desire to want to contribute towards the effectiveness of their child's education (Damons, 2012; Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009). Lumby (2003), however, cautions about the narrow definition of "parents" and argues that it should extend beyond a mere biological description to include those guardians who have stepped into the role of parents for many learners. This is particularly true in the context of South African schools, where extended family members often fulfil the role of parent or where children themselves may be heading households, as was often the case in the school in this study.

However, although parents are a key component in dealing with the complex challenges experienced at schools, there seems to be a lack of the consistent, sustained involvement of parents (Lumby, 2003). Besides the challenge of getting volunteers involved in the school, most of their involvement seems to focus on assistance in the classroom (Lumby, 2003; Nojaja, 2009; Van Wyk, 2001). This limited involvement does not seem to focus on dealing with the impact that socio-

economic conditions have on schools' ability to function efficiently and effectively, especially within the South African context.

A broader involvement of parents and stakeholder volunteers, across the key performance areas of schools, is required if these schools are to reach some degree of effectiveness (Witten, 2006). This model should involve parents and other educational stakeholders in a number of activities designed to support school effectiveness, as identified by the Whole School Development (WSD) approach of the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2001.) An emerging body of research suggests that broader community involvement can impact favourably on the general efficiency and effectiveness of schools (Nojaja, 2009; Van Wyk 2001). This proposition is further supported by Ginsburg, *et al.* (2014) in their findings on Malawian community schools; the authors contend that this broader involvement across the school promotes a more active participation in the total functioning of the school, which leads to greater school effectiveness.

The recruitment of volunteers and programmes to support them, in a South African context, should therefore reach beyond the classroom and look at other areas of the school's operation that will influence its efficiency and effectiveness (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006), especially as linked to the nine key performance areas captured in Whole School Evaluation (WSE) (Department of Education, 2001).

These nine key performance areas are an attempt by the DBE to make schools more efficient in realising their responsibility of delivering quality education to its learners. The first performance area, basic school functionality, focuses on the competency of the school to deliver on its central task of providing an engaged space for high-quality interaction between the teacher, learner and the Curriculum. Christie *et al.* (2007) identify this as one of the key characteristics of an effective school, in their report on school effectiveness to the South African government. Witten (2006), however, recognises, through his school-based complementary learning framework (SBCLF), that the striving for this basic functionality needs to be supported by an institution that has the capacity to perform at various levels. These levels, according to Witten's (2006) SBCLF, include sound organisational management; adequate human and material resources; and a strong school culture. These core areas speak

directly to the key focus areas of leadership and management in the WSE Policy. In my opinion, it is through this leadership that strong governance, as advocated through SASA (South Africans Schools Act 1996, 2014) can be built. The growth of leadership and governance should foster the development of strong relationships, which is regarded as an important element of effective school leadership (Day, 2003). Such leadership and governance are in support of basic school functionality, which should encourage high-quality teaching and learning and educator development (Key Performance Area 5). This pursuit of high quality and learning should be supported by the provision of adequate resources in order for the school to deliver the curriculum (Key Performance Area 6).

The DBE argues that this will facilitate improved educator achievement (Key Performance Area 7) (Christie *et al.* 2007). However, the same policy acknowledges that this cannot occur if the environment is not characterised by safety, security and discipline. Therefore, calls have gone out to parents and community members to become involved in not only building their school through governance structures, but by actively participating in its daily operation by participating and supporting various programmes at the school. This view is supported by various authors (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2014; Lemmer, 2007; Prew, 2009). An analysis of school health in 26 case studies across the globe (Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009) has found community volunteers and stakeholders engaged in a range of programmes at schools, varying from health promotion to personal skills development. This involvement can be linked to the nine key focus areas of whole school development.

Nicaragua's Friendly and Healthy School's (FHS) initiative showcased schools as effective mobilisers to get a broad range of stakeholders involved in school programmes (Meresman and Sanabria, 2009), thus creating links between the community and the school. In a Brazilian programme, youngsters who had left one of the Health Promoting Schools (HPS) returned to run an art and music programme (Meresman, Pantoja and Da Silva, 2009), thus encouraging learner participation in co-curricular activity. In the only South African example in the study, community volunteers became involved in a range of activities that included gardening, health care and teacher support in the classroom (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). In their study of community schools in Malawi, Ginsburg *et al.* (2014) found that the

involvement of the community, in addition to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the school, also encouraged democracy in the running of the school. They found that communities not only provided extra human resources to support school programmes, but also raised extra material resources, beyond the grants that many schools received from government and funding agencies. This multi-sector collaboration was also evident in the school under study. Whilst it is generally agreed that such extra human resources add value to the basic functionality of schools, there seems to be a lack of a clear strategy regarding the recruitment, use and retention of volunteers.

3.5 DIFFERENT WAYS TO RECRUIT, USE AND RETAIN VOLUNTEERS

If schools are to succeed in recruiting parents to assist, they should equip parents with skills to become better parents; create better channels of communication between school and home; encourage parents to volunteer in different programmes at the school; and encourage collaborative decision making about the education of their children (Lemmer, 2007; Nojaja, 2009). In addition to developing a recruitment strategy, Johnson *et al.* (1977), almost 30 years ago, stated that schools should develop a clear volunteer programme that should answer specific questions, such as who should do the recruiting; whether any qualifications should be attached to the recruitment process; areas of utilisation of volunteers; whether only parents should volunteer, and what training should be provided for volunteers. These speak possibly to the importance of having a policy that directs the operation of volunteers at schools. One would argue that the questions raised by Johnson *et al.* (1997), are still relevant today if organisations are to successfully recruit, sustain and support volunteers. In other words, volunteerism must become an integral part of the functioning of the school. This proposition could be extremely challenging to most schools, as their present organisational hierarchy (Christie, 2010) is not structured in such a way to facilitate this integration. This, coupled with the limited legislative role for parents and communities in schools, especially in the South African context (Department of Education, 2001; South African Schools Act 1996, 2014), presents a challenge to successful engagement with the community.

However, sufficient research exists that confirm the need for extra human resources, especially in the urban township schools of South Africa, to deal with the various challenges confronting these schools on a daily basis (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Damons, 2012; Prew, 2009). The programme proposed by Johnson *et al.* (1977) suggests what schools could do to integrate such a programme into their operational functioning. The authors further suggest that the key persons in developing a successful school volunteer programme are volunteer recruiters, school principals, and teachers. Recruiter coordinators should focus on the administrative and recruitment part of the programme, while principals should offer the same type of leadership to this programme as what they offer to their schools. Teachers must understand the purpose of the volunteers and how the volunteers could be an asset to them. In his study of parental involvement in rural schools in the disadvantaged communities of Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape, Nojaja (2009) states that for any programme of parental involvement to be successful, a clear model of support for volunteers needs to be developed. I found in my engagement with volunteers that besides a clear model of support, the school should have differential support to tackle the many issues that might impede their (the volunteers') ability to support the organisation. Furthermore, assuming that volunteers are also parents, Nojaja (2009) states that, beyond questions around the identity and qualifications of volunteers, principals and teachers should assist in developing programmes that will assist parents in identifying approaches to help in the education of their children.

Based on the above, an argument could be advanced that schools should pay attention to possible barriers that can prevent the successful implementation of volunteer programmes.

3.6   BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Although appreciating the value that these volunteers bring, the regulation of the volunteers through a formal process, as Johnson *et al.* (1977) suggest, was always a challenge for me as a school leader. The moral question I always had to grapple with, was: "How can I impose formal structure on people who render their services without any form of compensation?" Furthermore, Nojaja's (2009) recommendations regarding the provision of training and support are also challenging, because of the

extremely high workloads imposed on teachers and principals by the Department of Education. This is compounded by the challenges of operating in an under-resourced context. As a leader, I also recognise that lack of structure sometimes gives rise to tension, especially among the teaching staff, unless space is created to fully engage with teachers to make them appreciate the full value that the volunteers can bring to the school (Johnson *et. al.,* 1977; Nojaja, 2009) and to the teaching and learning process.

Van Wyk (2001), in her study on educators' perceptions and the practices of family-school-community partnerships, found that educators did not fully comprehend the partnership between school and community; educators were not convinced that community involvement would lead to the increased academic success of learners; there was a one-way flow of communication (from the school to the parents), while very little attention was given to the opposite flow of information; many educators believed in the limited role that parents should play in a school; educators were not fully capacitated to support community involvement in school; and most educators tended to blame parents for their lack of involvement in the school. My own experience supports these findings. At one stage, I was invited to present a short learning programme to Principals and School Management Teams (SMTs) for the biggest Teachers Union in South Africa (Appendix - 15). The section that I focused on was how to get communities more involved in dealing with the complex challenges facing schools, especially the majority of schools referred to by many authors (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006). I found that the participants in the programme felt that community members were always looking for something in return; parents and community volunteers would initially come to the school out of a desire to assist, but they all ultimately wanted some sort of compensation. Principals, particularly, felt that this fear of the demands posed by the community prevented them from tapping into this available resource and finally led to the deliberate exclusion of potential volunteers.

3.7   PROMOTION OF INCLUSION OF VOLUNTEERS

Any engagement to deal with challenges, especially within education, should be based on the principles of inclusiveness and collective and collaborative action

(Hunter *et.al.,* 2013). This collaborative voice is important if we are to "respond effectively to complex issues in rapidly changing contexts, especially at present while we face unprecedented challenges as a consequence of economic, political, technological, social and ecological changes and natural disasters" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, p. 1). One would argue that all these conditions, as raised by Zuber-Skerritt, are prevalent in many South African schools, but most starkly so in rural and urban township schools. It then becomes imperative to understand how the available human resources in the community can be engaged to deal with some of these challenges. However, from the literature search as well as personal and organisational reflection, it is evident that this process would be a complex one.

Sherr (2008), in working with volunteers in the social work field, advocates for a multidimensional theoretical framework to understand this complex phenomenon. This view is supported by Schuurman (2013) in her study on volunteers in a South African Non-profit Organisation (NPO) and by various international researchers (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Johnson *et al.*, 1977; Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002), who agree that a multidimensional approach should provide 'adequate information to make decisions about practice situations without drawing exclusively on 'predisposed biases'' (Sherr, 2008, pg. 46). This multidimensional view formed the theoretical framework for understanding volunteerism in this study.

3.8   MULTIDIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

In his review essay on volunteerism research, Wilson (2012) confirms that defining volunteerism is difficult, especially as it relates to the specific context in which volunteerism takes place. Wilson (2012) and Sherr (2008) confirm the challenge of adopting a one-dimensional focus in trying to understand why people volunteer, because of the complex nature of the people involved and their different motivations for volunteering. Their multi-dimensional view of the phenomenon provides useful insights for this study, in trying to understand why community volunteers get involved in volunteering at schools.

Wilson (2012), in his review of the literature, albeit focusing on literature that looked at a First World context, has grouped theories that influence volunteerism into

psychological theories, sociological theories and ecological theories. Sherr (2008) further explicitly identifies the following human behaviour theories as important: systems theory and ecological perspective; conflict theory; empowerment theory; phenomenological theory; social learning theory; life-span theory and life course theory; social exchange; and concludes with the theory of self-actualisation and self-transcendence. In my opinion, these human behavioural theories and the theory of self-actualisation and self-transcendence, as espoused by Sherr (2008), should provide useful insight into understanding the various motivations of community volunteers. Furthermore, they should provide some framework for interpreting the behaviour of and developing programmes of support for these volunteers, which was the main purpose of this study.

This inter-disciplinary theoretical view is supported by Wilson (2012), but he cautions that his research focused mainly on First World countries, arguing the case for these theories to be made contextually relevant. A brief discussion of these theories will follow.

3.8.1   Systems Theory and the Ecological Perspective

Organisations like schools are potential sites in which reciprocal transactions can occur between community volunteers and schools. The Systems theory, as an organisational theory, provides a framework that should enable us to understand how best individuals could fit into the environments that they enter and how they interact with one another (Friedman and Allen, 1997). These organisational spaces comprise various relationships between different stakeholders and other factors that the organisation has no control over (Amagoh, 2008) in pursuing its objectives. Volunteers can be regarded as human stakeholders that engage in this space.

Humans are regarded as whole systems that define who they are. Sherr (2008) states that this 'whole' system is made up of our biological, cognitive, emotional and spiritual systems. These parts connect to allow us to function optimally as individuals, as well as to connect with others. The individual functions within a group and the group then functions within a system. This is important to the understanding of volunteerism, as it is vital to recognise the uniqueness of individuals and how they

relate to others that they share their space with. A school is usually a space where multiple stakeholders are active to serve the larger purpose of the institution.

These multiple interactions take place through a 'constant and dynamic transaction of inputs and outputs' (Sherr, 2008, p.33). This reciprocal approach allows for the individual, group and environment to benefit. In the school in this study, this was evident, as the involvement of the community volunteers not only led to their own support, but also enhanced the profile of the school in the community and in broader society (Damons and Abrahams, 2009).

The systemic and the ecological perspectives thus seek to give attention to the dynamics of society, coupled with the expectations of the individual, further linked to the expectations of the environment (Friedman and Allen, 1997; Laszlo and Krippner, 1998). However, this engagement is characterised by its own tensions. This mutually beneficial relationship does not usually occur in an environment of stability and harmony and is usually underpinned by 'power, surplus value, and subjection' (Sherr, 2008, p. 33).

3.8.2   Conflict Theory

Where the systems and ecological perspectives attempt to advocate for harmonious relationships for mutually desired outcomes, the conflict theory suggests that this harmony may be difficult to maintain (Sherr, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Sherr argues that this disharmony is located in the areas of power, surplus value and subjection. The question for this study would be "how these areas of disharmony relate to the context of volunteers in a community school".

Power seems to relate to who has control over the key decisions that need to be made over matters that are important, especially with regard to people and the organisation (Sherr, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Given the nature of South African history, especially because of Apartheid rule, the public sector bureaucratic structures in this country continue to reflect a strong focus on authority and control. Schools in particular display these hierarchical structures of authority (Christie, 2010; Witten, 2006). Arguments are being advanced for a much more inclusive, flat, collaborative

type of leadership that allows for joint power-sharing (Grant, 2006; Prew, 2007). This style of leadership represents a change from the top-down leadership system that was prevalent pre-1994 in South African schools (Moloi, 2007). Traditionally, schools were seen as sites controlled, managed and, in some cases, owned by the professionally educated staff employed to educate the community's children.

The post-Apartheid South African government has gone further by legislating parental involvement in schools, to allow them to play an active role in the schooling of their children (South African Schools Act 1996, 2014). This power differential could be acuter in poorer communities, where schools are generally seen as towers of hope. The majority of members of these communities have low levels of formal education (Damons, 2012), which could lead to tensions between community members and the professional communities. This was evident in some of the responses of the participants in the aforementioned short learning programme that I presented for the Trade Union movement. In the studies of Nojaja (2009) and Van Wyk (2001), these tensions were also evident between community members and teachers predominantly around who has the right to occupy the educational space at the school. As mentioned earlier, the very nature of the way in which schools are structured (Christie, 2010) lends itself to this power imbalance. Volunteerism, I would argue, can present an opportunity to deal with this tension and could allow for better collaboration between the community and the school, as both carry the interest of advancing the children of the community at heart.

Sherr (2008) states that volunteerism, in the context of supporting social workers (and I would argue in the case of volunteers supporting schools), allows persons an equal opportunity to contribute to society. However, he cautions that, particularly in the West, how these citizens can contribute is still overregulated by people in positions of authority. Even in this study, this tension was evident as I attempted as a Principal (the person in position of institutional authority) to navigate with community members regularly the best way they could actively contribute to their children's education, negotiating a space that would allow for the emergence of voice, agency and community (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012). Johnson *et al.* (1977) identify principals as a key stakeholder group in regulating volunteer programmes, while numerous studies have reflected on the strategic roles principals play in working with

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volunteers and other stakeholders to support learner well-being and development (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006). The tension that arises, seems to be centred on how to optimally utilise the service offered by these community volunteers, or what Sherr (2008) refers to as 'surplus value'.

Surplus value, according to Sherr (2008), usually equates to the difference between the selling price of an item and the costs of the labour required to make the item. The surplus value in a school could relate to the fact that volunteers allow paid citizens (teachers and other paid government officials) to perform the core business of the school, namely teaching and learning, by supporting the school and getting involved in complementary programmes that support this core business. This provision of a voluntary service in schools could, therefore, be perceived as surplus value. Examples of such programmes, in this study, included community volunteers' involvement in the support of health initiatives and nutrition, and their direct involvement in teaching and learning by volunteering as teacher assistants in the classroom (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). Further examples of such support are the community getting involved in school security (Prew, 2009) and the involvement of young people in after-school and extramural programmes (Meresman, 2009). Sherr (2008), however, cautions that this contribution of labour can either discourage or contribute to the subjection of those involved in volunteerism. Volunteerism can also raise critical consciousness about citizens, their own agency, and their ability to contribute to matters that are of critical importance to the community. This can, however, be juxtaposed against the view that this form of volunteerism is a cheap form of labour; getting work done without any form of compensation.

I am of the view that, whatever the debate, it is important to recognise that these tensions and contradictions will be present when human and organisational systems converge to serve a common purpose. In agreeing with Sherr (2008), I am of the opinion that volunteerism could be used as a tool to counter the negative perceptions by developing 'strategies to reduce or eliminate the exploitative conditions in the social environment' (p. 35), through the empowerment and capacitation of those involved in volunteerism.

3.8.3   Empowerment Theory

The social stratification of South African society remains much the same today as it was pre-democratisation. This has given rise to community protests, especially in urban townships in South Africa, and even more recently in the community in which the school under study is located (Sobuwa, 2015). These tensions, caused by the inequitable social stratification in South African society, still reflect that the vast majority of the black population is trapped in conditions of abject poverty, which create grave social challenges (Statistics South Africa, 2012). Change is needed if we are to effectively deal with the legacy with which we are presently confronted and that permeates schools in urban township and rural communities (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010).

If we are to bring about meaningful change in the lives of all our people, collective action should be encouraged. Sherr (2008) states that critical and empowerment theorists argue that such collective action can take place only if pressure is put to bear on the established power structures. This is advocated through the empowerment of individuals engaged in this collective action.

Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) state that the empowerment theory, research and intervention are linked to individual well-being, which is connected to the collective well-being of the group and has as its broader purpose the well-being of the larger social and political environment. They argue that this is achieved when development focuses on people's capabilities rather than their deficits. Personal wellness and empowerment could be linked to the concept of personal control and the way in which the individual engages with the social world (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995). They further argue that this empowerment process will be enhanced when personal wellness is coupled with self-efficacy – the ability to take charge of self through change. However, they caution that such empowerment is not effective if it does not take place within a social context and community life. From these conclusions, they advocate for a definition of community empowerment as a space that welcomes people and contributes towards the empowerment of people. It is against this definition that I would argue that schools could be a space that could allow us to effectively engage with our communities to not only contribute towards their own

personal growth, but also to the growth and development of the school. The question that needs to be answered would be about the framework of engagement that is required, especially the context of the vast majority of South African schools.

Lord and Hutchison (1993) present some key principles for community practice that seek to advance empowerment. Although these principles were written almost 23 years ago, I would argue that they still ring true in the present context. They argue that humans engaged in the empowerment process should be seen as oppressed and not simply as 'clients' (p. 21), facing as they do various challenges, which range from poverty to social abuse. Various authors within South Africa have defined these challenges that many of schools are confronted with on a daily basis (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Prew, 2009; Witten, 2006). It is from these various challenging contexts that many potential community volunteers would come (Damons, 2012).

The principles espoused by Lord and Hutchison (1993) further encourage collaboration among all stakeholders. Freire (2007) contends that the giving up of power is essential if authentic dialogue is to take place. Through this dialogue, collaboration is established, which speaks to the complementary support that is required to truly provide learners, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the opportunity to actualise their full potential (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008). In addition, the role of citizens in identifying their problems and these citizens serving as the catalyst for fixing these problems is regarded as important (Lord and Hutchison, 1993). Lord and Hutchison (1993) further note that the actions to fix these problems must be backed up by the provision of the necessary resources. Research has shown that for any programme of change and improvement to be effectively implemented, attention needs to be given to a range of factors, which includes the provision of resources, both human and material (Vince Whitman, 2009). This resourced collaborative process, therefore, advocates for an engagement process that speaks *with* people, rather than being imposed *on* people (Hunter *et.al.*, 2013).

This agency approach to engagement could be fostered by creating spaces that participants can enter to not only actively contribute to their personal wellness, but to engage with issues related to the wellness of the broader society. Attempts to do this must not only contribute to the development of knowledge but also bear the interests

of personal and group wellness at heart. These attempts should also focus on addressing the many social challenges confronting society today (Hunter *et.al.*, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). This space of engagement should be characterised by the equal sharing of power, and people must be allowed to express themselves through various mediums (Freire, 2007). Freire (2007) further states that these views should be valued and respected, and vigorous dialogue must be encouraged. In my previous research, where I made extensive use of volunteers to support the opening of a new school, I found that the indigenous knowledge of the community substantially contributed to the establishment of an effective community school in an impoverished community (Damons, 2012). In the context of communities coming from such diversity, it would, therefore, be important also to understand how they construct their own realities.

3.8.4   Phenomenological Theory

The constructed realities of humans are influenced by the diverse backgrounds that we come from. The phenomenological theory allows for an understanding of the construction of these realities through the raising of critical consciousness by the analysis of culture, history, and individual and group perspectives (Patton, 2002; Sherr, 2008). This is particularly relevant in the South African context, because of our history. Issues like race, class and gender still play a major role in the way in which our communities are structured. The phenomenological approach allows us to understand participants' perspectives and experiences as they engage in the study (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The complex challenges that confront many schools (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006) are entwined with these community realities.

The complex challenges confronting schools are further complicated by the objective and subjective experiences of community members as they attempt to make sense of their present-day reality and engage in the process of supporting community schools. At an objective level, there was and still is the institutionalised experiences of society relating to race, gender and class. Even post the 1994 democratic dispensation in South Africa, the vast majority of the black population of South Africa still experience issues of gender stereotyping, class divisions and racial stereotyping,

mainly as related to demographic classification. This is manifested through the high unemployment rate among black females and with many women still being confined to the traditional role of caregiver at home (Statistics South Africa, 2012). This is coupled with the fact that the vast majority of townships, that house predominantly the majority of our black population, in which most schools are located, are characterised by extreme poverty and social challenges (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010). This is further indicative of the racial demographic continuing post-democracy. These objective experiences of society are further linked to the individual subjective experiences of the citizens in these contexts.

It is against these experiences that many community members, especially those living in rural and urban townships in South Africa, have to make sense of their realities and how they choose to engage with them. Creswell's (2013) philosophical perspective on phenomenology states that the wisdom that participants bring to the process of addressing their challenges is as important as the empirical evidence that will emerge. However, he cautions that the researcher must bracket his/her own biases, which was important for me as a participant in the study, having worked for more than 12 years with volunteers in a school set-up. These biases could be negated, Creswell argues, if space is created to ensure that all participants are fully allowed to describe their experiences to make sense of it from their own individual experience.

This was extremely important for this study because all the volunteers involved in this study were confronted with these objective and subjective realities on a daily basis. Having considered these realities, it, therefore, became important to understand how through self-efficacy we could give attention to these realities that might impede our personal development.

3.8.5   Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory allows us to understand how our learned behaviours are influenced by our thoughts, expectations, emotions and stresses. Social learning takes place through modelling and imitating (Sherr, 2008; Wilson, 2012), which occurs by observing the behaviours of others. Through this observation, we can

acquire new behaviour or change our existing behaviour. This modelling and imitation then lead to the development or encouragement of a sense of self-efficacy, through practically engaging in changing or acquiring behaviour. This taking responsibility of self in one area will generally lead to self-efficacy in other areas of the individual's life (Bandura, 1982; Sherr, 2008). Sherr (2008) further states in relation to social work volunteers that modelling can be manifested in the way leaders talk and relate to the phenomenon of volunteerism. He also states that more experienced volunteers can provide leadership to newer volunteers. This view supports the view held by Johnson *et al.* (1977) that recognises the important role of principals and volunteer recruiters in any school volunteer programmes.

Bandura (1982) argues that self-efficacy creates the platform for people to develop beyond the present disposition. Reed *et al.* (2015), however, warn that change in individual understanding needs to be accompanied by change within the broader social community of practice for social learning to occur. This change happens through interaction between the individual and the environment in which the engagement occurs. This presents an interesting proposition for volunteers as they operate in dynamic interaction with their fellow volunteers, learners, teachers and school, in an environment they are attempting to influence.

Various opportunities for social learning through volunteerism have been highlighted in several case studies across the globe, as well as the impact that these have had on the individual and the environment in which the individual volunteers (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009; Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). However, it is important to recognise that this social learning does not occur only as a once-off act in one situation; it happens throughout the lifespan of individuals and within the various spaces they occupy during the course of their lives.

3.8.6   Life-Span Theory and Life Course Theory

Recognising that learning occurs throughout our lifespan, makes it important that we have an understanding of human development, especially as it relates to physical and personal development (Schuurman 2013; Sherr, 2008). The psychology behind life-span theory has its focus on consistency and change of an individual through the

course of his/her life (Baltes, 1987). This life-span understanding is further intertwined with the life course of an individual, focusing on the influence of shared history and culture within the context in which the individual may find him-/herself. Sherr (2008, pg. 39) states that this complex intertwined nature denotes the 'interaction of physiological, psychological, social and spiritual processes' in an individual's life.

Erikson's eight stages of development posit that our physiological development goes through different stages, is influenced by different conditions during each stage, and that these stages are linked to one another (Sokol, 2009). Sokol (2009) states that Erikson's theory suggests that each stage has a conflict or crisis that needs to be resolved before one could proceed to the next stage. This classical view of an individual's lifespan is challenged by Sherr (2008), who argues that the limitation of these stages is that they seem to present a generic template for all individuals' development, irrespective of the various contributing factors and contexts that these individuals find themselves in. This critique by Sherr (2008) could apply to this study, because of the diversity of the participants in the study. Life course theory, Sherr (2008) then proposes, presents an attempt to address this by considering the impact of other social factors over the course of an individual's life. Factors like gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity play a big role in how one perceives oneself and one's development (Hutchison, 2010). Hutchison (2010, pg. 9) states that this impact is not linear and is a 'path with twists and turns'.

Based on the above argument, the life trajectories of individuals could be similar because of their objective experiences, but also vastly different, because of the subjective engagement within these various contexts. These trajectories, according to Sherr (2008), are influenced by individual and environmental factors. This could have been true for many of the participants in the study. Although they experienced the same harsh socio-economic conditions because they came from one area, their personal experiences could be vastly different within the same context. Sherr's (2008) argument is that volunteerism can be used as a phenomenon to influence these various trajectories. Volunteerism presents an opportunity for individuals to feel useful beyond their present disposition and allows individuals to recognise their talents and use these to benefit themselves, a group and the broader community. By

so doing, people then develop a healthier perspective of themselves and life in general. It further allows different ages to remain useful and active. In addition, Sherr (2008) argues that changing life trajectories also presents people with an opportunity to atone for past mistakes in their lives by engaging in acts that would be beneficial to others.

Having a conceptual understanding of what factors contribute to decisions to engage in volunteerism will assist in the recruiting process, but requires that recruiters spend time with volunteer recruits (Johnson *et al.*, 1977; Schuurman, 2013; Sherr, 2008). This will allow recruiters to develop a deeper understanding of the personal needs of the recruits and how best they could be utilised in the areas required. Through this, a better understanding can be developed for creating a programme of mutual benefit to the individual and the organisation.

3.8.7   Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The social exchange theory (SET) focuses on the reciprocal action that relies on the behaviour of another person that has the potential to foster high-quality relationships, under certain conditions (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Sherr (2008) further states that SET makes us understand the decisions that human beings make to achieve their personal goals during these reciprocal processes of development. In engaging in the process of reciprocal engagement to achieve these goals, humans then tend to work towards making decisions that maximise rewards and reduce costs (Sherr, 2008). This exchange could be material or more intangible, like status and recognition (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

The key element of the social exchange is that it adds value to the person involved in the exchange and the system in which this exchange is occurring. The reciprocal exchange is guided by the norms and laws in which they occur. For example, in a school situation, which to some extent is structured, there would seem to be a need to negotiate a value system that meets the developmental needs, both tangible, and intangible of the volunteer as well as the school. Majiros (2013), in examining SET in a federal workplace in the USA, states that one needs to create an organisational climate that encourages informal relationships between employees that will

encourage reciprocal actions, to the benefit of all the parties concerned. Organisationally, one could argue that this climate could be exposed in the norms and values of the organisation (Sherr, 2008).

The exchange, Sherr (2008) argues, could be under threat if people feel that the cost of getting involved in volunteerism outweighs the benefits. This creation of a reciprocal balance between the school and volunteer has always been challenging, also for the school under study, assuming that one tends to focus more on the needs of the school, often neglecting the needs of volunteers. If the primary need of the school is to create enabling conditions for effective teaching and learning, how does one recruit from within a community, with so much immediate need? Furthermore, how does a school give attention to the multidimensional needs, as highlighted in Sherr's (2008) theories, and still manage its own needs?

Majiros (2013) advances some ideas on how to tackle this challenge, albeit in a different context, but I would argue they could also be applicable to a school. Persons should be encouraged to engage in mutual exchange reflective practices that will encourage enhanced performance and facilitate the transfer of power, knowledge and perspective. This is important for a school, as volunteers often enter the process without any idea what they would like to do. Further, as we realise the importance of recruiting community members into the organisation, the realisation has to dawn that the spaces that were exclusively occupied by paid professional staff should now be shared. Added to this, creating space for developing a common perspective on how education should be done should be encouraged. This should then offer different perspectives on the roles and functions of many stakeholders that are now in the space called school. Majiros (2013) argues that the exchange of knowledge should become one of the core values and should be embedded in leadership. In a school, the knowledge about the community and children that volunteers could bring to a school could be invaluable in supporting the work of teachers, especially in the context defined by the school in this study. This knowledge should be shared through open communication, which will "support the natural development of informal mentoring relationships based on mutual respect, shared values and trust" (Swingonksi in Majiros, 2013). These enabling conditions,

however, should be conscious of the context and culture in which it takes place (Majiros, 2013).

The social exchange theory provides a lens for also understanding how we could begin the process of aligning the needs of those that have an interest in education to play a meaningful part in helping the school achieve its objectives, by further understanding the needs of volunteers.

3.8.8 Self-Actualisation and Self-Transcendence Theory

Besides the need to engage with one another, Sherr (2008) states that Maslow focuses on the individual positive human elements, which include qualities like lovingness, spontaneity, meaningfulness, creativity, freedom and dignity, that may contribute towards motivating persons to become involved in volunteerism. These qualities, he argues, are present as people progress towards self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

Self-actualisation is the inclination to achieve one's personal highest potential and is located on the higher end of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualisation is achieved once our lower needs of physiology, such as safety, love and esteem, are attended to (Griffin, 2015). This is in contrast to the more behaviourist approach that characterises the previous theories covered in this section (Sherr, 2008). It is, therefore, important that we have an understanding of the needs of human beings if we want to develop a more complete and 'accurate understanding of human personality and behaviour' (Koltko-Rivera, 2006, p. 313). The argument is, therefore, advanced that if one achieves meeting one's deficiency needs (Griffin, 2015), one stretches beyond oneself to others. Moreover, one then moves toward what one feels is a 'higher state of being' (Sherr 2008, p 43), which is referred to as GOD in some instances (self- transcendence) (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

As noted before, although volunteerism could be quite complex to understand, Sherr (2008) argues that it could be a medium that allows people to self-actualise and self-transcend. This, he argues, is achieved by allowing people to engage in acts that allow them to experience 'dignity, justice, mastery and love of others' (Sherr, 2008,

p. 43). It could be said that this would probably augur well for many of the black communities that surround many South African schools, who have emerged from a past characterised by loss of dignity, grave injustices, lack of opportunity and division, because of the legacy left by Apartheid (Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Prew, 2009). Sherr's(2008) proposition suggests that, through volunteerism, an opportunity exists for these communities to experience a new sense of dignity, justice, mastery and love of others.

The challenge that would possibly face many schools is how to establish a framework of engagement with the local communities around the school in order for them to have such an experience and contribute towards the functionality of the school. It is clear that this would require investment in extra human resources and a lot of time, which could prove challenging for many principals, as they are already faced with a myriad of challenges.

The multidimensional framework has, as its focus, volunteerism in the social work profession. I found Majiros's (2013) citing of the purpose of social work, as defined by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, very closely aligned to what I view should be the purpose of any possible recruitment of community volunteers to assist a school:

> Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle of change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups, organisations and communities (Majiros, 2013, p. 25).

The reworked purpose of community volunteers active in a school could possibly read as follows: Community schools should understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle of change. Community schools should engage available community members as partners in the helping process of delivering quality public education for their children. Schools should seek to strengthen relationships among all its stakeholders in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the wellbeing of learners, educators, community

volunteers, communities and, most importantly, the school in which this dynamic interaction occur.

It is clear from the above framework that a multifocal approach provides a broad view to understand volunteerism and to guide strategies for understanding, creating and sustaining such a programme in a school. The systems and ecological theory provide us with an insight into individuals and how they interact with the school as part of the system of the community. Critical theory will not only allow schools to reflect on the various power relations operating within them, but also provide insight into individuals' own personal consciousness as it relates to personal agency while reflecting on the impact of our historic past. Through this agency, a space for empowerment can emerge that could be beneficial for the individual volunteering as well as empowering the school to deliver on its main mandate of providing quality education to its learners. In the process of this empowerment, the phenomenological theory will provide further insight into who these people are who volunteer and into different behavioural patterns. Volunteerism could then potentially lead to a change in the life trajectories of these community volunteers. The trajectories are then further developed by the mutually beneficial exchange that can occur between individuals involved in volunteerism and the school. This has the potential for these volunteers to transcend from not only reaching and achieving their own fullest potential, but extend to touch the other-self, in an almost spiritual mission to improve society.

The multidimensional view is supported by various studies that have worked within the volunteer sector (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Johnson, Guinagh, Bell and Estroff, 1977; Schuurman, 2013; Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002). However, Schuurman (2013), based on her South African study, states that there was very little literature on the application of these theories within the South African context, and a further search indicates even less of the application of these theories in studies that focused on community schooling. Although Prew (2009) and Damons (2012) recognise the importance of volunteers, no detailed theoretical analysis was done on the underlying motives why volunteers chose to get involved. Furthermore, their studies did not clearly identify if these volunteers: visibly understood what their roles were in contributing towards the effectiveness of schooling; how their critical consciousness was raised through the act of volunteerism; and based, on these theoretical

understanding, if schools knew what support could be provided to ensure the sustained continued involvement of these volunteers. In addition, the actual voice, as active participants in this 'action' process of volunteerism, of the volunteer, seemed silent in the most literature reviewed, and most of the research seemed to be done on the volunteers instead of with them.

It appeared from the literature review and from the examples cited from the school under study that a number of questions needed to be answered before such a volunteer programme could be successfully implemented. Table 3.1 provides a summary of how these theories connect to the study.

TABLE 3.1: Connecting theories to study

Theory	Relevance to study
Role-identity; life-span; life course; self-actualisation and self-transcendence	Understanding why community volunteers get involved.
Conflict, systems, social theory and empowerment theories	Making sense of the work volunteers are expected to perform within the ambit of the school.
Ecological and social exchange theories	Should further clarify how our work fits into the broader transformation of society.
All eight theories	Assist in the conceptualisation of a theoretical model for engagement with community members.

3.9   QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

Sufficient research does seem to exist around the contributions, other than governance, that communities can bring to support schools to become more effective (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2014; Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009; Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009). There still seems to be a lack of a clear understanding as to how these stakeholders can get effectively involved in supporting the school (Lemmer and Van Wyk, 2004; Nojaja, 2009).

It is further evident that school effectiveness has been mainly defined by academic scholars and the Department of Basic Education (Department of Education, 2001;

Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Prew, 2009). However, not much literature was found around how the community defines this effectiveness and what volunteers perceive as their role in making schools more effective, especially in schools located in South African urban township and rural communities. I am of the view that if enough empirical evidence emerges, creative tensions, cited earlier in this review, can be addressed. This was true in the case of the school in the study, as the community never truly participated in a deep systematic process to define what school truly means to them within the context that it was located.

Furthermore, although alternative models of schooling are being followed (UNICEF, 2009; WHO, 2014), not much literature exists on how schools located in these communities can go about recruiting the available human resources to support them in their endeavours to become more effective. Insufficient evidence seems to exist as to what would motivate communities to become involved in volunteering in disadvantaged schools.

This proposed study will attempt to address these gaps by focusing on giving voice to community volunteers involved in the action of volunteerism in a community school in South Africa.

3.10   SUMMARY

In this chapter, I critically discussed existing literature as it related to volunteerism in relation to the definition of volunteerism; the demographic profile of volunteers; volunteerism in schools; different ways to recruit, sustain and use volunteers; and potential barriers to the successful implementation of a volunteer programme. The multidimensional framework was then explored as a possible means to understand why people choose to volunteer, and the chapter concluded with a discussion of some important issues that need to be addressed. The following chapter will focus on the methodology justification to generate data to address these issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

A THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1   INTRODUCTION

My desire to create a space for agency, voice and community (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012) guided this journey of exploration with a group of community volunteers to understand how they contributed to support the school under study in achieving its core objective providing quality public education to its learners. Using a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) design, the aim was to develop a suggested framework that could be used in schools to recruit, support and sustain the work of community volunteers. This chapter will justify the choice of research design that I deemed appropriate to attain this objective.

In this chapter, after providing a brief rationale and motivation for my research focus, I describe the paradigmatic assumptions that informed the methodological choice for this study. I then explain participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) as a research design and the methods used for participant selection, data generation, and analysis. An elaboration is thereafter given of the methods taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study, and an explanation is provided of the ethical issues considered relevant for this type of study. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the key concepts discussed. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the methodology.

TABLE 4.1: Overview of research design

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	
RESEARCH QUESTION	
How can the community school recruit, support and sustain the community volunteer?	
SUB-QUESTIONS	
• What motivates the community volunteer to do this work? • How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school? • How can this knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer work in a community school?	
RESEARCH PARADIGM, APPROACH AND DESIGN	
• Paradigm: Epistemological: Critical Theory / Empowerment Theory • Research Approach: Qualitative • Design: Participatory Action Learning and Action Research	
RESEARCH METHODS AND STRATEGIES	
Participant selection:	Purposive sampling: 15 community volunteers active in the school that forms part of the study
Data generation activities:	**Cycle 1**: *How can we work together to answer the research questions: What motivates the community volunteer to do this work?*: Problem definition and needs analysis; Start-Up Workshop: team building, project presentation and orientation, planning of study; setting up of Key Advisor Set (KAS) (two meetings): reflection on action learning set (ALS) meeting, planning for ALS; setting up action learning set (ALS) (two meetings): formulation of final research questions, exploration of data generation methods, generation of data, data analysis, reflection on learning, planning next cycle. **Cycle 2**: *How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school? What collaborative processes enable data to emerge?*: Action learning set meeting (two meetings): engagement with question, refining data generation methods, generation of data, data analysis, reflection on learning, planning next cycle; SMT Focus Group: school management engagement on research questions; key advisor set (KAS) meeting: reflection on ALS, planning of next ALS. **Cycle 3**: *How can this (Cycle 1 and Cycle 2) knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining*

	volunteer work in a community school? What collaborative processes will enable a framework to emerge? Key Advisor Set (KAS) (two meetings): validation of data from cycles 1 and 2, conceptualising process model, reflection on research process, drafting procedure manual, planning and facilitating final ALS engagement; Action Learning Set (three meetings): validation of data from cycles 1 and 2; conceptualising process model, reflection on research process, finalising procedure manual, planning for presentation of findings, presentation of findings and celebrations, recognition ceremony for participants.	
Data generation strategies:	Action Learning Set (ALS) and Key Advisor Set (KAS) engagements: transcripts of engagements, photo voice, world cafe; Focus group with School Management Team, my personal reflective journal; secondary data sources (portfolios of evidence submitted for other research projects conducted at the school, minutes from meetings where the phenomena was discussed and photo collages of projects from the school)	
Data analysis technique:	Critical discourse analysis (CDA): narrative analysis and thematic analysis	

TRUSTWORTHINESS: QUALITY AND VALIDITY CRITERIA				
Dialogic and Process validity	Catalytic validity	Rhetoric validity	Democratic validity	Outcome validity

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Institutional requirements: informed consent; Action research principles: mutual respect; equality and inclusion; democratic participation; active learning; making a difference; collective action; and personal integrity

OUTCOMES
To collaboratively design a process model to recruit, sustain and support the community volunteer involved in a community school.

4.2 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR CHOICE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I wanted to ensure that the generation of empirical knowledge, through the phenomenon under investigation, would not only contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the school, but also add value to the community that we serve. Action research, of which PALAR is one genre, "intimately links research to practise such that each informs the other" (Hunter *et al.*, 2013, p. 18). This understanding of

Hunter *et al.* (2013) aligns with my conscious attempt to build a bridge where theory could meet present practice, to influence praxis. According to Hunter *et al.* (2013), the intersection of theory and practice is regarded as a praxis that impacts on the way we think about how we perform our duties, responsibilities and civic action in a specific space, in this case, the school. I therefore attempted through the study to develop an ontological and epistemological understanding of how the phenomenon of community volunteerism had a perceived impacted on the general functionality of the school, especially in the context of an under-resourced school, mirroring many South African schools in a similar context (Christie, *et al.*, 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010). The study further sought to understand what motivated volunteers to become involved in the school and how their work in the school could be supported and sustained.

This exploration and learning were guided by my primary research question: *How can the community school recruit, support and sustain the community volunteer?*
In order to fully engage with the primary research question, we, the participants in the study, explored the following sub-questions:

- What motivates the community volunteer to do this work?
- How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school?
- How can this knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer work in a community school?

As the then Principal of the school, the data that emerged, not only provided valuable empirical evidence of the perceived beneficial impact of volunteerism at the school, but further allowed the opportunity for me to reflect on my own ontological and epistemological assumptions of the phenomenon. This data could possibly help inform other school leaders about how to attract and maintain volunteers in support of the work that they had to do, especially leaders and schools faced with similar contexts as the school in the study.

The motivation for my study was to explore and understand with the community volunteers their motivation, the perceptions of the value that they added and how their work could be supported and sustained. Objectives to reach this aim were:

- To collaboratively understand what motivated the community volunteer to be involved in a school.

- To collaborate in a humanising way with the community volunteers to develop an understanding of what they perceive as their key roles and responsibilities in the school and what support they needed to improve on present practice.

- To explore whether their acts of volunteerism were perceived to have had an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.

- To develop a contextual process model for sustaining volunteerism that could be of use to other schools operating within similar contexts that desired to involve volunteers.

4.3   METHODOLOGY

Since it was important for me to collaborate with those I shared my space with, I needed to find a research design that supported a participatory paradigm. This approach was premised on my personal desire to serve as a catalyst for change through the honouring of the voice and agency that a group of community volunteers brought to our school. I, therefore, attempted to create a dialogical space in which all participants in the study, including myself as a researcher, could vigorously engage with the phenomenon under study (Freire, 2007) in a humanising way (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012). This dialogically engaged space was influenced by the following paradigmatic assumptions.

4.3.1   Paradigmatic Assumptions

A paradigm is the view of reality (ontology), of which one may or may not be conscious, and is related to the types of knowledge that can be generated through standards for justifying it (epistemology) through a structured approach to generating this knowledge (methodology) (Taylor and Medina, 2013). The belief of what

knowledge is and how it is constructed (Scotland, 2012) and the process of generating this knowledge is important for any approach to research and is influenced by the researcher's beliefs (De Vos, *et al*, 2011).

Taylor and Medina (2013), in their paper on the major paradigms in education, use the metaphor of a fisherman (see Table 4. 2) to explain them. They argue that the use of post-modern paradigms, such as the critical and interpretive paradigms, allows for the development of the researcher and encourages alternative modes of thinking, such as 'metaphorical thinking, dialectical thinking, inductive thinking, mythopoetic thinking and reflective thinking' (Taylor and Medina, 2013, pp. 9-10). They further advocate a multi-paradigmatic approach, which encourages diverse philosophies on knowledge generation. This post-modern, multi-paradigmatic approach, as suggested by Taylor and Medina, located in a critical emancipatory paradigm, is what I regarded as best suited for my study.

TABLE 4.2: Paradigm metaphoric table

Paradigm	View	Application in study
Positivist Paradigm	A positivist fisherman standing on a river bank describes (without getting his/her feet wet) the social properties of a species of fish by observing the general tendency of their group behaviour as they swim around. Usually done through the gathering of empirical quantitative data.	These views were not applied in the study, as I was an active participant using qualitative data generation techniques. If I located the study in this paradigm, I would administer a questionnaire to the volunteers and analyse and draw my conclusions, as an example.
Post-Positivist Paradigm	A post-positivist fisherman supplements his/her	

	quantitative observations of the social properties of a species of fish by wearing a wet-suit and conducting structured interviews of a random sample of fish to ascertain their reasons for swimming in accordance with the inferred social pattern.	
Interpretive Paradigm	The interpretive fisherman enters the water, establishes rapport with the fish and swims with them, striving to understand their experience of being in the water. This interpretive fisherman questions his/her methods of interacting with the fish remains doubtful about his/ability to fully commune with them and reflects on his/her own experience of being fish-like in the water.	I worked with my co-participants in an Action Learning Set (ALS), as we strove to understand the phenomenon that we were researching. Through constant reflection in a personal journal and engagement in the set, we collaboratively determined what the best methods were through the dialogical reflections that took place in our meetings. I constantly reflected on the process of collaboration, as well as the emergent data.
Critical Paradigm	The critical fisherman enables the fish to perceive the pollution in the water in which they live, to find its source, and	Through the emerging data, we could reflect on our practices and what influenced our behaviour and actions as it related to volunteerism at

	to identify its harmful effect on their being in the water. The critical fisherman empowers the fish to organise themselves as a lobby group and protest the Fisheries department and s/he advocates on their behalf to have the river cleaned.	our school. In addition, the engagement developed a contextual relevant theoretical framework for sustaining volunteerism that can be of use to other schools operating within similar contexts that wish to involve volunteers. This was done through the development of a volunteer procedure manual and the presentation of data to stakeholders, involved in the school and in education in general. The raising of participants' awareness empowered them to decide on the process and what to do with data. For example, they could play an active role in deciding how they wanted volunteerism to be structured and how it should be reported to the school and other stakeholders.

Given my participatory ontology, the multi-paradigmatic interpretive and critical paradigms were the only paradigms I could consider for the study. As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the study was located and influenced by South Africa's history. This historical location was further influenced by the challenging socio-economic conditions in which the school and participants found themselves. Through these critical paradigmatic lenses, I wanted to understand, with a group of volunteers, what motivated and what did not motivate community involvement in a

school. Furthermore, I wanted to explore what value, if any, these volunteers brought to the school and how this involvement could be sustained. This we achieved through a dialogical and action based engagement of issues raised in the study.

The dialogical engagement, which is suited for a critical paradigm (Taylor and Medina, 2013), was characterised by collaboration, active and voluntary participation and open, frank, democratic communication. Furthermore, we evaluated and interrogated our own agency in the process of trying to understand the questions raised in the study. Through the process, my study furthermore sought to empower participants, by critically looking at our approach to volunteerism in the school. In addition, this look at practice allowed us to self-critique our practice and provided alternative pathways to improving it.

Critical theory has its origin in social justice (Zeus, 2004), which I regarded as important for this study, because of the context in which the school was located. All children should be allowed to enjoy quality education (Noguera, 2003). The concept of looking at ways to support the provision of quality education for the learners in this community became an important social justice issue for this study. This I sought to do through working collaboratively with a group of community volunteers who resided in the community from which the learners hailed. It was further important that the participants would recognise that, through their agency, they were participating in the creation of a space in which quality education could be provided for their children. They did this by actively contributing through the process of volunteerism in our school. However, as Sherr (2008) explains in his multidimensional theory, understanding all the participants' interpretations of the knowledge we were creating was quite complex and, therefore, a critical lens was required to view the data as it emerged and to understand how our knowledge is and was shaped (ontology) and how we constructed our knowledge (epistemology) (Scotland, 2012).

Having declared my intention to not only be a catalyst for the embodiment of the principles of *Ubuntu*, as explained in Chapter One, but also wanting to be an agent for personal and organisational transformation, I navigated towards a critical emancipatory paradigm as the basis for our empirical exploration in my study (Montero, 2000). The emancipatory nature of the research methodology (Montero,

2000) aligned with my intention to not only critically engage with the social issues that impacted on our working space but also to provide a research space that could be an instrument to achieve our goals. This explicit intention is important (Hunter *et al.*, 2013) because I wanted the research to be conducted within the context of our work, with a clearly stated agenda. However, as a scholar, I was mindful that I had a responsibility to share the empirically generated knowledge with the scientific community, clearly indicating how the knowledge was constructed and clearly stating my scientific obligations, to ensure that my findings were credible (Montero, 2000). Through this, I furthermore wanted to ensure that the converging of theory and practice would contribute not only towards my own personal development, but also to the development of those with whom I shared the research space. This collaborative engagement would then lead to the improvement of the research space itself. In the case of this study, our research space was the school. Through this agency and dialogical engagement, we grappled with the challenges that not only confronted our school, but the broader society as well (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

The journey of creating this dialogical space was important to enable all the voices in the study to be heard on an equal basis and not for mine to be foregrounded (Henning, 2004). This balance of voice was challenging throughout the course of the study, as I had to constantly juggle my roles in the space as Principal and researcher. It is this tension of managing the space, Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that could lead to the possible subjectivity of the knowledge that might emerge. However, as the study will show, this dance between these roles allowed for the emergence of a dialogical space in which the critical discussions were held, allowed for the empowerment of all who owned the space. Sherr's (2008) multidimensional lens thus became an effective filter to critically view the discourse that took place, as it emphasised the multiple reasons why people would get involved in volunteerism. The knowledge that emerged, provided the basis for challenging our own assumptions and beliefs around volunteerism that we sometimes took for granted, having being immersed in the process for many years. This socially constructed knowledge, I will later argue, not only led to the emancipation of us as participants, but further impacted on the school as an institution of teaching and learning (Esau, 2013). From the emerging data, we eventually looked at the redefinition of the community school, within our context.

On a personal level, my assumptions regarding my own humanity, my role as a Principal and my role as a researcher were under constant reflection and open to review. It is through this reflection and reviews that my own practice as Principal and researcher was impacted. In my opinion, this was also true for the other participants, as it also related to participant researchers and volunteers in the study, which highlighted the strength of the research design. It is against this background of critical discourse, empowerment, collaborative engagement and growth that I identified a participatory action research approach as the most appropriate methodological approach to achieve the objectives of this study.

4.3.2 Methodological Approach

My paradigmatic assumptions strongly influenced my methodological approach. These assumptions required a space in which the authentic voice of all the participants could be honoured, through a journey that would not only provide empirical evidence, but also contribute to broader social change through the educational process. I, therefore, chose a participatory approach as the scientific method that would allow for a dialogical space for data to be generated and analysed, justifying the findings of my study (Struwig and Stead, 2010).

The recognition and full engagement of all participants' authentic voice (Freire, 2007), encouraging agency and creating a sense of community (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012) was important as we navigated what at times seemed a messy process, which is common in action research projects (Klocker, 2012). Montero (2000) traces the history of participatory research from the early emancipatory work of Engel and Marx to the dialogical active approach of Paulo Freire in Latin America. Montero recognises Freire's work as introducing the participation of subjects into an active enquiry about themselves and their environment.

Montero (2000, p. 134) further explains participatory action research as an inclusive process. This strategy, he states, seeks to incorporate 'those people and groups affected by a problem, in such a way that they become co-researchers through their action in the different phases and moments of the research carried out to solve them' (Montero, 2000, p. 134). All the participants who formed part of my study were either

parents or guardians who had children attending our school, or they lived in the community in which most of our children reside. In addition, they were all active volunteers at the school in the study. I facilitated the exploration of knowledge, with the participants through the creation of an action learning set (ALS) (Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). An ALS is regarded as "a collaborative team" engagement and "all members working on the same topic problem of mutual concern" (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, p. 27).

Knowledge emerged over the course of three iterative cycles (see Figure 4.3). It is through these various cycles that the ownership of the research process by the members of the action learning set was cemented. In addition, the knowledge generated through the iterative cyclic process, which is common in action research projects (McAteer, 2013), also provided us with the opportunity to re-examine the way we viewed ourselves, our school and society. The further purpose of this engagement was to ensure that the knowledge that emerged, not only contributed to improving the way we did the business of the school, but possibly also to knowledge that could impact on other schools faced with similar challenges as our school. Montero (2000) argues that the bringing together of participants in a participatory way will foster the emergence of this new type of knowledge. The bringing together of such a diverse group of participants, in this study, who included me, required a research approach that was, therefore, embracing of all participants.

4.4   RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative approach was considered suitable for my study because it would honour all participants and allow for the study to occur within the context in which the phenomenon was being studied (Mouton, 2003; Struwig and Stead, 2010). The fact that we studied the phenomenon at the school at which we all worked, allowed us to be able to understand volunteerism as it related to the engagement at our school much better. It further allowed us to see the interrelatedness of the study with our work, one of the key features of the qualitative approach.

Our engagement, however, at the empirical level, was different, because of the diversity and complexity of us as participants engaged in the study. As noted earlier,

the engagement proved both exciting and challenging. We had to navigate through issues like language barriers, use of names in the space, and the impact of our respective jobs on the research process itself. In addition to this, the diverse make-up of the participants reminded me to be attentive of the realities of age, gender, class, power, learning, expectations and self-actualisation that were at play during the process. Sherr's (2008) multidimensional lens directed and informed this mindfulness, which allowed me to remain reflective throughout the processes of the engagement. Constant reflection in my journal and with critical friends further assisted with this mindfulness. I heeded Maxwell's (2012) caution that a theory-laden lens does not stand in isolation to the realities of unemployment, gender bias and the daily struggle for survival that many volunteers face. Hence the choice of a qualitative approach.

The qualitative approach allows the multidimensional theory (Sherr, 2008) to meet critical reality (Maxwell, 2012). The key to this was to ensure that the voice that emerged through all the processes remained authentic, as it related to the various engagements we had, a key component of the qualitative approach. I, therefore, sought to understand the emic perspective, which is information from the view of the people living the experience, as well as incorporating the etic perspective or outsider's view (Hennik, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). Although I was Principal at the school and had worked with volunteers for more than twelve years and was, therefore, familiar with many of my fellow participants in the study, it would be the first time at our school that I would enter the space as a co-researcher and participant. So, to some extent, I entered the space from an etic perspective. Furthermore, according to this view, a person's perspective or processing of information is influenced by his/her interaction with his/her social context (Henning, 2004), which in this case was the personal context of the participants as well as the context of our school.

A qualitative approach helped further to navigate areas of subjectivity of which I had to be constantly mindful. This was particularly true, because of my dual role as Principal and researcher in the study. I had to ensure that I did not allow the Principal to become part of the empirical space, which proved challenging at the best of times.

The need to incorporate the view of all participants was further underpinned by my desire to remain true to the philosophy of honouring all the participants' voices.

It was, therefore, important that I chose a research design that would honour and incorporate all perspectives, as well as recognise the context in which our study occurred. The design further had to allow for empirical vigour so that the findings could be validated and justified.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN: PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING AND ACTION RESEARCH

A research design is regarded as a plan how a researcher can attempt to explore the phenomenon under investigation (De Vos *et al.*,2011; Mouton, 2003; Struwig and Stead, 2010). Furthermore, Trafford and Leshem (2008) suggest that such a plan should consider constraints, practicality and time. Serving as Principal of the school and having the volunteers active in the school made it a suitable site to conduct our study. These considerations, coupled with my intent to be an agent not only for organisational change but also social and personal change, informed my decision to use a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) design (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

PALAR is a genre of action research. Zuber-Skerritt (2011) first developed the methodology by bringing together the fields of action learning and action research, to include a more participatory paradigm. She states that PALAR is a synthesis of action learning (AL), action research (AR) and participatory action research (PAR), and is ideally suited for 'personal, professional, organisational or community development' through action leadership (p. 2). Action leadership is developed with others in an actively creative, innovative, collaborative, shared way (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011), which this study sought to do.

This type of action leadership was encouraged throughout the study. Through the iterative cyclic process, we navigated from clumsy novices to becoming competent action leaders. The research space was characterised by the various participants assuming multiple leadership roles throughout the process. These roles manifested in various forms, including the translating of parts of the set engagement into

isiXhosa by those competent to do it and participants actually leading the set meetings or sub-groups in the set. This fluid leadership development evolved from the learning experienced through the various cycles as we constantly reflected on the process. These reflections were primarily aimed at answering the research questions; the secondary role it fulfilled was to improve our research capacity. The development was further supported by a research space that encouraged the promotion of mutual, development and trust; the achievement of sustainable community development; the inclusion of knowledge; and the creation of new knowledge that was relevant, useful and contextualised (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

The research questions aimed to generate data to develop a theoretical framework that would enable us to understand volunteerism through the experiences of people engaged in the practice. This was done in order to suggest a sustainable model around volunteerism within the context of the school in the study. The study went further and highlighted the value that volunteerism could bring to support the functionality of the school and how the work of the volunteers could be supported in the school.

The iterative cyclic processes allowed us to systematically navigate through all the data that emerged, and the emerging data lead to the influencing of praxis, as it related to our practice in the school and the research process. All the time during this engagement, I had to be mindful that the knowledge that was emerging should not only be relevant for the development of participants, but also help to make the school a more humanising space. This personal statement of commitment to the development of self and others, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, is what philosophically drove me to do this research. In doing this, I wanted to ensure that I not only added value to the lives of all the participants in this study, which included myself, but also added value to the school and community in which we did our research. Equally important, we wanted to learn from the process, so as to contribute to the local, national and international debate on school improvement.

PALAR is grounded in a multi-theoretical framework, which includes action theory; grounded theory; critical theory; systems theory; personal construct theory; and experiential learning theory (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). This multi-theoretical grounding

not only aligns with my own paradigmatic approach to the study, but also shares the commonalities of Sherr's (2008) multi-dimensional framework, which provided the theoretical framework to understand volunteerism in my study. These multi-dimensional approaches formed part of the key component of the empowering of self and others in this study. It furthers allowed for the critical engaging of social challenges that impacted on our ability to do our work, as educationists and stakeholders wanting to contribute to this process. In addition to the alignment with my paradigmatic assumptions, PALAR moreover synthesises the participatory methodological approach, which in this study encouraged us to take full ownership for ourselves, others and the spaces that we occupied, through the equal sharing of power, through a structured designed approach.

This synthesised process of participatory action learning and action research took place through various cycles of engagement (Figure 4.3), which was informed by Zuber-Skerritt's (2011) 'donut' model of an action learning programme (Figure 4.2). My research design (Figure 4.3) attempted to develop a process that would create a pathway for participatory engagement and learning to occur, using some of the key components of a structured action learning programme. The various research cycles were characterised by planning, engagement, reflection and action, which is summarised in Table 4.1.

FIGURE 4.2: 'Donut' process model (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011)
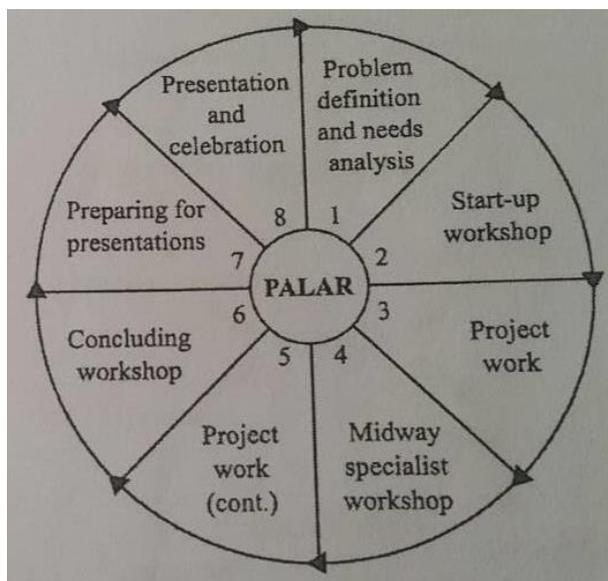
FIGURE 4.3: Research design
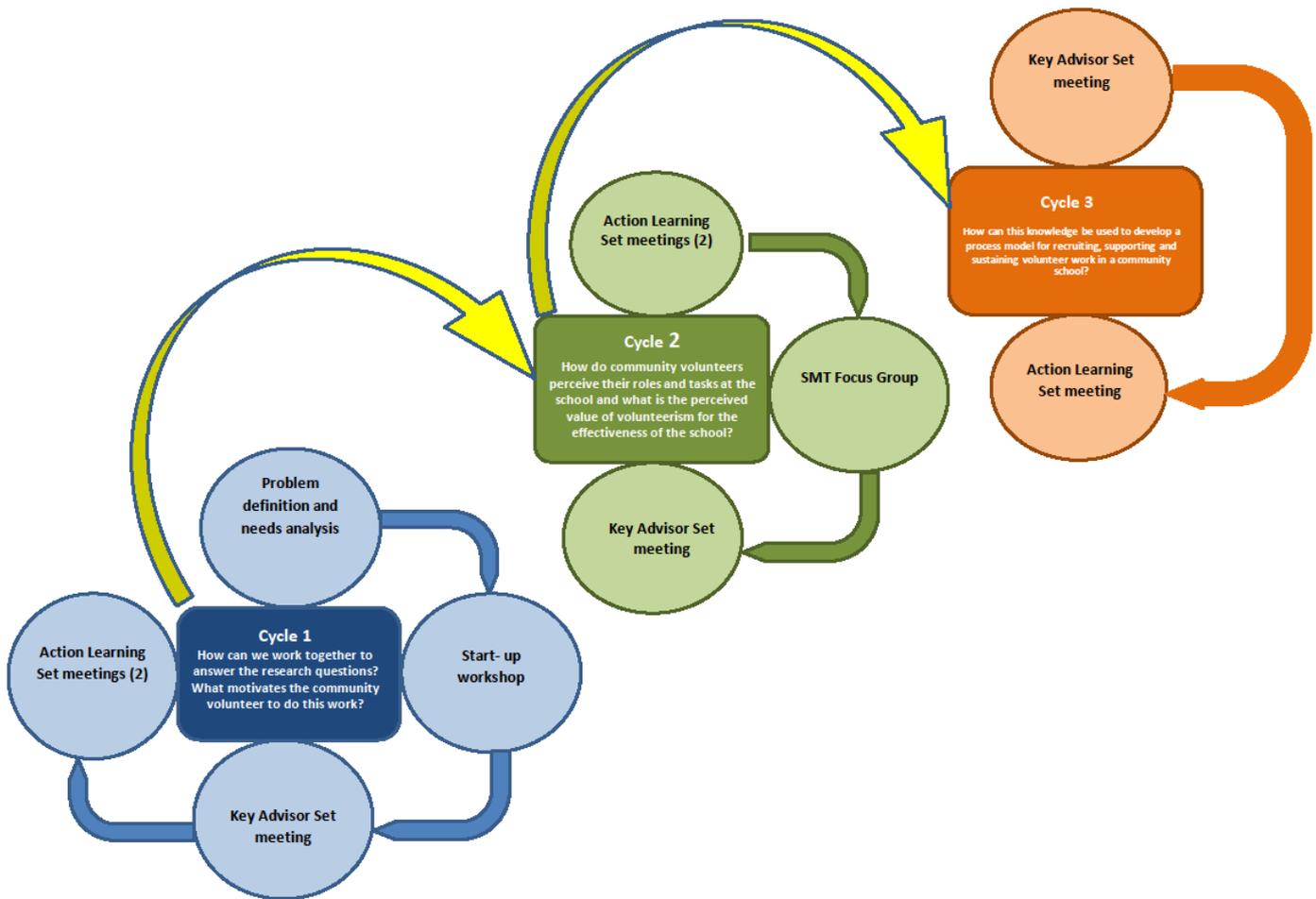
It is through these various cycles of knowledge engagement that the action learning set (ALS) and the key advisor set (KAS) emerged as the key spaces for the dialogical and dialectal engagement of participants.

4.5.1 Participant selection

The 15 participants were purposefully sampled because they represented a fairly representative demographic spread of all the volunteers active at the school. Their selection was agreed to in a meeting with the leader volunteers of the school. We agreed that the leaders of each of the different volunteer project areas active in the school would be the participants in the study. We felt that voices of all the volunteers would be heard through the participation of their leaders in the study. The table below, 4.4, presents a demographic breakdown of the participants relating to age, gender, educational levels, race, their dependents for survival and number, and their

children attending the school where the study took place. We organised ourselves into an action learning set (ALS), comprising all participants in the study (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011; Zuber-Skerritt and Teare, 2013). In addition to the community volunteers, the action learning set included a Dutch volunteer, who was active in the school. After the start-up workshop, a key advisor set (KAS) was created, compromising five members from the ALS.

The KAS was established initially as a support group to help me in planning the logistics around the various set meetings. However, the KAS emerged as one of the important spaces where reflection in the set meetings occurred, as well as serving as the space for the strategic planning and direction of the study. A reflection in one of the KAS meetings at the end of Cycle Two had a major impact on how the ALS was conducted in Cycle Three. The members of the KAS were identified by myself and confirmed by the ALS. The one member was identified based on considerations such as that she was the Admin Assistant of the school; was confident in IT, and was articulate in both English and isiXhosa. A second member was identified, because besides serving as the designated translator in all the set meetings, she initially showed enthusiasm towards the research project and was not afraid to engage me critically in the ALS space or informally outside of the research space, about matters relating to the study. She became a critical voice in the study and navigated me to many wonderful personal spaces. The Dutch volunteer also formed part of the KAS. She brought her personal expertise, which included typing at break-neck speed. This meant that after each session I would have notes that I could use to validate my reflections. These reflections, with the official transcripts of the various sessions, became important data verification tools. A fifth member, who was part of the ALS, was nominated, by the ALS to the KAS during the third cycle, because we needed an extra person to assist with the data verification process.

The KAS meetings usually sat before each engagement to reflect, plan and discuss content and issues as they emerged during the study. The KAS was further tasked with the responsibility to compile the volunteer manual from the data that emerged (Appendix - 1). In addition to the manual they had to design, they facilitated a capacity building workshop to prepare ALS members to present the findings of the study to the identified stakeholders.

TABLE 4.3: Biographical detail of community volunteer participants (excluding the Dutch volunteer and myself)

Age		Gender		Formal education level		Race		Dependents at home		Children at Sapphire	
Age groupings	Total	Gender	Total	Highest Level	Total	Race	Total	Total dependents	Total	Children at school	Total
27-46	9	F	11	Grade 7-11	15	Black	14	0-3	11	0	5
47-66	6	M	4	Grade 12 and post grade 12	0	Coloured and other	1	4-6	4	1-2	10

The Dutch volunteer, mentioned above, approached the school at the beginning of the year to ask if she could volunteer at the school. The SGB decided then that she would work with the volunteers and she was co-opted onto the executive committee of the volunteers, as the project developer and fund-raiser. She brought another critical voice to the research space, as she not only had a passion for community volunteerism but also had an understanding of the empirical process, holding a Master's degree in Developmental Studies. At various stages in the process, she guided and reminded me to be accountable to myself and to the principles that we set in the start-up workshop. In addition to serving as a critical voice, she was also important in assisting me to capture the summaries of all the discussions during the set meeting. She proved to be an invaluable critical friend during the process of data generation and assisted in my own positioning in the study.

As indicated in Chapter One, I positioned myself as a participatory activist researcher (Hunter *et al.*, 2013) in the study. My intention was not only to generate empirical knowledge but also to allow my study to connect this knowledge in such a way that it would contribute to the practice of all of us in the school. It is during this connection, as the findings will show, that our personal transformation took place. The work of Hunter *et al.* (2013) provided a key framework for my personal engagement in the study. Hunter *et al.* (2013) caution participatory activist researchers regarding their own biases, values, beliefs and expectations, and this was something that I had to be conscious of throughout the study, particularly during the writing-up stage.

My own fear of dominance, as an active participant, was later overcome when the participants started to find their voices. To keep conscious of the issues raised by Hunter *et al.* (2013), I designed a reflection journal, themed around the seven key values of the research design PALAR, namely communication, collaboration, commitment, coaching, critical and self-critical attitude, competence and compromise (Appendix - 2). These reflections allowed me to remain conscious that I had to give up some of the practices, privileges and titles that are usually assigned to a school principal through the normal conventions of the job. One example of this was the address form used during the set engagements. As Principal, all the participants call me Mr. Damons, but in ALS meetings I was called Bruce. This led to some fun, but tense and awkward situations in the start-up workshop. For the younger volunteers, this more informal mode of address was easy to navigate, but the older volunteers experienced some difficulty with it. I also had to admit that it initially made me feel somewhat uncomfortable as well. I will reflect more on this dynamic interplay in my findings. We finally agreed that I could be called whatever mode of address individual participants felt comfortable with. So throughout the process I was called a variety of names, which included 'Bruce', 'Mr. Damons' and 'Tata (Father)'. I recognised that this focused critically on one of the conventional operations of schooling, namely the titles giving to those in authority, usually associated with power.

The engagements with one another in these sets were underscored by what Zuber-Skerritt (2011) terms the 7Cs of action research: communication; collaboration; commitment; coaching; critical attitude and reflection on the action; competence; and character building.

4.5.1.1   Communication

Since the dialogical spaces would be the primary data generation method in this study, how we related to one another would be important throughout the process. The varying language competencies of the set were English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The dominant home language was isiXhosa, but members agreed that English would be the formal medium of communication for our engagement because all members could converse in English. However, we agreed that members would be allowed to

speak in any language that they felt comfortable in. We were privileged to have participants in our set who were trilingual and, as transcripts will show, various occasions during the engagement they rendered interpretation services (Appendix - 3). Participants were allowed to stop any discussion if they felt the discussions was excluding them because of language issues or lack of general understanding of the concepts under discussion. We playfully used the word 'English', as a cue that anyone could shout out if they felt that they did not understand a word or if the discussion was moving beyond their grasp.

We further had to be conscious of the dominant voices in the engagement. These were initially those of the long-serving leaders of the volunteers and the younger, more articulate, volunteers. The use of ice-breakers in the start-up workshop as well as starting each set meeting with a prayer encouraged the other voices to come into the set. However as the study progressed, the voices started to balance out and the creation of sub-groups within the ALS further invited those silent voices to be heard during discussions. By the end of the first cycle, all voices were actively engaged in the process.

This collective ownership of the dialogical space ensured that we collaborated well to achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

4.5.1.2   Collaboration

PALAR suggests that the participants should collaboratively identify from the start the nature of the project, in this case, the phenomenon that would be researched. However, due to institutional limitations, I did the identification of the initial research focus myself and presented it to the participants during the start-up workshop. Before the start-up workshop, I presented the suggested area of research to the School Governing Body (SGB) as well as to the Executive Committee of the volunteers. Both these meetings agreed that the proposed project comprised a valuable area to be researched for improvement. It was during the meeting with the volunteer leaders that we agreed on the participants who would form part of the study.

Furthermore, collaboration was enhanced at various levels of the project by delegating tasks to different members of the set. This included setting up the venue, catering, cleaning the venue, typing up of summaries, facilitating sessions, etc. As noted before, the KAS became the key collaborators. Apart from the logistical and technical set-up of the ALS, the KAS became my critical friends that started to direct the research process, as our confidence in the process grew. This collaborative process was enhanced by the commitment of the participants to the study.

4.5.1.3   Commitment

All participants showed tremendous commitment right until the end of the project. We kept an attendance register (Appendix - 4) of all set meetings, agreeing that for a set meeting to continue, we should have at least a seventy-five percentage attendance. Those that did not attend the meetings usually forwarded an apology. The participants also invested in ensuring that all were present and engaged throughout the process.

Institutional commitment towards the study was demonstrated when the school advanced stationery and funding for the start-up workshop; this was later repaid by the fund that supported the study. Although this was challenging, the school further released all of us to be able to participate in the study during working hours.

On a personal level, the study required personal commitment and material sacrifice. I had to commit to supporting elements of the research that was not covered by the fund. In cycle three as an example, during the KAS analysis session, I opened up my home to host the set meeting. My family committed and assisted with the catering and babysitting responsibilities of two of the KAS members' children because they could not find babysitters for the day.

The commitment towards the personal growth of my fellow participants was important. The study was not only an opportunity to generate empirical evidence around the phenomena raised in the study, but it also brought about personal empowerment to the participants. For example, employing two participants to do the transcribing of the voice recording, meant that I had to be patient and accept their

level of growth related to this. In addition, I had to remain committed to supporting them, which meant that I had to wait for long periods for the transcribed notes. They skilfully navigated through various challenges around equipment, understanding the process of transcribing and personal commitments. However, they showed tremendous growth in this process and from the initial transcription (Appendix - 5) one could see how through their own action learning how they progressed (Appendix - 6) to make a business out of transcription. The transcripts proved relatively accurate and they captured nuances of our engagement that I am sure an external transcriber might have missed. The capacity gained through the study positioned them to achieve this. My commitment to wanting to ensure their financial and skills empowerment meant that when writing up the study, from time to time, I had to go back and listen to the actual voice recording if the transcriptions did not make sense.

There was also a strong commitment to the personal wellness and wellbeing of all participants. All our set meetings opened with a prayer, and this became an important entry point for each cycle. The data will later show that the prayers provided a form of entry therapy for many of the sessions. It was during these prayer sessions that we could focus on some of the challenges raised by participants. The ice-breaker, where we had to share one thing that we thought no-one knew about ourselves, allowed another gateway for the development of trust and provided another entry point for engagement. It also welcomed all voices immediately into the research space.

I am, however, mindful of the many personal sacrifices and commitment of the other participants in the set. These sacrifices included, among others volunteering at the school and the commitment to attend all the engagements of this study. This underlined and brought into focus the need to invest in one another through various forms of coaching and support.

4.5.1.4   Coaching

The coaching throughout our engagement was facilitated by "learning from one another in dialogue, discussion and to ask fresh questions" (action learning) (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, p. 217). Initially, I was responsible for the set-up and guidance during

the research process. In the start-up workshop, my main role was that of coach/teacher, as the objective of the workshop was to orientate the participants. The start-up session's main objective was to lay the foundation for the dialogical engagement to occur.

Our various engagements were facilitated by a standard agenda that was used after reflection at the end of a cycle or in a planning meeting of the KAS (Appendix - 7). The start-up workshop also took the form of an empowerment session as we practised various data generation methods. These included training in using the dictaphone, video camera and interviewing techniques. It was in trying to facilitate all these activities in the start-up workshop that I recognised that taking personal charge of all such activities might prove challenging. The establishment of the KAS become an important development, as the members assisted me in the technical and intellectual support for the duration of the project.

The coaching and support among the other participants took the form of some explaining the more technical processes in isiXhosa to isiXhosa-speaking participants and helping each other prepare for presentations in the set or to outside stakeholders. The constant engagement and reflection led us to take different directions and approaches, informed by the need to honour the voices of all.

4.5.1.5 Critical attitude and reflection on action

My key critical friends during this study were the participants themselves. It was through our iterative engagement that so much learning and critical engagement took place.

After the coaching of participants around data generation methods in the start-up workshop, the KAS recognised that the participants were not very comfortable about using multiple data generation methods. We then agreed that it was in the dialogical space where the best empirical engagement could occur. These adjustments and corrections, in some cases, became the trend throughout the study. On various occasions during the research process, the voices of the participant directed the course or flow of the engagements.

During the engagement sessions in the first cycle, some of the more vocal participants would stop the engagement and ask for a translation, because they recognised that some of the quieter participants were being left behind in the discussions. The reflections from the first cycle, coupled with the reflections from the personal reflection journal, led to the establishment of sub-groups within the large set. This immediately encouraged quieter voices to participate in the dialogue and I observed the animated debate in the smaller groups and the freer use of isiXhosa in the discussions and more active participation by all. This really seemed to open up space for honest critical engagement.

I was challenged when I presented the customary feedback on data that I captured during the first action learning set of Cycle Two. One participant contended that it did not represent the views expressed during the discussions in that set. The set members confirmed her assertion, and I had to do a correction and present it at the next meeting. Furthermore, this critical presence and engagement led to a review of the second sub-question of the study. It was decided to reword the question.

The inclusionary critical process also led to another critical moment in the research process. At one of the KAS meetings, one of the transcribers mentioned that, as she was transcribing, it seemed to her that my voice was dominant in some of the recordings. She felt that I might have caused confusion in some of the sessions, which might cause the emerging data to be compromised. We then agreed that the final sessions of cycle three would be facilitated by KAS members. This cycle of data validation and presentations would be preceded by a planning session with the KAS that would look at the capacitation of the participants of the KAS to lead these sessions.

Besides the critical friends within the research process, I had a range of other 'friends', who included an international group of researchers that kept me grounded in the methodological process. In addition to these methodological friends, I also had two friends with whom I would take a walk on most Sundays, during which excursions we would discuss the study. Both were retired academics with a strongly grounded belief that the empirical project must contribute to social justice. They provided a welcome sounding board to make sure I kept to my stated philosophical

research objectives. The critical reflective attitude endeavoured to ensure that I guided the process with competence by developing my own competencies, as well as the competencies of my fellow participants.

4.5.1.6 Competence

Competence in managing the process and doing my job proved challenging at the best of times. Although my study would assist in my job, the requirements of my job had to take priority. This initially led to a rushed approach, which set the study off in a somewhat disjointed fashion. The situation was further complicated when some set members failed to arrive on time for meetings. However, as mentioned earlier, as our confidence grew, the balance between the research project and doing our jobs improved – our confidence and competence grew with each set meeting.

Cycle three probably bears testimony to how our competency had grown. It was during this cycle that the participants actually led the final verification process, my main role was that of a resource person.

4.5.1.7 Character building

Our engagements were characterised by a great deal of respect, trust and patience among all the participants. At times, though, one could sense frustration on the part of some of the participants at others who were perhaps not moving at the same pace. However, the group remained constantly mindful of the core value of honouring all participants, which we set for our engagements. This mindfulness allowed our humanity to connect at various stages in the process. This became especially evident when participants shared their emotional pain through the stories they narrated, or when requests for special prayers were made at the start of sessions. This connection usually manifested itself after such prayer sessions. The space was immediately transformed into one of solace and support, and we listened empathetically and offered advice drawn from our own experiences. This appears to have been allowed to happen because our space was characterised by integrity; trust; honesty; respect; diversity and difference; and openness to new perspectives, opportunities and innovations (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Allowing this space to be

characterised by Ubuntu values did not, however, mean that the data generation methods used and the analysis were not underpinned by empirical rigour.

4.6 DATA GENERATION METHODS

Part of the participatory process, Hunter *et al.* (2013) suggest, includes trialling and refining data generation methods and, as is the case in this study, changing and omitting them. In cycle one, a variety of methods were used, that included participants exploring photovoice and interviews. After giving these methods a trial, the participants felt that they preferred dialogical engagement in the ALS, further augmented by the establishment of the KAS. In the data analysis section, I do, however, reflect on some of the methods used during the trial period. The transcripts of these engagements were then triangulated with reflections from my personal journal, the focus group conducted with the School Management Team (SMT) and the secondary data sources that were available at the school. The ALS was, however, the primary data generation instrument in this study.

4.6.1 Action Learning Set (ALS)

The recorded discussions and transcriptions from the ALS served as key data generation tools (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). This method we deemed most appropriate because we desired a space in which we could collaboratively work on the research topic, which we considered important to ourselves as participants, the school, the sponsor and also the broader society (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Zuber-Skerritt (2011) advises that such an action learning set should at least have a mentor/coach; have access to consultants or advisors, and have a sponsor to keep it viable.

As mentioned earlier, I assumed the mantle of coach and mentor, because of my experience of using this methodology in my Master's study in Education (Damons, 2012) and because I had been privileged to be part of a short learning programme conducted by Zuber-Skerritt and her colleagues around the PALAR design in 2012. However, I might have been the methodological coach, there were times when the coaching role was taken over by various members of the set.

The seventeen members (including the Dutch volunteer and myself) in the set presented its own challenges. The caution of Hunter *et al.* (2013) around the dominance of certain members and voices being lost, was addressed by the establishment of smaller groups to function within the larger group. Furthermore, as noted before, as the study progressed, the confidence levels of all members grew, as did their participation levels. This brought another challenge to the fore: managing the space, to ensure that we did not lose focus on the research question.

The set meetings were guided by setting up a formal meeting guide. Using a schedule (Hunter *et al.*, 2013), or what I termed an agenda, helped to give as structure (Appendix - 7). The agenda directed the activities of the set meetings. These agendas were determined by the preceding ALS meetings, and in some cases altered by the KAS, if something significant emerged that we might have missed in the ALS. Although the agenda gave us structure, we still followed a fluid approach to the engagements in the ALS. So, although the research questions guided our discussions, the dynamic within the set also dictated how the set would be managed. This was evident when we struggled to properly grasp research Sub-question 2; and after the engagement, we decided to merge and reformulate Sub-questions 2 and 3.

At the end of each set meeting, I immediately wrote up a summary of the proceedings and discussions held. My notes were complemented by the notes that the Dutch volunteer simultaneously took during the set meetings. My summary also proved an effective tool for reflecting on some of the dynamics that emerged during the engagement process (Hunter *et al.* 2013).

The effective functioning of the set required support and it would have been difficult to facilitate the set engagements without material and logistical support. This support was provided by the school and funding from the National Research Foundation.

In spite of the ALS being the space of primary engagement, as mentioned earlier, we attempted various other methods, within the set, which included photovoice and interviewing. However, participants found this confusing and time-consuming, preferring the dialogical engagement that took place in the space. In cycle three, we

employed the use of collage to ask the participants to answer the main research question, based now on the data that emerged during the course of the study. The participants were required to compose this collage using pictures from old magazines or drawings. The data that emerged in the first two cycles were verified using the world café (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). The collage was an attempt to understand how the participants now interpreted the main research question, as it related to the world. The process of data generation in the sets also went hand in hand with my own personal reflections and observations.

4.6.2   Personal Reflective Journal

My personal reflective journal allowed me to critically reflect on my learning as I grappled with the often contradictory demands of my different identities during the research process. I used the seven principles of participatory action learning and action research (PALAR): communication; commitment; competency; compromise; critical reflection; collaboration; and coaching (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011) as standards of judgement against which to evaluate my actions. Moon in McAteer (2013) states that journaling inter alia allows for ownership of learning; acknowledging of one's emotions; helping will structuring the research, and allowing for personal reflection on one's own learning. All these became evident in me in my multiple roles throughout the study. The ALS, together with my personal reflective journal, was further triangulated with the various secondary resources available at the school, and which I was granted permission to use.

4.6.3   Secondary Data Sources

The school's rich history of volunteerism meant that there were a number of secondary sources available for me to access. These included portfolios of evidence submitted for other research projects conducted at the school, minutes from meetings of which the phenomenon was discussed, and photo collages of projects on the school. These documents allowed for both historical and contextual information (McAteer, 2013; Yin, 2003), which added value to the primary data that emerged during the course of the study.

These data generation methods were further triangulated with the literature reviewed, through an inductive process (Creswell, 2013). This was done by identifying similarities and differences in emerging themes and sub-themes from literature, as they had relevance to my findings. These methods also influenced the analysis and presentation of the data.

4.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The diversity of the participants and the context in which the study was conducted, played a big part in the meaning of information collected, because 'meanings also shift accordance with our motivations, with our histories, and with and the array of situational conditions' (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Kwong Arora and Mattis, 2007, p. 1). Suzuki *et al.* (2007) therefore propose that researchers engage in critical self-reflection. This reflection was achieved at two levels throughout the study: through my own personal reflections and through the reflections built into the research design.

Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that the interpretation of emerging data needs to be viewed critically, because of the possible subjective nature of the emerging text. I heeded their caution when analysing the data. This was necessary, as noted before, because of the number of complex conditions at play in the study. Some of these complex conditions included the power relations between my fellow participants and myself, and the relationships among the volunteer participants themselves, relating to position, the length of volunteering, age and gender. The fact that we chose dialogic engagement as the primary form of data generation further informed the processing of data through multiple forms of understanding (Hunter *et al.* 2013). This mindfulness, coupled with getting to know the data well (McAteer, 2013), was important for us in engaging with the emerging data. McAteer (2013, p. 83) suggests that this is important as it will allow one to find out what the data, "means and how can I communicate it effectively". This was essential to me, as I wanted to ensure that I authentically represented the voices of the participants in the findings. The iterative design of the research plan allowed for a constant reflective process of analysis.

I designed the cycles of engagement in such a way that each data generation session was followed by a cycle of reflection and engaging with the data that had emerged during the previous cycle. The KAS also became an important group of critical friends for understanding and giving meaning to the data as it emerged. I furthermore sent my cycle reflections to my promoter, who provided critical feedback on the engagements in the sets. The reflections and analysis from the first two cycles were brought into the concluding cycle, so as to inform the final sub-question as well as the main research question.

In the third cycle, we conducted a final member check at both KAS and ALS levels, at the retreats held for both sets. The data that emerged from the dialogical engagement was then triangulated with the data that emerged from the SMT focus group, secondary data sources and the literature reviewed. In addition, I also looked at additional data that emerged during the course of study, which included: a drawing around the motivational question; transcripts of the interviews the one group did with volunteers outside of the ALS; and the collages presented in cycle three. From this analysis, we started looking at the emerging themes for emerging patterns of meaning (McAteer, 2013), relating to the research questions posed in the study.

4.7.1   Critical Discourse Analysis

As mentioned in Chapter One the overarching structure of the analysis was a critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA allowed us to explore how our own location influenced our understanding of how we presented our information. The lens through which I viewed the discourse included the complex issues of power, gender and race. I further had to be mindful of our country's historical legacy and its impact on us as participants and how this complexity might have manifested in the individual and group scripts of the participants (Hunter *et al.* 2013). The CDA structure of analysis equally importantly allowed me to explore the existing hierarchical nature of the school structure, as well to be attentive to the different class, political and social elements at play in the school and its surrounding community (Hunter *et al.* 2013).

These complex situations were at play throughout the study, hence the need for a lens that would allow for the interpretation of the diverse perspectives of the

participants, which included my voice (Baxter and Jack, 2008). My researcher allowed me to be able to honour the insights, learning and teachings that I often took for granted as a principal working with volunteers for more than 12 years (Lester, 1999). This directly impacted on my own praxis as a principal and researcher and will be reflected on in the findings section. The CDA framework was useful in ensuring that the methods employed to generate the data allowed all the participants to be heard and understood during the entire research process (Hennik *et al.*, 2011). It was, therefore, important for me as a researcher to look through this critical lens both during and after the empirical process. The aforementioned made me understand that our actions were informed by various reasons and that, through this, we were able to develop rich local understanding through our dialogical, dialectical and hermeneutic engagement within our social context (Henning, 2004; Taylor and Medina, 2013) regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The use of participants as translators, the organic formation of sub-groups in the ALS and then the engagement in the third cycle on the conceptualisation of a framework, bear evidence that the study stayed true to this contextual link.

It was through this triangulated engagement that we could critically look at what motivated our volunteers and the impact they had on the effectiveness and efficiency of the school and then develop a process model that would improve our own practice and possibly assist schools in similar situations as ours (Taylor and Medina, 2013). Having made sense of what we were saying, we then proceeded to begin coding the data around themes.

4.7.2   Thematic Analysis

The data was coded for emerging themes, which were then validated with the primary participants in the third cycle of the research process. Participants at the KAS retreat in the third cycle performed the initial coding, and this was presented to the ALS retreat in this cycle. It was at that ALS retreat that all primary participants actively participated in verifying and validating the correctness of all the data generated during the course of our engagement.

From these themes, we then conceptualised what a possible process model for volunteerism in a community school could look like. Bearing this in mind, we were then able to reflect on how our existing practice could be impacted by the empirical evidence that emerged. This conceptualisation and reflection on practice influenced the content and process of compiling a procedural manual to recruit, support and sustain community volunteers in a community school.

The manual was then taken to the volunteer population, in the form of a workshop, with the view that it could affect their practices in the school in a positive manner. In addition, the manual was used as the script to report on the findings of the empirical study to the identified stakeholders and organisations – something we committed to before starting the study (Hunter *et al.*, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The outcome of the empirical process, because of the nature of the research process, had to conform to stringent yet fluid trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

4.8   TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Herr and Anderson (2005), the dilemma of the insider/outsider researcher is not as big as the scientific field tends to punctuate. They argue that the participatory collaborative approach allows for both the insider/outsider approach to be brought into the study. The insider/outsider approach was evident in the overlapping roles of principal, researcher and participant. These proved initially challenging and messy, but as our confidence grew during the process, I was able to incorporate these multiple roles into the research process. This I did by navigating the process in such a way that the demands of my 'job' and my desire to complete the study did not compromise the generation of authentic text. Equally important was my personal desire not to compromise the humanising spaces that emerged during the study through the forms of the various learning sets, which became the primary data generating settings.

Zinn and Rodgers's (2012) three chief characteristics of such humanising spaces are the generation of voice, agency and community. I would argue that this was achieved in my study, as the participants' active engaged voices were present throughout. These voices translated into agency in the research process and the

evolution of the practice of volunteerism at the school. This agency during the empirical process was evident throughout the study, as the participants took charge of the research space and were able to use the capacity gained to impact on areas of their operation. The participants further reflected that, through the research process, a space had been created that was previously lacking in the school. The emerging knowledge did not only have relevance to practice around volunteerism in the school, but participants could confidently present to various interested stakeholders the process model, in answer to the main research question. In addition, the ALS allowed the volunteer leaders to pull together as a leadership community to hear one another at a different level, for the first time. Through the PALAR process, one would then argue that a dynamic engaged community emerged, through meeting the goals of action research.

These goals, which are common in most action research projects, according to Herr and Anderson (2005), are the generation of new knowledge; action orientated participatory approach; relevant to the local context; providing for the education of the researcher and participants; and should follow a sound methodology.

I could find no evidence of a similar empirical study having been undertaken in any community school in South Africa. Given the crisis in South African education and globally in general, the data that emerged should enrich the dialogue around solutions to these challenges. Secondly, the approach of the study was action orientated, and participants fully participated throughout the study, including in the analysis and reporting stages. In addition, through the empirical data that emerged, the participants were able to develop a procedural manual to improve their own practice as well as to provide guidelines for other schools that might find value in utilising volunteers. All of us grew through the collaborative participatory approach. The knowledge generated through the action learning and research enhanced our own practice and influenced my own epistemological knowledge on the methodology and volunteerism. In using Herr and Anderson's (2005) five validity criteria, I attempted to create the empirical space required for the conception of these action research goals.

Outcome validity describes the ability to achieve the outcome of the research project by carefully and skilfully navigating the research process (Herr and Anderson, 2005). The iterative cyclic processes of the research design ensured that the findings and recommendations of this study achieved the main objective of answering the main research question, despite the haphazard start to the process. The outcome validity was linked to the process validity, which allowed us to make the claims in our study.

Process validity pertains to the question of how claims could be made (Herr and Anderson, 2005). As mentioned previously, triangulation occurred in this study through the use of various data generation methods. This was supported by constant reflections through the cycles, which ensured that the democratic voices of all the participants in the study emerged through the process, which is another validity criterion put forward by Herr and Anderson (2005). All participants were honoured and respected and the phenomenon was relevant to the context in which we found ourselves. The emerging data became the catalyst for change that needed to happen in our practice at school. Further, the knowledge that emerged, although it cannot be generalised, should add value to the ongoing debate around school improvement. Other schools located in similar contextual conditions could potentially find the information useful in engaging, with the challenges confronting them. This knowledge was submitted to iterative engagement processes, which accounts for the dialogic validity in the study.

The constant critical feedback on a conceptual and methodological level from my promoter, who is renowned for her work in action research, supported the journey to ensure the validity of our study. In addition, I was able to be part of a preconference workshop for an Action Learning and Action Research conference, where I had a coaching session with Zuber-Skerrit, the developer of the PALAR process, which assisted in validation around methodology and writing up of my thesis. However, I do recognise the KAS as the key group of critical friends who ensured that the dialogical validity was maintained. This accountability to validity was guided by both personal and institutional ethical requirements of the study.

4.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

I received formal institutional permission from the Ethics Committee of the University (Appendix – 9), the School Governing Body (SGB) (Appendix – 8) and the District Office of the Department of Basic Education (Appendix – 9) to conduct the study. The participants in the study were asked consent (Appendix – 9) during the start-up workshop and provided this in written form (Struwig and Stead, 2011). Although the form stated that the identities of the participants would be kept confidential, the primary participants indicated that they wanted their names expressly stated in the thesis. I decided to honour this, but where I thought that a critical point against a person or institution had been raised, I protected the identity of the participant.

As reflected throughout the study, I attempted to follow the ethical principles of action research which advocate for mutual respect; equality and inclusion; democratic participation; active learning; making a difference; collective action; and personal integrity (Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, 2012).

My decisions during the empirical process were influenced in a manner that valued relationships with the participants in my study (Henning, 2004). These decisions were further cloaked in the value principles espoused by the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action. The principles were complemented by me clearly indicating my intention to influence the conditions impacting on our ability to deliver quality public education to our community (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Following these principles was made easier because I already had an intimate working relationship with the school and participants in the study. However, even though we had this intimate relationship, the empirical pursuit kept me mindful of the power relationship that was present among ourselves as participants during the course of the study.

I further remained mindful that the nature of action research might allow ethical issues to emerge through the course of the study and was mindful to constantly check with participants when these did arise. By adopting a playful, humanistic approach to the study, I allowed my comfort zone to be disturbed at times, and that led to my greatest learning as a researcher.

4.10   SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the theoretical justification and research design of my study. It focused on the research paradigm that informed my research approach and design, which included a discussion of how the values of PALAR were integrated into the various iterative cycles of the study. It further discussed the data generation methods used throughout the study, as well as the strategy employed to analyse the data from these various sources. It concluded with the methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, including compliance with the institutional and personal ethical requirements. The next chapter will discuss the emergence of the data around the first cycle, as well as the themes that emerged, in order to answer the main research question.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF WHAT MOTIVATES COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO VOLUNTEER

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the theoretical justification, research paradigm, approach and design of the study. I further discussed the various iterative research cycles conducted in the study, as well as the data generation methods used. The discussion of the analysis of the data, from these different sources, was followed by an explanation of the methods used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, including ensuring compliance with institutional and personal ethical requirements.

Chapter Five aims to establish a deeper understanding of what motivates a group of community volunteers to become involved in a school. From this knowledge, I seek to present a reasonable contextual theoretical understanding of volunteer motivation, in particular, what motivates community volunteers to offer their services to a community school. Insufficient evidence seems to exist as to what would motivate community members from the communities surrounding disadvantaged schools to become involved in volunteering at schools. Also, I concur with Lord and Hutchison (1993) that schools should recognise that these community members may be oppressed and not just regard them as 'clients' that they are supposed to service. It is through such recognition of the oppressed state of community members that schools can begin to function as more than just academic centres, but also as beacons of hope for disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, I would argue that an understanding of what motivates such volunteers will provide an opportunity for the participants in this study to reflect on their possible roles and functions in the school. In addition, the findings provide valuable insights for other schools, the government and communities that intend to promote voluntarism or become actively involved in volunteerism at schools.

Cycle one of the research process (Figure 5.1) focused on what motivates the volunteer to do this work. However, the cyclic, iterative process of the design meant

that knowledge about motivation emerged in all three cycles of engagement. The data is presented and supported by quotations of the participants and at the end of each major theme I interpret and discuss the data against appropriate literature and theories. The primary data, which emerged from discussions throughout the collaboratively constructed research process, is further triangulated and analysed with various secondary data sources and my personal reflections, as principal and researcher. I then conclude this chapter with a summary of the essential learning that emerged as a result of the engagement.

FIGURE 5.1: First cycle of research process
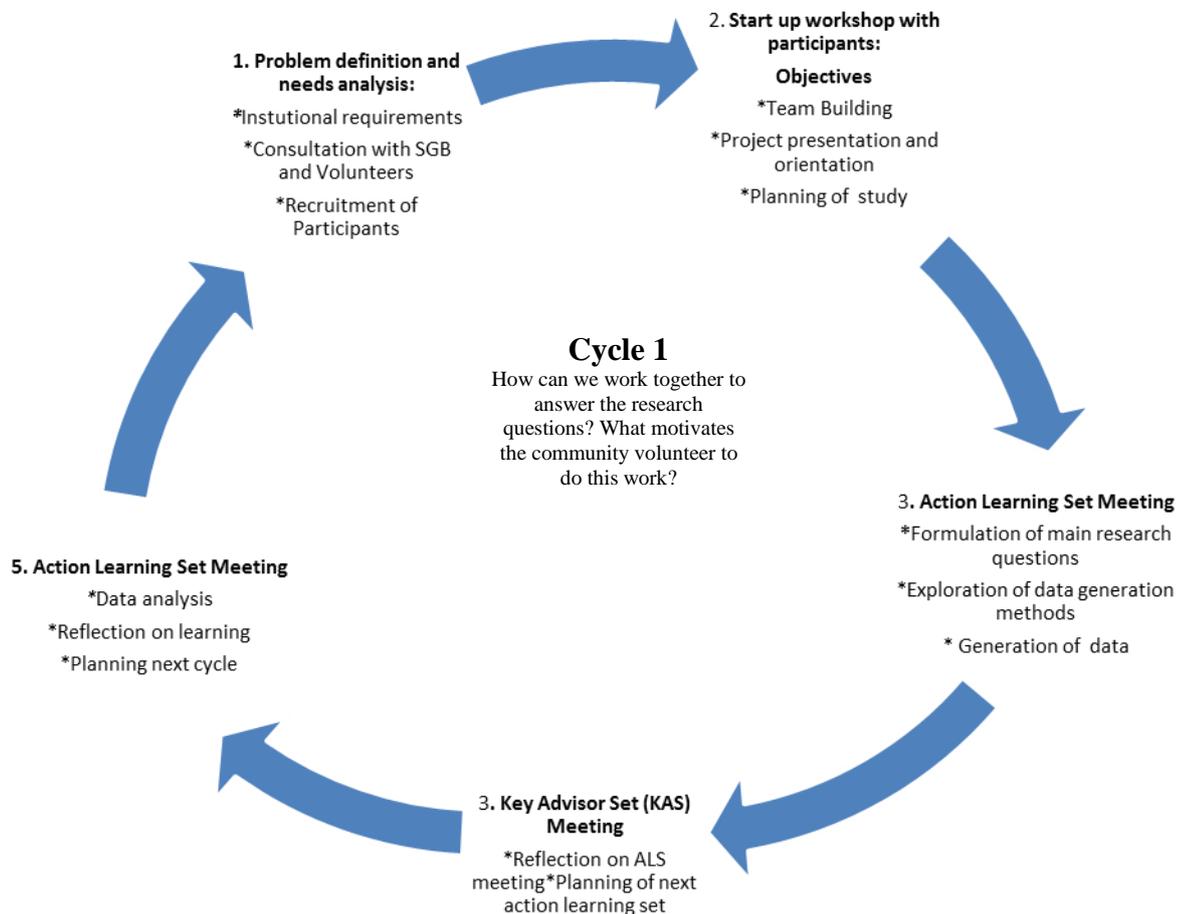
I present the emerging themes in narrative form, to allow me to stay true to capturing the authentic voice of all the participants in the study.

5.2   DISCUSSION OF THEMES

The theme identification and subsequent analysis were guided by what volunteers listed as the most important motivators for their involvement in the school. Using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006) each participant ranked his or her top five motivators; these were tallied, and the following emerged as the primary motivators (Table 5.1):

TABLE 5.1: NGT outcome on motivation

Motivator
1. ***To receive stipends***
2. ***To acquire training and skills***
3. ***To receive food parcels***
4. ***To receive love from the school***
5. ***For love of school and child***
6. New engagements, with people, education and organisations, that they would not have experienced if they stayed at home
7. To learn language skills
8. The desire to make a difference
9. Sign of hope
10. To gain experience and references from the school
11. To escape unemployment and poverty
12. To attain a sense of purpose
13. To escape from reality
14. To develop confidence
15. The positive image in the community presented by other volunteers

The top motivator was receiving some financial contribution, termed a stipend. The expectation of receiving training and acquiring new skills followed. The third most important motivator was receiving food parcels. The fourth and fifth motivators centred on the love they would receive as volunteers from people they interact with at the school and the love that they had for the children and the school. The top five

motivators listed in Table 5.1 were confirmed by the participants, during the final data verification set meeting in cycle three. In addition to highlighting the main five motivators, participants felt that language acquisition needed to be added to the skills and training motivators.

The motivators advanced by the participants can be broadly categorised as economic and material support; attainment of skills; love received from the various stakeholders in the school; and the love the volunteers had for the children and the community. The data seems to indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors played a role in their decision to volunteer.

From the discussion around the motivators, the following two main themes emerged around the question of motivation: support from the school; and that school presents a humanising space for engagement while recognising the value that volunteers bring to the school. Also, a third theme that emerged from the dialogues, was the tensions among the various stakeholders, which seemed to be continuously present in the school and which was intertwined with the preceding two themes.

5.2.1   THEME 1: Support from the school is a motivating factor

The findings seem to suggest that schools need to be cognisant of the generally adverse socio-economic conditions of community volunteers. All the participants in the study, as well as other volunteers doing service at the school, as highlighted in Chapter One, lived in areas confronted with harsh socio-economic conditions (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). The SMT members, in their focus group, indicated their awareness of these circumstances; they identified such adverse socio-economic conditions as manifesting themselves in unemployment and lack of finances, as among the chief motivators for volunteering. The need for material support for volunteers in the form of stipends and food parcels ranked among the top three motivators of the participants.

Patricia, who had been volunteering for more than 12 years at the school under study, highlighted during the start-up workshop: "The reason we say because maybe to you as a researcher, you do not understand these things. We are from there. We

have a problem in the ward[6] we are staying, and it is growing day by day." She added that unemployment was causing challenges, and that is why "You see at the beginning of the year, all children want Sapphire, Sapphire, they got a reason." The reason why children wanted to attend this school, she suggested, was the feeding scheme and other support they received, which they would not usually receive at other schools. The extra support that children received, included healthcare services and access to clean toilets – all made possible thanks to the involvement of volunteers at the school. She raised this point in explaining that volunteers understood the plight of the children from the community much better than the educators in the school, almost as a justification why community volunteers should be active in a school.

Neziwa, as she was presenting her photo collage in the form of a story (Image 5.1) narrated: "This is me, Neziswa ne, this is my beautiful house. I come from my house; there is my bed, and there is my table. On my table is only hot water there, there is no food. I am not working, as I am walking, I am thinking Eish, 'kanene[7]', what will my granny be eating tonight at home? I don't have money to go to church; I don't have money to contribute in church." This narration further highlighted the context from which many of the volunteers came. The participants narrated their stories from their own lived experience. Many authors (Christie, et al., 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006) have identified the conditions in which many South African urban township and rural communities find themselves. It should not, therefore, be surprising that stipends and food parcels ranked so high among the motivators of the volunteers. However, in a community like the one in the study, a deeper meaning of this type of material support emerged.

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[6] A ward is a residential demarcation in the municipality

[7] Kanene an isiXhosa exclamation with no real specific meaning

IMAGE 5.1: **Neziswa's group drawing around her motivation**

The following sub-themes shed further light on what the volunteers meant by support.

5.2.1.1   Volunteers are motivated by the promise of material support

The stipend the volunteers referred to was a basic monetary amount that they received from a local church, through a government job creation programme. As mentioned in Chapter One, it was extremely unreliable and at times volunteers waited months for payment. In addition to this, in 2013 and 2014, the number of stipends allocated to the school never matched the number of actual volunteers who were active in the school. However, the volunteers seem to value any form of monetary contribution. In the first action learning set in cycle one, Patricia responded that "... stipend, food parcel is like a medicine to us". She stated that her basic needs were important, but beyond that, as the sole provider in her family, she had to consider the needs of her family as well, especially as she was a single mother. Notiki, who volunteered in the toilets, noted that volunteers seemed to work harder and attend school more regularly when they know that they would be receiving a stipend. Further confirming the value of the stipend, Nositembiso, a clinic volunteer, added that the money she received, had assisted her in starting a business. However, the participants stated that although money was necessary, they valued

anything that showed appreciation of "enkosi[8]", for the work that they did. They acknowledge this 'anything' more like a 'gift' and did not see it as a salary, but rather as a token that showed appreciation for their contribution to the school. In 2014, we were informed that the school would only be receiving 20 stipend grants from the church project. I presented this to the leadership team of the volunteers. Their immediate response was that they would still be gratified at receiving something. After discussing and presenting this, which I thought was a dilemma, to the rest of the volunteers, they decided to pool the 20 stipends and divide it among the volunteers who were active in the school at the time. The school itself further recognised the need to support the volunteers financially as well.

In 2014 the SGB formally acknowledged the volunteers as staff and, as reflected in the minute of the SGB retreat in 2015, as an important part of staff. The SGB resolved that for every amount of money invested in the academic staff, the same sum had to be invested in our volunteer staff. For example, in 2014, a local businessperson donated an amount of R10 000 to the school for staff development. Five thousand rands went towards the academic staff, while the other R5000 went towards the volunteer staff. Also, the SGB identified two fundraising projects a year to augment the Volunteer Fund; one of these fundraising projects was the tuck shop, with profits from the tuckshop injected into the Volunteer Fund. These funds were accumulated throughout the year and paid out at the end of the year as an 'enkosi' for the work done over the course of the year. According to Lungiswa, during discussions in the ALS, this stipend amounting to under R500 per volunteer, allowed the volunteers to provide "other than just salad to their children over Christmas." The participants, however, identified that support from the school went far beyond the monetary reward.

They acknowledged the plate of food they received daily from the school (Image 5.2), also recognising the 'risk' that the Principal was taking in ensuring that they received food from the Feeding Scheme. The DBE policy on the Nutrition Scheme (Department of Basic Education, 2011) dictates that only the children themselves are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the Scheme. This plate of food was also

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[8] Enkosi is the isiXhosa word for "thank you"

recognised by the SMT focus group members as possibly an important motivating factor. The school's Feeding Scheme, aside from providing a daily meal to the volunteers, allowed the school to divide any surplus food left over at the end of each school quarter among the volunteers. Also, from time to time, the school was able to source food parcels for the volunteers from non-governmental organisations and state agencies.

IMAGE 5.2: Volunteer receiving daily plate of food

The participants were of the opinion that if they had a say in the content, they could create more economically viable food parcels. A fascinating debate ensued in the second action learning set of Cycle One, about what such a food parcel should comprise. The participants thought that any such food parcels should contain large items. As Mavis commented, "... because culturally we believe in buying 12,5 kg items". Nevertheless, the participants were quick to emphasise that "we accept any item, no matter the size." On what would be regarded as essential food items, they identified the following as essential components of a food parcel: rice, potatoes, sugar, flour, maize, samp, fish oil, soup, salt, dry yeast, coffee, vegetables and peanut butter. Meat, milk and macaroni were regarded as not that critical to surviving. The argument for the inclusion of larger sized food items in the food parcel was based on the belief that these would last longer and could be shared amongst

more people. The debate around content and size of the food parcel was interesting for me; not only because it showed that the volunteers were thinking about others, but also because it contradicted what I would have regarded as items of value in such food parcels. The preference of the volunteers regarding the content of the food parcel was rarely sought because we assumed that the volunteers would be happy with anything given.

In addition, any surplus stock that the school had to write off, was first offered to the volunteers, if they could find a use for it. An example of this was when the school received donations of new computers and decided to arrange a lucky draw among the volunteers for the old machines. In doing so, more than 15 volunteers won a computer, becoming the proud owners of a computer for the very first time in their lives (Image 5.3). Receiving the surplus stock from the school, the volunteers suggested, served as additional motivation for them to become engaged in voluntarism at the school.

IMAGE 5.3: Volunteer receiving a computer after the lucky draw

The participants further highlighted appreciation for the fact that whenever the school received donations from companies or organisations, it would request extra, so as to include the volunteers. An example was when we received battery powered lamps from a company (Image 5.4) in 2012.

IMAGE 5.4: Participant and her child receiving a donation of a lamp

The data here suggest that the recognition of the adverse situation of those who were willing to support the school, by the school and its stakeholders, was important. Several articles have highlighted the importance of context and its impact on schooling (Christie, et al., 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Spaull, 2012; Witten, 2006). However, very little has been said about how schools could contribute to alleviate these conditions that also impact on schools' ability to deliver quality education. In this study, the voices of the participants brought these challenges in the community to life and suggested how the school could materially support volunteers willing to support the school. The desire for such material support among volunteers confirmed what principals feared in the short learning programme mentioned in Chapter One, namely that community involvement in schools could lead to an extra financial burden on the schools, which would be of concern, especially in resource-scarce schools. However, an interesting finding is that the participants seemed to be mindful of the risks and effort required from leaders to support them; this was demonstrated by their concern at the fact that the school provide them with a daily plate of food, in possible violation of policy (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Another important finding is that although the participants expected support to be provided by the school, they would like to have a voice in what form this should take; as in the case of the food parcels. It is clear that the participants suggested that they

want their voices heard, as proposed by Hunter *et al.* (2013) when collaborating with others, even in acts of support for their own benefit. Having both the school and the volunteers mindful about the need to acknowledge the voices of the volunteer would heighten the awareness of stakeholders about the plight of these volunteers as they performed a service to the school. The services rendered by the volunteers were an attempt to address the challenges not only confronting them, but also the community from which they came. Griffin's (2015) argument on Maslow's hierarchy of needs that states that the achieving of self-actualisation happens once lower needs have been satisfied, seems to be confirmed by the NGT (Table 5.1) ranking on motivators. These findings suggest the need for some contextual understanding, which is lacking in most studies around volunteerism (Schuurman, 2013), of how schools could respond to meet the primary needs of community volunteers, as defined by Maslow (Griffin, 2015). The data seem to suggest further that beyond the immediate need of some material support, the school could offer further additional support to both the volunteers and the community.

5.2.1.2   *The school as a resource for personal and community support*

The school provided a space for volunteers to access health and social services through the institution. The Health Department provided health services to the volunteers directly on the school premises (Image 5.5), which included birth control services and screening for various ailments. Moreover, the participants reflected on how the school had extended this support to the broader community.

Patricia noted that the school assisted volunteers in resolving personal matters, even providing taxi fare to the volunteers to attend to these issues. Lungiswa reflected on being questioned by Pat, one of the male participants in the group, on why she decided to volunteer at the school. She stated that, initially, she began volunteering to convince "the principal to take her child into the school", as she knew the school was full. Lungiswa seemed to suggest that, because the school was willing to help her, she was prepared to help the school, even though her motives may be construed as a little devious. However, she then shared that the self-interest motivator had been largely replaced by the other motivators raised in the study. Lungiswa argued that the other motivators were now strong enough to keep her at

the school, but that "it does not take away from our (volunteers) need to have a stipend and food parcel." The participants further recognised the school as a centre where matters relating to the community would receive attention.

IMAGE 5.5: Volunteers and community accessing health care through the school

The support the participants identified, included helping members in the community obtain identity documents and social grants. An example of such support occurred in 2005 when a child disappeared from the community and the Police were not responding to the countless calls from the community for assistance. The community came to the school and requested the caretaker to contact me, as Principal. It was around two o'clock in the morning and after intervention from myself, we managed to get the Police to launch a major search. Luckily, the boy was found unharmed, in a bush. The community also felt comfortable enough to report the behaviour of neighbours who had children at the school. In this way, several cases of abuse and neglect pertaining not only to children attending the school under study, but also children from the broader community were reported to the school. This reporting allowed the school to be responsive also to the welfare of children who did not have any official affiliation with the school. I wrote a self-reflection piece in 2008 (Appendix – 10), which highlighted my growing frustration with having to deal with a plethora of social issues that impacted on the wellness of our children and the functionality of

the school. The data indicates the importance of the school's involvement in broader societal matters.

In 2004, at the height of the xenophobic attacks in our country, the school was faced with a challenge: at the time, we had a Zimbabwean seamstress volunteering at our school. The attacks against other African nationals were occurring in our community as well. The School Governing Body (SGB) took a decision to run an African Awareness Day at the school, during which we celebrated the seamstress who was capacitating our community through sewing classes. This recognition and acknowledgement by the school of the contextual realities seem to be consistent with the data previously discussed, namely that awareness and responsiveness to contextual realities is an important added motivator.

The participants mentioned that they saw the school a space in which personal development was encouraged and support provided to the individual and the community. These findings seem to support Witten's (2006) School-Based Complementary Learning Framework (SBCLF), in terms of which schools could be sites in which mutual support emerges. However, what is missing from Witten's argument is what this support could hold for the community, in particular for a community providing complementary support for the learning and teaching processes taking place at the school. The same limitation – absence of what such support could look like for a community – is evident in the Complementary Learning Framework (CLF) advanced by the Harvard Family Project (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008).

The findings of my study seem to suggest that the relevant community was more responsive when they felt that the school was conscious and sensitive to their needs, as was the case in the previous sub-theme. These various types of community support are evident in the 26 global cases reported on by Whitman and Aldinger (2009), which seem to advocate for schools as centres for broader community agency and support. My study identified what the participants regarded as practical, action-orientated responses of the school to individual and community needs, which one could argue could apply to other schools in a similar context. While these other studies suggest that schools must be more responsive, the knowledge generated by

the community volunteers participating in this study illustrated practical forms of action to provide for the basic needs of the individual and the community. These concrete forms of support drew on the existing networks of the school: for example, taking care of the volunteers' health needs and serving as a support centre for the community. This responsiveness to the needs of the individual and the immediate community allowed then for the reciprocal benefit to the school and the community volunteers involved in the school.

5.2.1.3 *The school becomes a space to develop skills of mutual benefit to the school and the volunteer*

Mavis stated in the first set meeting that dealt with motivation, that although the stipend was necessary, they would still offer their services even without it because the experience and training gained through volunteering would put them in a much more favourable position to secure employment. The multi-skills training that participants identified, was provided at the school by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and government departments. Nositembeso recognised how her attending of classes to qualify her as a Grade R practitioner has not only made her more employable, but also equipped her with extra skills to help teachers in the classroom. Other forms of NGO support included a project that recruited the volunteers to assist with the physical education of the learners; they attended training courses to prepare them to assist the teachers (Image 5.6) with Physical Education classes.

IMAGE 5.6: Volunteers engaged in activities to assist teachers in Physical Education

Further programmes on reciprocal benefit included some volunteers forming part of a writing circle that was attached to the local university. From this circle articles appeared in a local newspaper (Appendix – 11), which highlighted the work the school was doing, thereby providing good publicity for the institution. Other forms of training reflected in the data included bead-making, health awareness and First Aid training. Also, the participants further recognised the informal 'on-the-job' training they received while volunteering at the school; this was over and above the training facilitated and provided through the school.

IMAGE 5.7: Training volunteers in basic computer literacy
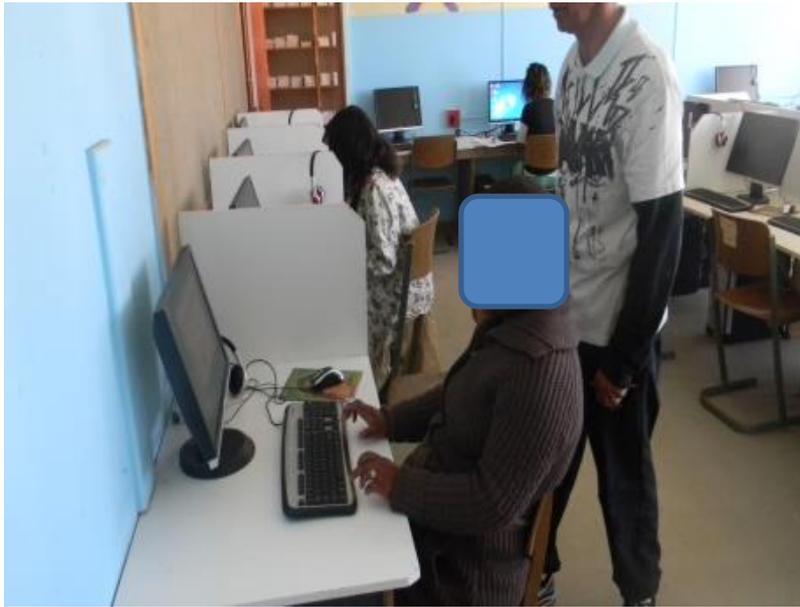
Yolande mentioned the training on SASAMS[9] given by the Principal in the Administration Block. This training was coupled with the training provided by the Secretary of the school. The Secretary was responsible for the training of the administrative volunteers in Office Administration, which included answering telephones, receiving visitors to the school, and making photocopies. Also, other on-the-job training is evident from the data included the training of Teacher Assistants in the class by teachers and by local nurses, of the Department of Health, training Clinic volunteers around various health issues. Crosby, one of the male participants, also recognised the value of the computer training that they received from the school, provided by computer literate volunteers (Image 5.7). The volunteers themselves provided mentorship and guidance to new volunteers who joined the programme, in the various project areas. The findings further suggest that the research space of the study provided an additional opportunity for personal empowerment to the participants.

The PALAR design meant that simply participating in this study provided an opportunity for capacity building. During the start-up workshop, we identified areas in which we thought we would require support to complete the study. The participants engaged in a capacitation exercise on the use of the identified data generation

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[9] SASAMS – a computerised school administrative programme of the DBE that requires a full time administrator in my view

methods as they prepared to go into the field (Image 5.8). I demonstrated two data generation strategies: interviews and photovoice.

IMAGE 5.8: Participants data generation method training

The empirical process presented a further opportunity to develop skills and boost the confidence of the participants involved in the study. They learnt how to prepare for conference presentations and had to develop the competence and confidence to present to communities, including the academic community, something with which they were not familiar. An example of this was a presentation done by the participants at the University to share their experiences during the research process (Image 5.9).

IMAGE 5.9: Participants presenting to University around their experience in research process

Here the participants narrated how the research process had given them the confidence to not only speak in public, but, as Mavis put it: '... to understand I was collecting data all along when I was collecting information for the school'. To recognise the work of the participants and to be true to the need to honour their voices, I endeavoured to include them in most activities related to the study, such as adding them as co-presenters at a conference at a neighbouring university (Image 5.12).

IMAGE 5.10: Participants presenting at conference

Furthermore, we received a commitment from the National Director of Rural Education to present the findings of the study and the Procedural Manual on Volunteerism to the National Education Department, once completed. The presenters to the DBE would be participants in this study, who would be workshopped by the KAS to do these presentations. As a way of further honouring the participants' commitment to the empirical process, I committed at the end of the study to host a community celebration after my 'official' graduation. This celebration will formally recognise the participants, inter alia in that they will be issued with certificates for the role they played in my study. I intend to invite the Vice-Chancellor of the University that I will graduate from, to officiate at this event.

The findings around personal growth and mutual engagement are significant because they highlight the value that a school can add to the development of the community and how, through their agency, volunteers can contribute towards school functionality. The findings suggest that this reciprocity happens at a personal and organisational level which, according to Sherr (2008), allows for the individual, group and environment (school) to benefit. Friedman and Allen (1997) and Laszlo and Kipper's (1998) elucidations on ecological and systemic perspectives allow us to understand how we can link the expectations of the individual to the expectations of the environment. The findings, therefore, raise the possibility that, through their active involvement in the school, ownership of the school will become a personal issue to community members. It is through such personal agency and change that community members can take charge of themselves and their lives (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995) – change that was evident throughout this study and over the course of many years of volunteerism in the school.

These findings should to some extent alleviate the fear that principals from scarcely resourced schools have that they will not have the capacity to provide material support for their community volunteers. The evidence suggests that mutual support, other than material support, could add value to the school and promote personal and community growth. Schools could actively seek material support and be creative in soliciting such support from within itself and from outside agencies. Schools could also make resources such as telephones, fax machines and photocopiers available to the community, which will greatly assist volunteers and community members, who would normally not have access to such facilities. Furthermore, the findings suggest that schools through their traditional internal stakeholders, namely principals and teachers, need to make a conscious effort to develop the skills and capacity of community members. Schools will then become not only spaces for the support of individual community members, but also forces in the community to engage with the prevailing adverse socio-economic conditions. Such mutual support should occur within a humanising climate.

5.2.2 THEME 2: Volunteers experience the school as a humanising space

The findings indicate that the communities, from which these volunteers came, were faced with many adverse historical and socio-economic challenges that had a severe impact on their quality of life. The participants articulated that volunteerism added to their quality of life. Faith, a teacher assistant, shared how volunteerism had improved the quality of her life, stating that she saw the school as a beacon of hope at which she could develop a sense of purpose through the act of contributing to it, "even as an unemployed person". Mavis supported this statement, sharing how she was able to live out her dream of being a Florence Nightingale through her volunteerism at the school. The sense of purpose was further complemented by the awareness raised during the study that we needed to get to know one another better.

An icebreaker exercise held during the start-up workshop helped participants to get to know each other on a more personal level, allowing them to share the kinds of adversities and hardships they faced on a daily basis. This helped them develop a common bond. This common bond was further strengthened through the prayer sessions held at the start of each set meeting, which allowed for emotions to surface in what was experienced as a safe space. At the Key Advisor Set (KAS) retreat, it was reflected that having a time for prayer, allowed the volunteers to deal with the issues that they as individuals were facing. The prayers seem to have provided counselling where the volunteers needed it. Although the ritual of prayer had always been present in many of the programmes of the school, it was only during the study that its significance surfaced. This humanising space, which allowed them to acknowledge one another, helped them to become less judgemental and more caring towards each other, creating a sense of community and support. The findings, therefore, suggest that it is important to create a space in which volunteers will feel that they are valued as people, that they have support, and that they have dignity and worth. It was through the articulation of the challenges they experienced that participants narrated how the school provided a healing space for them to deal with some of these challenges.

5.2.2.1 The love volunteers receive from the school and the love volunteers have for the children of the community are motivating factors

Yolanda spoke of the love they received from the Principal, teachers and children when they first entered the school environment. Neziswa's narration around her collage (Image 5.2) provides some insight into this motivator. She stated: "I got problems with family; I got family issues. So now I am taking a walk so that I can just get away from home. Kanene! I am not getting along with my brother and sister." She stated that in coming to school, she had found a mother in 'Ma' Mavis, in whom she could confide her problems. According to Neziswa, her burdens had been relieved, and the love she received from Mavis motivated her.

This love and care, the participants said, was manifested in the fellowship and sharing among the volunteers and in the fact that everyone was treated the same: there were no titles among the volunteers. According to Yolanda: "We (volunteers) are willing to help one another". I am aware of other 'incidents' that demonstrated how the school provided healing opportunities. One example of this was when we had to intervene in a domestic dispute between partners who were both volunteers at the school. The husband stood accused, by the family, of abusing his social grant and not contributing to the household. The family wanted assistance from the school to resolve the dispute as his elder children had reached the stage where they wanted to eject the male volunteer, the father, from the family home. With the help of the older volunteers, we called the family together and provided support. We were then able to suggest a solution to the dispute. This type of assistance, according to the participants, was further manifested in the unity they felt among themselves, according to Lungiswa, "because we have to respect each other", which led to a sense of being loved and accepted.

Neziswa added: 'Many of us come from homes without love'. The space opened by the school, the participants suggested, allowed them to experience love in different ways. Neziswa proffered that this was possible because the volunteers and other school stakeholders came from different cultures. Love, she suggested manifested itself in a variety of ways. Referring to me as an example of a person from a different culture, she stated that I might hear the word 'love' every day from my children and

wife, whereas she might hear it only on her birthday. "It might be easy to show it, but it is not easy to say it", she added. Neziswa commented that coming to school every day and hearing someone say: "I love and care for you" had taught her to love and care for not only herself, but others as well. Lungiswa added: "Although I have got Tamara (her sister who volunteers as well) and my kids at home, I know I have a family in Sapphire I can depend on." This family, she argued, extended their roles as parents to the children in the school "because other volunteers are motivated by having a love for children. They know that they can also love other children when I am in class, and when I am at home, I am a parent to my kids." This acknowledgement further expressed the experience of love and support the volunteers received from some teachers.

The volunteers also appreciated the love that the teachers showed towards them. The word 'love' was used quite frequently during the engagement, highlighting the need for the volunteers to feel valued and appreciated. The teachers of the school recognised the role of the volunteers by celebrating the contribution the volunteers made to the school. An example of this was that the teachers organised a Volunteer Recognition Day on International Volunteers' Day in 2013, during which the school volunteers were awarded certificates of appreciation, in a formal ceremony. In 2015, the same celebration and recognition took place at the school, and again on this day, the teachers served the volunteers (Image 5.11)*.* I am further aware that some teachers had brought clothing and food items for the volunteers from their homes. In some instances, volunteers worked at the homes of certain teachers, thereby earning much-needed income. The blanket of love the participants expressed that they experienced, seemed to be amplified in the volunteer song they composed in 2014 (Appendix - 12). The song, as explained by the volunteers in the workshop held in 2014, provided a further indicator of how important the school was to the volunteers. According to the song, Sapphire was a white blanket under which teachers, learners, parents and the community worked together. It was a place where you could come and forget all the pain and suffering you might be experiencing in the community, albeit for a few hours a day.

IMAGE 5.11: Volunteers celebrating Volunteers' Day and being served by teachers

As part of their continued development, the volunteers and a group of teachers formed an organisation called Ubunye[10] (Teare, 2016). The objective of Ubunye was to introduce several programmes to develop the volunteers and community. In this regard, it piloted a parent/child academic support programme, which guided parents in helping their children grow academically (Appendix- 13). Volunteers who assisted in conceptualising the module insisted that one of the components of this module should be a personal wellness section (Appendix– 14). This wellness module, volunteers recognised, should be an essential element of any programme the school launched in the community. Image 5.12 shows two of the volunteers working with a psychologist in conceptualising the module presented during the course. The psychologist was also available for participants if they required his support as a result of matters that arose as a consequence of the study.

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10 Unbunye is an IsiXhosa word that encapsulates the values of trust, respect, discipline and honesty

IMAGE 5.12: Volunteers and psychologist conceptualising Wellness Module

Besides the module, the community psychologist ran workshops with all stakeholders in the school on various topics, including providing the tools to deal with personal trauma. Many of the volunteers used his presence at the school for personal coaching. The school was very mindful to ensure that it included components of personal wellness, capacity and growth for all stakeholders, including the volunteers, in the general school programme (Appendix- 15). The love received by the volunteers from the school, I argue, cannot be discussed without understanding the volunteers' desire to show love to the community and, in particular, the children of the community.

Opening up this space at the school allowed the community to express love for the children and allowed volunteers to become agents of support and change in the community. Patricia stated that the fact that community members were preparing the food the children received in terms of the School Feeding Scheme, made the children feel more motivated to come to school. The children knew that they would be receiving a meal, prepared by their parents or a person known to them from the community; Patricia seemed to suggest that the children recognised that the meal would be made with love. She reflected on the photo they took during the training phase of the study, that showed the feeding scheme in action (Image 5.13). Patricia reaffirmed that if the children saw the mothers from the community working in the kitchen, they knew that there was a reason to come to school. She further observed

the smiles of the children when they had eaten their meal: they were no longer "exhausted or cheeky".

IMAGE 5.13: Volunteers assisting in the Feeding Scheme

The participants felt that this motivator of love for the community and the children was displayed in the various tasks that they as volunteers performed daily in the school (image 5.14)

IMAGE 5.14: Teacher assistant, administration volunteer and volunteer toilet cleaners
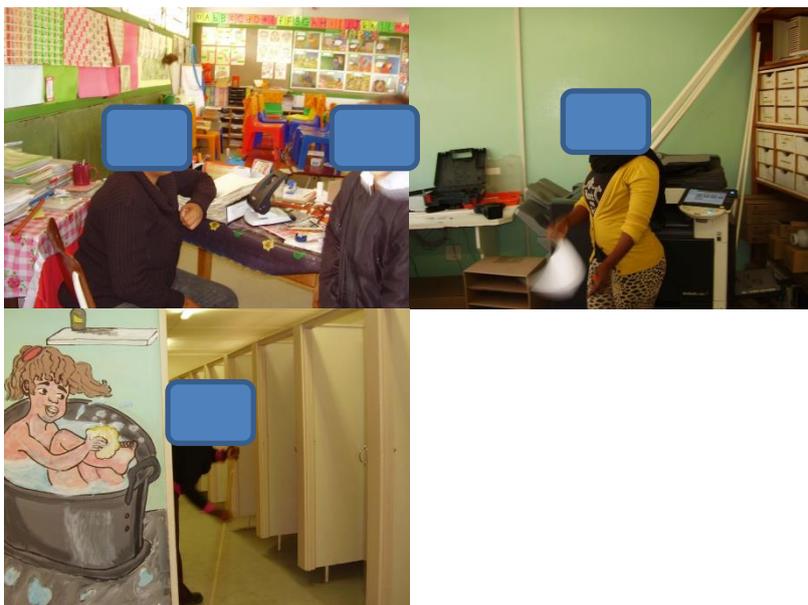
Lungiswa stated that when she contemplated 'bunking' (skipping school) for a day, she reflected on how stressed the teacher would be and how much the children would miss out on because of her absence. Living in the community, they were aware that many children wake up to "no porridge". She added: "We are motivated, because of our children who are part and parcel of the school. What we are doing, we are doing out of our passion and heart for our children". This statement suggests that the children were a huge motivating factor for the volunteers. Yolande added that they felt united by the children, "not only for our own children, but all children. We are working together to build something out of nothing." Lungiswa added that they had, in fact, become "mothers and parents of the other children, too." Working together had created a sense of community agency. This feeling of community agency through volunteerism, the participants suggested, could occur only if the volunteers had a love for the children who, in return, showed love to the volunteers. Their intimate knowledge of the children allowed for the mutual expression of love to the children and love from the children, connected through the participants services in volunteering at the school.

The participants saw a direct relationship between the learners and the school. According to Mavis: "If you do not have love for the school, you will not have love for the child". The participants argued that the desire to communicate this love should act as a motivator for the volunteers. Also, the participants felt that the ability to look beyond the present disposition of "our children and see the potential of every child", was equally important. The participants seem to highlight the value of volunteers as surrogate parents, to support learners emotionally, with particular reference made to those children who were perceived as 'troublemakers'. A participant commented that she felt that the love she gave, was returned when the child "recognises me as a teacher (TA) in the community." The participants emphasised that the volunteer role extended beyond just doing the job, but required one to be mindful of the surrogate role that volunteers had to perform. Nositembiso, who volunteered at the clinic, cited that children would sometimes come to the clinic simply to get a hug. In addition, one of the male participants, Pat, who lived in one of the security cottages on the premises, reflected how some of the 'naughty children' visited his cottage during school breaks. He tried to have conversations with them, suggesting he could be someone the children felt more comfortable talking to. The participants identified that

the library sessions held with the learners were also another way in which their love was shown to the children. Lungiswa, who volunteered as the librarian, indicated that these sessions allowed her to connect with the children on a personal level.

The firm sense of compassion for the children that participants suggested was present, was confirmed by a comment from an SMT focus group member, who stated that, in her opinion, the volunteers came to school because they were concerned about the well-being of their children. The love, respect and a sense of purpose seemed to enhance the development of voice and human agency, which participants appeared to suggest would not be present if they were not volunteering.

5.2.2.2   The opportunity to develop their voice and agency is a motivating factor

According to Yolanda, the positive climate at the school and the development of confidence as a result of volunteering taught her to start respecting herself and, through socialising with other volunteers, she also began to respect others. The participants emphasised that they were treated in a kind and respectful way by fellow volunteers, teachers and learners. An SMT member in the focus group felt that it was because of that welcoming environment that the volunteers did not focus on the issue of race and were able to communicate freely with everyone. The warmth that they as volunteers received, the participants seemed to suggest, imbued them with hope, and the various programmes offered to the volunteers further increased that hope.

A teacher living in the area, who was not only part of the SMT focus group but had been a volunteer herself before qualifying as a teacher and then being appointed at the school, commented that volunteerism provided a:

'… sense of liberation. I am going to speak in the sense of being a Xhosa woman. When you are poor, you just stay in a certain container, and you are being contained in every way. You are not liberated, and I cannot hug someone. You are scared to speak to people because you are in a container. Sapphire had this warm welcome to

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those inferior minds. At the end of the day, their eyes opened and they started to recognise themselves and their talents.'

The volunteers said that the values of honouring all voices, respect, equality and democracy that they negotiated for the research, were lived out in the way the school interacted with them as volunteers. For instance, democratic power relations were established by the use of first names, regardless of job title or status. Yolande remarked how in the research space, they enjoyed calling me by my first name rather than by my title. Calling each other by our first names, placed us on an equal footing. The value of recognising us all as equals in the research space enhanced the levels of engagement and debate in the set meetings. The KAS retreat (Image 5.15) highlighted how the research process and volunteerism allowed the volunteers to develop agency and a sense of personal liberation.

IMAGE 5.15: KAS analysing and looking at data generated in ALS meetings

The KAS members stated that the process of being engaged in the study provided them with greater clarity on their roles at the school and a deeper understanding of their purpose.

Volunteering further opened a secondary opportunity for some participants. Three of the members of the KAS acquired transcribing skills and received remuneration for their transcriptions. The study further presented an opportunity for the participants to represent the voice of a group of community volunteers to the outside world and change, in the words of one of the KAS members, 'how outsiders look at us as volunteers'. All this engagement led to the development and bolstering of their self-confidence, they argued. The research process allowed them to understand their

motivation and how important the life-enhancing values were for deepening their commitment to volunteering.

This view confirms the connectedness that links personal purpose to making a difference on a broader societal level (Vézina and Crompton, 2012). The suggestion is that the volunteerism allowed not only for support from the school, as with the services provided by the volunteer psychologist, but seemed to support the view of Bandura (1982) and Sherr (2008), that taking responsibility in one area of life, by volunteering, could lead to self-efficacy in other parts of an individual's life. Bandura (1992) further argues that this self-efficacy then allows persons to develop beyond their present disposition and to extend help to others. Volunteerism, therefore, allows volunteers to extend love to communities through the provision of support and healing. Bandura (1982) argues that this can occur only if there is an interaction between the individual and the environment, which in this study entailed very personal interaction between the volunteers and the school. Furthermore, Perkins and Zimmerman's (1995) suggest that this empowerment of individual wellbeing should be linked to a group in service of a bigger purpose. This seems to be confirmed by the data. This type of social learning and its impact is evident in several studies (Davila and Diaz-Morales, 2009; Vince Whitman and Aldinger, 2009, Wymer Jr and Samu, 2002;). It is ironic that 20 years into our country's democracy, the largest percentage of our population still confront many of the challenges caused by Apartheid (Statistics South Africa, 2012). These challenges, as highlighted by the participants, have been evident over all the 15 years that I have been working in the community. The song by the volunteer, the voices and the active agency of the volunteers then seem to suggest that the school under study provided a possible space in which some healing could occur, to give hope and possibility through personal agency, in service of the community. As Lungiswa put it: the volunteers were allowed to become mothers and fathers to more than their own children. However, this value-laden development of confidence, agency and community was not without contradiction and tensions.

5.2.3   THEME 3: Tensions of volunteering

The data that emerged from the action learning set and the secondary data sources indicate that unless certain tensions were addressed, the continued motivation and sustaining of volunteer support would be difficult. The tensions experienced, ran across the two themes identified above. During discussions around Theme One, Neziswa commented: "I will give the school 1½ out of 10 here" regarding sustainable support in respect of stipends and food parcels. Notiki added that for volunteers to work effectively, proper uniforms and implements should be provided by the school. Lungiswa further added that some of the teacher assistants felt incompetent in performing tasks, because of lack of clarity on what to do: "That's why they sit in Sun City[11]". She felt that the teacher assistants should be trained so as to capacitate them to move past just "shouting at children" and truly supporting them. Patricia felt that the school could be more aggressive in persuading the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to formally recognise the work that they were doing. In her view, the volunteers were doing the work that the DBE was supposed to provide manpower for.

Neziswa, one of the younger volunteers initially wondered why stipends, food parcels and other material support from the school had not been regarded as important to older volunteers like Mavis and Patricia some 12 years ago when they started volunteering. Seemingly, these issues were now at the forefront of their minds. The question that she posed to the action learning set was that, in the absence of a stipend, what would motivate volunteers to come to school. Patricia's response was that years back when they first came to school as volunteers, love was the chief motivator. She admitted, however, that since the introduction of a stipend, it become the main priority. The older volunteers stated that stipends became more important to them when younger volunteers joined, as the latter were more aggressive in pursuing the matter of stipends. Also, Patricia stated that they could not "even think straight" when money was due to them. Neziswa added that during the times when the stipend was not active, she did not feel like coming to school, but was then worried about what people would say if she did not show up. Such inconsistency

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[11] Sun City is an area in the school where volunteers would 'hide' if they did not want to work: named after a large holiday resort in South Africa.

around the commitment to volunteerism was always evident in a number of volunteers participating in the programme, with the largest number always being present when there was some tangible material support to be received from the school. The provision of skills and support also had its tensions and pressures.

One such challenge faced by the school was the time and effort it took to train volunteers to assume their various positions. The training proved to be time-consuming and required patience as a leader because the volunteers arrive at the school with widely divergent skills sets. This was coupled with the pressure to keep up to date with official submissions to the Department of Education. I recall an incident where a volunteer failed to save the work she was doing on the computer, losing everything as a result of a power outage. On that occasion, two hours of data capturing was lost. Then there was the challenge of dealing with the multiple personalities present when having so many persons active in the school. This challenge at times required me to mediate in some disputes between the Secretary and the volunteers. The mediation was necessary, because either the Secretary felt that the volunteers were not performing to the standards she set or, on the other hand, the volunteers did not appreciate the way in which the Secretary was engaging with them.

In addition to the complexity of 'on-the-job training', the participants felt that their capacity building and training should extend beyond the scope of the areas in which they were volunteering. Such broadened scope of training, they argued, would give them broader exposure, to enhance the possibility and chances of finding employment. This training, participants further felt, should be accompanied by some certification. In the subsequent debate, they argued that this training should be more in line with a qualification that is accredited. The lack of training to assist the volunteers in performing their duties efficiently and the perceived biases towards individual project areas were flagged as areas of concern. The participants further felt that the Principal should be more persistent in following up on various commitments made to support them as volunteers. The tension around the principal and his role in the volunteerism programme led to an interesting debate in the second action learning set of the first cycle.

I challenged the participants that if their love was so strong, why was it that food parcels and stipends emerged so high on their motivation scale, above love for and from the school. Patricia advanced that the participants might previously have been afraid that they would be judged to be greedy and only being there for the money. Furthermore, they were wary of what the Principal might think of them if they declared it upfront during the discussions. It was at this stage that I reflected in my journal that, I felt personally glad that we are now moving to space where members felt more confident to declare their whole truths, which I would advance required the space, to be honest, and humanising. The older volunteers narrated the story of how, in the past, the Principal responded aggressively when they raised matters like stipends and food with him. Patricia added that their pride withheld them from seeming to be desperate and raising the initial motivators. The additional critique raised by both the participants and SMT focus group was that they felt that the Principal had not done enough to create the space for the volunteers and teachers to engage. The SMT cited as an example that they were not aware of all the areas in which the volunteers were active. Another example of where participants thought that the Principal could have done better, was the calling of meetings: the participants felt that meetings with or among volunteers only tended to take place when there was a crisis or celebration. They were of the opinion that regular engagement should be encouraged between all stakeholders in the school. In addition to the tension around the leader, there was tension in relation to interaction with teachers.

The participants commented that not all teachers showed love and positivity: sometimes they felt disrespected by the teachers. A minority of the teachers still did not want a teacher assistant in their classes. Citing examples of this disrespect, participants mentioned that some teachers failed to greet while others seemed angry about the fact that they all shared communal spaces, for example, toilets. The teachers, on the other hand, were complaining in staff meetings not only about the problem of hygiene, especially in the toilets, but also about the overuse of the staff room by the volunteers. The participants also felt that they often got blamed when things went wrong. There were complaints about things disappearing and as principal I had to deal with a few cases of school property disappearing, allegedly taken by volunteers. A participant also mentioned that it took time to develop trust

with teachers. She cited an incident when a 'teacher did not trust me with the class key made me angry'; but as the trust grew the teacher 'eventually left me alone with items in class'. These tensions were extended to the interaction among volunteers themselves.

The participants also felt that there was much gossiping amongst themselves as volunteers. What made matters worse, was that the gossiping happened in front of the children – leaving the children with a bad impression of the volunteers. The participants agreed that dealing with the different personalities of the volunteers proved challenging; one participant remarked that when "someone made me angry it took me almost eight months to forgive that person".

Although the data supports the argument of Zinn and Rogers (2012) that humanising spaces are characterised by the emergence of voice, agency and sense of community, it was evident that some tension also marked these areas. The age difference between the volunteers seemed to give rise to some tension. The data further infers that the personal development paths of the older and younger volunteers were different. It is apparent that the younger volunteers regarded volunteering as a gateway to the improvement of their lives; hence their push for the certification of empowerment programmes to use in job applications, whereas the older volunteers seemed to recognise volunteerism as an opportunity to live out the dreams that they had lost out on because they did not have the opportunity to actualise their potential fully. The age motivator helps us to understand how age influences the motivation for volunteering. Davila and Diaz-Morales (2009) confirm that age does play a role in the motivation for volunteerism. However, their assertion that older people volunteer to improve their emotional state, while younger people tend to do it to make friends, contradict some of the findings of the study. The data from this study seems to suggest that, irrespective of age, the participants in the study volunteered for material support, to improve their emotional state and to develop friendship bonds – one could argue this was because of the impact of harsh socio-economic conditions across all ages.

5.3   SUMMARY OF LEARNING IN CYCLE ONE

In summary, the absence of additional authentic dialogue spaces to deal with these tensions in the school (Freire 2007), which was discovered during the study in the PALAR process, was what the participants seemed to say was missing in the volunteer programme at school. It is, therefore, important to implement a PALAR approach to volunteering across the volunteer programme to foster an environment in which all voices are heard and respected. The environment, Majiros (2013) further contends, should encourage informal relationships and reciprocal actions, to benefit all parties. It was evident from the findings of the study that these spaces were lacking in the school, as reflected on by both the participants in the study and the SMT focus group members. The values underpinning the creation of such a space were presented in the (KAS) retreat and discussed earlier in the chapter. The data seems to indicate that the personal and organisational healing of volunteers can occur through the recognition and support of the healing process. Through this recognition, schools can identify the complexities and tensions that may emerge as a result of this engagement and take the necessary measures to address them. I concede that we missed the opportunity to address these during the years of engaging with volunteers from the community at the school. The lack of an initial structure or a clear programme and educators not clearly understanding the roles of volunteers, as argued by Johnson *et al.* (1977), Nojaja (2009) and Van Wyk (2001) were possible factors that could have contributed to the tensions. The findings, therefore, suggest a need to develop a space to address these tensions, mindful of the contextual conditions, to understand the respective agency between the school and volunteers. However, I am of the opinion, agreeing with Sherr (2008) and Wilson (2012), that because of the complexity of understanding the motivators for volunteering and the multidimensional nature of the persons engaged in volunteering, maintaining harmonious relationships may prove challenging. One could, therefore, argue that perhaps the school should live with the tension, but create spaces to manage it effectively. It will mean, however, as the data suggests, that the employed staff need to give up some of their space and power, to fully tap into the human capabilities offered by the community. Once all stakeholders understood and valued each others' complementary roles and purposes, then one could argue that stakeholders would work harder to achieve harmony. Therefore,

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through the development of collaborative, cooperative stakeholder agency some of the classical, hierarchal norms of schooling could be challenged.

Witten (2006) and Christie (2010) recognise that schools have a hierarchal set-up. Having the Principal on top of this hierarchy perhaps provides some insight into my inability to show this humanity at times. The acknowledgement of my lack of initial humane responses to volunteers, as reflected by the older volunteers, was perhaps indicative of my journey of recruiting volunteers to serve my subjective needs as a school leader, instead of having recognised and valued the actual agentic value that community volunteers brought to the school. I argue that having to deal with so many complex challenges in a school, we forget that our primary interaction is with human beings. We need to allow ourselves to be vulnerable enough to show our humanity. In my personal struggle, I recognised that I did not have the vocabulary to engage with my community because, as Patricia stated, I perhaps did not understand the actual struggles of the volunteers. The role of the principal is critical, as recognised by numerous authors, in ensuring the successful implementation and development of all programmes in a school, including a volunteer programme (Christie, et al., 2007; Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006). So to open the school gates for communities to support its programmes actively; principals, teachers and the DBE will have to realise that they will have to change the way they perceive the communities that the schools serve (Reed *et al.,* 2015). In reflection, as our relationships developed and I grew to recognise the value that my volunteer colleagues brought to the space, my humanity evolved. The volunteers taught me what true humility means.

The need for a school to recognise the contextual reality of the community it serves and then create incentives to meet the material and emotional needs of the volunteers seems to provide an effective base from which to recruit community volunteers. Besides the need to support the basic needs that Maslow (Griffin, 2015) argues need to be met, the data seems to suggest that the school under study had enough institutional capacity and agency to meet some of the needs of the volunteers. Some of this capacity included the provision of a plate of food, which is a basic need and making facilities like telephones and fax machines available to volunteers. It requires a degree of braveness, creativity and commitment from the

school to want to support a group of persons who want to support the school. The above findings provide a response to the concern raised by Schuurman (2013) about the lack of literature on motivators of volunteerism in rural and urban township communities in South Africa and, particularly, in schools in these resource scarce communities. The inclusive, collaborative and collective research approach (Hunter *et al.*, 2013) proposed to facilitate the emergence of these motivators in this context. The findings can help us further understand how community members can be best recruited and their commitment sustained, especially in communities battling with high unemployment rates. Recruiting from these communities requires an in-depth understanding of how these volunteers construct their realities (Patton, 2002; Sherr, 2008). For this to happen, a humanising space characterised by mutual respect and democracy and that encourages voice and agency need to be developed. Doing this PALAR study created such a space, which the study suggested needed to be extended to the volunteer programme in general. The participants provided various narratives to give insights into their culture, history and group perspectives and how the school could be mobilised to address the conditions that impacted on their lives. The volunteers' expression of the socio-economic conditions that needed addressing suggested that schools wanting to make use of community volunteers needed to cognisant of the whole system making up these volunteers. Friedman and Allen (1997) recognised the entire system as comprising the biological, cognitive, emotional and spiritual systems. The whole system implication supports Sherr's (2008) multi-dimensional view of volunteer motivation. The findings of this cycle built on this to provide further insight into what a contextual relevant multidimensional approach could look like for community schools in South Africa. From the data, one would argue that a linear interpretation of motivation could lead to a possible linear understanding of the key motivators, as to why community volunteers would want to get involved in a school. From the emerging data, in support of Sherr (2008) and Schuurman (2013), it was apparent that multiple reasons motivated the community volunteers. The data did, however, give some contextual framework, which was lacking in most of the studies reviewed, why community volunteers in the context of this study were motivated to become involved in the school.

5.4 SUMMARY

After the participants had developed an epistemological understanding around not only the motivators, but also the barriers to motivation, it was also necessary to understand the perceived value the volunteers thought they brought to the school. The iterative nature of the first cycle allowed us to take some lessons into the second cycle, which made the engagement much more efficient and humanising. Furthermore, the data that emerged around motivation enabled us to view the perceived value of volunteerism through a lens with a deeper understanding of purpose. Also, certain practices started to change, including my relationship with and understanding of the community volunteers serving in the school.

The following chapter will now explore the perceived value that the volunteers and SMT thought they brought to the school. The perceived value will then be studied against what the Department views as effective and efficient schools, and this will be further triangulated with the school management's view of the volunteers' impact on the functionality of the school.

CHAPTER SIX

A CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE PERCEIVED VALUE THAT COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM BRINGS TO A SCHOOL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five discussed the factors that motivate community volunteers from socially challenged environments to become involved in supporting a school. The two main themes that emerged from the discussions were the support that volunteers received from the school, and how the school should present a humanising space for volunteerism to happen while recognising the value that volunteers brought to the school. Support from the school was not only understood as the promise of material support, but it also identified the school as a community resource for individual and community development and growth. The development and growth that occurred through volunteerism allowed for the development of skills, which benefited the school and the community volunteers alike. In addition, the participants stated that the school should be a humanising space that valued the voice and agency of the community volunteers. It is through the creation of this humanising space that volunteers acknowledged the love they received from the school. The volunteers then expressed the love that they had for the children and the community through the services that they rendered at the school. However, the findings also indicated that this engagement between school and community through volunteerism was characterised by tensions. It was in this mutually beneficial and valued filled, but often tense space that the volunteers were required to perform volunteer services that contributed to the basic functionality of the school.

Chapter Six focuses on the perceived contribution of the volunteers to this basic functionality. The second cycle of the research process (Figure 6.1) explored the question of how the community volunteers perceived their roles and tasks at the school and the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school.

FIGURE 6.1: Second cycle of research process
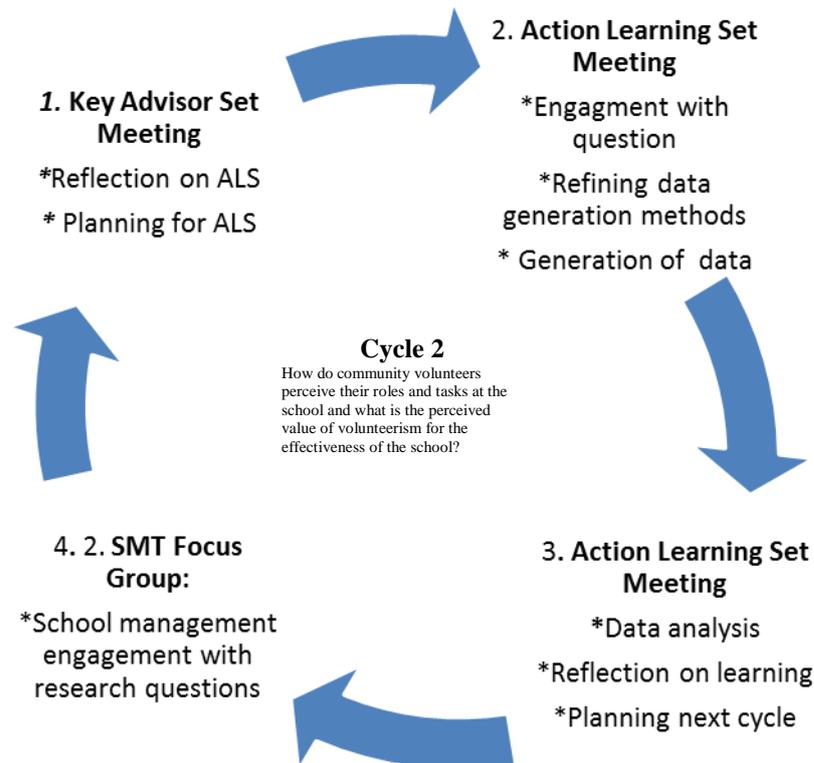
As with the first sub-question around motivation, the cyclic, iterative process of the design enabled data to emerge throughout the three cycles of our engagement. In this chapter, the analysis from the participants and SMT around the value that volunteers added to the school is compared with what the Department of Basic Education (DBE) perceives as school functionality. The comparison is further integrated and triangulated with the literature reviewed. Furthermore, in writing up the findings of this cycle, I was mindful of the findings that emerged during the first cycle of the research process. The mindfulness was important because it was evident during the second cycle that the participants were now more confident regarding the methodological process. This confidence allowed us to use the discussions of the findings in cycle one to reflect on our discussions around sub-question two. In addition, the insights gained from the volunteers' involvement provided an opportunity for the participants in this study to understand the strengths and weaknesses around their existing participation in the school. Understanding these strengths and weaknesses allowed the participants to advocate for improvements in the volunteer programme. The findings of the first and second

cycles further complemented the development of the process model that emerged from the third cycle, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.2 PERCEIVED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME TO THE SCHOOL

The analysis of the perceived value that volunteers brought to the school occurred at the functional, and what participants termed, the "deeper" level. The functional level is defined as the additional human services and support offered by the volunteers in the nine focus areas in which they operated at the school. The deeper level was understood as the added value, in addition to the services and support that emerged from performing labour-intense services. The awareness of the value of their contribution to school functionality was highlighted by the following comment from Patricia:

> We see us as volunteers playing a very important role towards the school. Checking all over what we are doing in- and outside. TV programme (Rise) about volunteers: what is happening in our schools, most especially poor black children, where the toilets are foul, how the schools are looking, especially the old schools: you cannot go near the toilets. Talking about the people to help the schools. The programme made me sit and think: this is what we are doing! All they were talking about is what we are doing. We are playing a very important role in our school. We only need our people in the school to show them from government straight to Sapphire. The answers are here.

It is from comments such as these that the participants highlighted the functional role they performed in the school.

6.2.1 The perceived functional contribution of volunteers

The school had a rich history of community involvement. A "bosberaad",[12] under the theme, *Masibambane sakhe* (Let's join and build) (Appendix – 16) held as far back as 2000 identified the value that the community could bring to support the teaching and learning processes at the school. The school recognised that the community could "play an active role in the development and overall maintenance of the

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[12] A strategic planning meeting comprising of various community stakeholders to determine the vision and mission of the school

teaching (sic) to make it conducive to the provision of quality education" *(Page 10 Bosberaad document).* It was evident from the numerous secondary data sources available at the school that the community played a significant role in supporting the school to do its work *(Appendix – 17).*

It was also further evident that the roles performed by volunteers had evolved over the years. In a paper submitted by myself and the then Deputy Principal of the school to a book highlighting global case studies of health promoting schools, some of these evolving roles were highlighted (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). The aim of identifying the research sub-question was to be able to ascertain if the participants were cognisant of the functional roles that they performed in the school. In the discussion in the action learning set in this cycle, the participants advanced the following understanding of their contribution towards the functionality of the school. The analysis of the contribution took place through the nine focus areas in which the volunteers were active (Table 6.1).

TABLE 6.1: Contribution to school functionality through the volunteer areas

Teachers Assistants (TA)
•   Coming to school daily
•   Making sure children pray before school starts and ends
•   When the teacher is absent, tending to class
•   Going to office for teachers
•   Knowing how to help children
•   Individual support for learners
Orphan Vulnerable Children Caregivers (OVC)
•   Coming to school daily
•   Identifying the needy and the vulnerable children: when they have down days, giving them a hug
•   Counselling learners and community members
Grounds and security personnel (GRS)
•   Coming to school daily
•   Making sure the school-ground is clean

• Repairing broken windows and doors
• Fixing broken wires
• Repairing blockages and making sure there is no leakage around the toilets so that the school does not need to employ someone from outside
• Making sure that the school is not vandalised.
• Safety and security of school

Toilet Volunteers
• Coming to school daily, making sure the toilets are kept clean
• Making sure that children wash their hands after using toilets
• Taking care of children who are sick e.g. runny tummies; cleaning them before going out so that the next child can come into a healthy environment

Clinic Volunteers
• Weighing of children
• Screening of children
• Testing, check-ups, referrals, cleaning wounds and family planning
• Supporting and escorting children to the clinic.
• Counselling

Administrative Volunteers
• Typing, answering phones, photocopying, faxing
• Assisting with school planning (weekly planning)
• Welcoming visitors with a smile
• Showing visitors around the school

Garden Volunteers
• Digging planting, bedding, watering, transplanting, reaping and selling
• Assisting Feeding Scheme with fresh veggies
• Selling for an income for the Volunteer Project

Project Manager
• Signing of volunteers' daily attendance register
• Managing and monitoring the different volunteer projects
• Developing weekly work plans
• Writing reports for schools and funders

Library Volunteer
•   Assisting learners with reading, colouring, discipline and research

It is apparent from the discussions that the participants felt that they did perform a significant role in various areas of the school. Their important role was subsequently confirmed by the SMT in discussions around this question.

In addition to confirming most of what the participants highlighted in Table 6.1, the SMT added that some teacher assistants helped with assessments, keeping classrooms clean and assisted in translations (from English to isiXhosa and from Afrikaans to isiXhosa and English). One SMT member felt that one specific teacher assistant was so efficient "it is almost like she is a teacher". Also, another SMT member noted that the mere physical presence of the volunteer in his class made him feel more confident and comfortable, basing this on the fact that they, the volunteers, knew the learners and their circumstances much better than the teachers. A female teacher added that the presence of community volunteers, in addition to making the teachers feel more confident and comfortable, allowed the teachers to feel physically safe at school, given the school's location in a high crime area. The SMT members acknowledged that by performing these services, the volunteers lessened their workload as teachers. This freed up more time for teachers to pay attention to their core task of teaching. It was evident from these findings that the perception was there that the volunteers played a crucial role in the functionality of the school. This perception of the volunteers' importance was confirmed in a policy retreat of the School Governing Body (SGB), held in 2015, where it was acknowledged. The findings suggest that the functional contribution was further complemented by the deeper value that the volunteers brought to the school.

6.2.2   The perceived deeper value that volunteers brings to the school

The value of giving beyond the service of volunteering was highlighted through an incident at the school, which formed part of an emotional discussion in the first action learning set in the second cycle. Crosby, one of the participants and a volunteer in the GRS, was recognised as a hero during this session. He put his life on the line

when he assisted in calming and subduing a young drug addict from the community, who was causing havoc in the street and the school on one particular day. The narration during the set meeting was concluded with Crosby being applauded for his act of bravery. Crosby commented that "it is not just about money. I care about what I am doing." Neziwa commented that besides subduing the youngster, he showed compassion towards him: "He is a father; you are a father to every child. When you are a brother, you are a brother; you are a brother at the same time." It is this giving more than just their sense of service in a focus area that the volunteers regarded as their deep and meaningful contribution.

Crosby's example of commitment beyond physical service serves as a good example of the deeper values that participants felt were present in all the focus areas in which the volunteers were active. Table 6.2 illustrates what the participants identified as the deeper values that each focus area of volunteering brought to the school.

TABLE 6.2: The deeper contribution through the volunteer areas

Teacher Assistants	- Support - Love, caring and patience - Hope (willing to help and support slower learners)
OVC	- Telling vulnerable children there is hope - Identifying needy and the vulnerable children: when they have down days, giving them a hug. Loving and caring - Affection and support
GRS	- Role of father and brother (all males in this project) – showed love of a father to child, but also related to child as a brother (reflection from incident involving Crosby) - Love and care for the building (love at

	two levels for persons and infrastructure)
Toilets	• Love and care – compassion for children • Love for environment – keeping toilet clean
Clinic	• Caring for the children • Love
Administration	• Caring • Patience • Kindness • Love
Garden	• Kindness (prepare to share produce with other volunteers) • Caring (providing fresh produce for Feeding Scheme)
Project Manager	• Working hand in hand with all volunteers equally • Supporting volunteers • Caring, • Trustworthy, • Counselling the volunteers
Library	• Attention and love • Positive reinforcement

The findings suggest that these deeper values of caring, love, support and role modelling were validated by the responses of the SMT focus group. One female teacher felt that the presence of the volunteer meant that she had someone she could relate to when she was feeling down. Another teacher acknowledged how much she had learnt by watching how some of the more senior volunteers managed conflict. This was especially important in the multicultural environment of the school, recognising that the volunteers might have more skills in certain areas than the teachers. Likewise, another member felt that it was comforting having older, more

mature people around them to guide around issues that teachers might not be too comfortable with. This guidance seemed to be referring to issues directly linked to community matters. The teachers felt that the volunteers provided an active link between the community and the school, as previously raised in Chapter Five. Through this link, there seems to be pride to be part of the school, which added to the culture of ownership of the school. The particular importance of feeling part of the school was because the school was still in the process of transitioning from serving mostly Afrikaans households in 2000 to a majority of isiXhosa-speaking households at the present time. This meant that classroom demographics were becoming skewed towards isiXhosa-speaking children, as a result of which more isiXhosa-speaking teachers had been employed by the school. The volunteers were further mindful that when they recruited, the recruitment should represent the demographics of the children in the school.

The findings therefore strongly suggest that a link exists between the functionality of the school and the presence of volunteers in the school. This functional contribution in the form of volunteers offering their services in various focus areas was complemented by a deeper kind of support. This deeper support emerged through acts performed by virtue of the service and had a broader impact on societal issues, enabling community transformation in terms of the integration of previously segregated cultural, racial and linguistic groups. This applied not only to South African Black and Coloured families living in the same community, but also to the integration of other African nationals. The school could help to create a unifying space in which all cultures could learn to work together as volunteers, including immigrants from other African countries.

However, I was mindful as a school leader that this value-laden functional contribution had to align to what the Department of Basic Education (DBE) viewed as a functional school. This alignment is important if this model is to be useful for other schools and for the DBE to potentially embrace community volunteerism in schools.

6.3   COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED VALUE WITH DBE AND REVIEWED LITERATURE

The comparison of the perceived value against the expectations of the DBE first has to be located in the broader debate of school effectiveness and efficiency. As I reflected in Chapter Two, a definitive understanding of what basic school functionality is, always eluded me as a leader of the school. The lack of understanding, in reflection, was influenced by my personal frustration that all schools were required to obtain the same levels of functionality, irrespective of context. The findings of this study seem to suggest a different understanding of what this functionality should be. The argument has emerged that schools facing multiple challenges, which are in fact the majority in South Africa (Christie, et al., 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006), have to pursue a context-driven understanding of what functionality should be. This new understanding of basic functionality needs to extend beyond the present notion of measuring functionality against pre-determined academic yardsticks. The academic measurement translates into many schools being labelled as dysfunctional (Christie, et al., 2007; Spaull, 2012). The participants in this study articulated that they saw the school as a beacon of hope, not only for the children, but also the broader community. So the question that many school leaders face, through the lens of Drucker's (2008) definition of effectiveness and efficiency is whether schools are doing things right (efficiency) at the expense of doing the right thing (effectiveness), for themselves and the communities? The answer to the question in most cases is guided by what the DBE mandates that schools should be doing.

I am in no way suggesting compromising academic excellence in any school. I am, however, positing that the one size fits all kind of interpretation of excellence will make it difficult for schools to serve their communities best, given the many complex challenges facing the vast majority of South African schools. The findings of my study suggest that a pursuit of effectiveness that incorporates the entire community is possible, albeit with challenges. Furthermore, I would argue that following this community-centred approach to schooling could contribute towards meeting the requirements of what the DBE regards as a functional school, according to the Whole School Development Model (WSD) (Department of Basic Education, 2001).

The WSD model focuses on nine key performance areas. These nine performance areas are the basic functionality of the school; leadership management and communication; governance and relationships; quality of teaching and educator development; curriculum provision and resources; learner achievement; school safety, security and discipline; school infrastructure; and parents and community involvement (Department of Basic Education, 2001). I agree with Witten's (2006) argument that there needs to be complementary support for schools to achieve relative degrees of functionality, especially within the context of the vast majority of South African schools. The argument advocates that schools should develop the capacity to transform beyond the understanding of school as a space of interaction between teacher, learner and the curriculum. It suggests that the school should be a space in which multiple external stakeholders, including the community, should be involved in supporting the holistic development of the child in the school. What Witten (2006) fails to show, however, is how this complementary support can happen, using the available human capabilities in a community. This study aims to fill this gap in knowledge by illuminating how this can be done. This chapter, in particular, shows how support in the nine focus areas of the WSD could be attained through the agency of community volunteers involved in the school; this would also help to meet some community expectations. These nine focus areas, of the DBE, can be reduced to three focal points in support of basic school functionality, namely: academic support; community involvement and relationships; and resource provision and support. It is against these three focal points that I will compare the perceived value that volunteers can bring, as advanced by the participants in the study.

6.3.1   Provision of Academic Support

This focal point incorporates the key performance areas of the quality of teaching and educator development, curriculum provision and resources and learner achievement. Although the objective of the study is not directly related to whether this form of community agency results in improved academic outcomes, the findings indicate that substantial academic support was provided by the volunteers in this study.

The type of support emanated predominantly from the services rendered by the teacher assistants in and around the classroom. The support emerged in the form of volunteers acting as translators for teachers, providing logistical support, like cleaning classrooms and covering books, supervising classes when teachers are not present, doing administrative tasks for teachers, assisting with group work, going to the administrative block to make photocopies, assisting with recording assessment tasks, managing and controlling classroom resources, and offering support to "slower" learners. The freeing up of time from doing these duties, which many teachers in the majority of schools have to perform, allows them to keep their focus on teaching and learning. The more direct academic support from volunteers came in the form of direct support for those learners who might need it and assisting teachers in translation when required. The library volunteer also provided a space of additional complementary academic support, as highlighted in Table 6.1.

Parental support was taken to the next level, through the Ubunye project, discussed in Chapter Five, which sought to empower parents in the community to help their learners academically, given the various challenges they faced. I am of the view that the Ubunye programme carried academic projects beyond the gates of the school, into the community. The academic support relied on the involvement of the community and was, therefore, important for the development of sustainable support in the school (Christie, et al., 2007; Prew, 2009).

6.3.2   Community Involvement and Relationships

Community participation in a school, the findings suggest, should not only serve the narrow interest of the school, as WSD seems to suggest, but should further the interests of the community as well. This focal point, community involvement and relationships, includes the key WSD performance areas of leadership management and communication, governance and relationships, and parents and community involvement. I am of the opinion that it is these focus areas that can provide that mutually beneficial link between community and school. I would further argue that this holds particularly true in the case of schools facing tough socio-economic conditions.

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The integrating concept of school and community, as suggested by this study, could influence the lack of consensus of what defines community (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). Block (2007) recognises community as a place of belonging. Prew (2009) further states that South Africans tend to display a strong sense of affiliation to the communities in which they reside. Based on the findings of my study, I want to advocate that the school can be a place in which the concept of community belonging could be initiated and further evolved, as community volunteers develop a sense of purpose for their children and themselves.

This feeling of belonging created through volunteer agency in school is usually accompanied by the need to pursue a common goal that is in the interest of the demographics of the community in which a group of people are located (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). In the case of this school in the community, the findings imply that the common goal should reflect both the interests of the children and the community. The mutual reciprocal purpose allows for the celebration of diversity in the school and the community, helping educators to understand and engage with broader societal transformation issues. One would argue that this would not have occurred if the volunteers were not active in the school. The participants in this study made a case for volunteerism in schools as a powerful positive cohesive force in the community. This is unlike the example cited by McMillan and Chavis (1986) of the Klu Klux Klan in America as an example of a force eroding social cohesion. This cohesive push towards good, I argue, is what is needed for all of us to evolve to higher levels of self-actualisation (Sherr, 2008). I would further argue that this self-actualisation could assist in creating citizens who feel that they have something to contribute to society through being engaged in a school – especially as the gap is widening between the rich and poor in society and the world (Rossouw *et al.*, 2010), making the vast majority of the population feeling hopeless. The findings suggest that the development of the community could be achieved while pursuing the holistic development of children through community volunteerism at school.

The fact that more than 40 volunteers have been involved in the school under study over a sustained period of time suggests that this model could address the constant complaint that communities do not want to get involved in schools. Chapter Five highlighted the chief motivations behind why these communities became involved,

while Chapter Six highlights both the functional and deeper roles that the community brings to school. Like Witten's (2006) School Based Complementary Framework (SBCLF), the Harvard Family Research Project's Complementary Learning Framework (CLF) (Bouffard and Weiss, 2008) advocate different types of support from various stakeholders, including parents and communities. They do not, however, highlight strongly enough how the communities of the schools could actively be used as agents for such complementary support. The findings of this study provide some indication as to how the community could be integrated into the operations of the school.

This integration of the community and school will further assist in dealing with the fragmented family structures evident in the community of the school in this study and many similar communities across South Africa (Meintjes *et al.*, 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2012). The findings in both Chapter Five and Chapter Six show how these volunteers acted as surrogate parents both inside and outside of the school. The findings further suggest that in order for this to occur, strong relationships need to be developed among the various stakeholders in the school. The school culture should advocate for the organic development of these multidimensional relationships among the various stakeholders of the school. Also, the culture should be caring and allow for the creation of a climate of trust among the various stakeholders, which should assist the school in meeting its obligation to provide quality education to its learners (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004). Key in the creation of this caring, learning culture is the leadership of the school.

Having been a principal of a school, I concur with several authors (Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006) who recognise the important role the principal and school leadership play in creating and maintaining a caring, learning culture in the school. The volunteers, in particular, the administrative support volunteers, allowed me to be administratively efficient on a number of levels. I used to boast that I had five secretaries: one paid by the state, and four community volunteers. Furthermore, the important role I played in conceptualising, promoting and advancing this programme has been documented (Damons and Abrahams, 2009; Wood, 2013) and was recognised by the participants in this study. However, the study also illuminated how in certain instances, as discussed in Chapter Five and in section 6.4 in this chapter,

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my actions or omissions affected the effectivity of the volunteer programme at the school. Besides the leadership required to create and sustain school programmes, the leadership of schools are entrusted with the roles of ensuring resource provision in order for schools to be functional.

6.3.3   Resource Provision and Support

Resource provision and support cover the WSD key performance areas of school safety, security and discipline, and school infrastructure. The provision of adequate resources, both human and material, has constantly plagued schools in the context of the school in the study. The lack of resources and adequate support from the DBE led to violent protests around schools, in the same geographic area as the school in the study (eNCA, 2015). Against the backdrop of the lack of support required to provide quality education to the vast majority of our learners, the question requiring reflection is whether schools should restructure themselves to develop the support needed. UNICEF's (2014) child-friendly schools and the WHO's (2014) health promoting schools provide a conceptual framework of how schools could attempt to remodel to deal with these challenges. However, I could not find any clear model for the successful integration of the community into the main functions of the school. In this school, the community volunteers were integrated through their functional roles in the nine focus areas in which they volunteered. I would put forward an argument based on the findings of this study as well as my experience of working for 25 years in schools, that there is a need for such a restructure to accommodate the community resources available to all schools. The participants in this study, supported by the SMT, suggested how the restructuring of the school and the understanding of the purpose of the school could evolve through this integrated community school approach. This evolving understanding will be put forward in more detail in Chapter Seven.

In the absence of material and human resources from the DBE, the community, as the findings suggest, provides an available resource that could step into that space. The community, through active agency (Table 6.1), presents an opportunity to assist schools in dealing with the complex challenges (Christie, et al., 2007; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010; Witten, 2006) that they confront on a daily basis. In addition, the findings

suggest that schools could become sites to deal with some of the ideological and social challenges that confront our communities, among which are transformation and social cohesion.

It is apparent from the findings in this study that the volunteers did add value to the basic functionality of the school. The value added can be directly linked to what the DBE regards as school effectiveness, but the findings further seem to suggest a different focus to schooling. In the WSD model, the focus can be perceived as the holistic development of the learner, for academic excellence, irrespective of the context of in which the learner is expected to learn. The findings of the study suggest that doing the right thing (effectiveness, as opposed to only doing things, efficiency) requires an integrated school community engagement approach, which services the holistic development of the child. The engagement further needs to pay attention to the needs of both the volunteers and the communities from which they come. However, again, as with the motivation question, this engagement was characterised by various tensions.

6.4. CHALLENGES OF ENGAGING COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL FUNCTIONALITY

The tension in this cycle focuses on the various elements that impacted on the value that volunteers could have in supporting the school to become functional. One of the major issues raised was the lack of a clear plan to manage the volunteer programme. Johnson *et al.* (1977) recognise the importance of having a clear plan for such a programme to be effective. In addition to the absence of a clear plan, the absence of a clear job description, raised by Nojaja (2009) in his studies, gave rise to tension among the various stakeholders in the school. The lack of a clear capacity building plan across the nine focus areas in which the volunteers operated also seemed to heighten the perception that the volunteers could be viewed as incompetent. Volunteers were recruited and placed in a focus area without any training or support for the work they were required to do. One of the teachers remarked that some of the teacher assistants seem inefficient because they lacked proper direction from the teachers they were working with. There was, however, evidence that the volunteers had attempted to formalise the programme at the

school (Appendix - 14). The findings, however, suggest that a lack of formal engagement and regular meetings was what participants regarded as the reasons why the formal programme struggled at times.

Again, the lack of proper communication that emerged in Chapter Five was evident in the second cycle. This lack of communication became apparent when not all the SMT members in the focus group were aware of all the volunteer areas in which the volunteers were active. Furthermore, not all SMT members were aware of the leadership structure of the volunteers. It further became apparent there was a communication divide between teachers and volunteers. One teacher remarked that this could be avoided if there was better communication around the volunteer programme.

The issue of volunteer turnover was raised as a challenge. Some volunteers moved on to pursue other opportunities while some became disillusioned because they were not receiving any incentive for their services. This meant that each time a new volunteer was recruited it required an investment of time to orientate him or her into the culture of the school, which in most cases did not happen. The concern of having too many volunteers at the school was also raised. The participants felt that this might lead to an unnecessary overpopulation of staff. No proper audit had ever been conducted to determine how many volunteers each focus area required in the school under study. Chapter Seven will attempt to address many of the challenges raised here and in Chapter Five.

During the second action learning set of the second cycle, we were visited by two Professors of Philosophy, one from the local university and the other a visiting Professor from the United Kingdom. They observed the second action learning set in this cycle which focused on our engagement around the perceived value that volunteers brought to the school. The one Professor, in closing, highlighted that the true value he thought volunteers brought, was that they provided true insight into the lives of the community and the children from the community. He commented that:

> Universities are very interested in counting mainly. So what we do we say, we look at a school; we look how many children, not at their size, shape, health, where they

come from. Secondly, we look at how many in the class, how many pass, how many fail, we look at the marks in the exams. How many understand maths as it is? We look at numbers a lot. We never really understand deeply what actually is happening in the school. We don't look at the children, their houses, their families. Children walking to school for 2,5 hours and return. Drank only 1 mug of black tea. So we began seeing … then you think how can they learn? How difficult is it to learn? Not many people do that research in which we tried to understand what happens (to go to school in the rain)? We did not look inside the school a lot. You are beginning to look inside the school."

6.5   SUMMARY

The findings suggest that a community volunteer programme could add immense value to schools. As the Professor suggested, the community volunteers in this study allowed the school to have insight into the real context of the children. In addition, through their active agency, the volunteers provided functional, value-laden support to the school in its efforts to become functional, as defined by the DBE. The findings seem to suggest that this integrating concept of school and community can be achieved if the key elements of an effective school, as espoused by Macbeath and Mortimer (2001), are present. These key elements are having a shared vision and common goals; setting high expectations for everyone; cultivating a positive environment; and encouraging collaborative learning, where rights and responsibilities are understood and respected.

However, as the study illuminates, this integrating concept happened in an environment characterised by various tensions. It is through this dichotomy of functionality and tension that a case is made for a different understanding of school effectiveness, especially in schools with such diverse contexts as the schools in South Africa. Enough has been reported about how the majority of schools are not performing to the desired standard set by the DBE. In reinforcing the commentary I made in Chapter Two, I do believe that the efforts to achieve efficiency should be equalled by the same effort to effectively engage with the contextual challenges confronting schools. An integrated school community approach that values a mutually reciprocal relationship between school and community volunteers is what the findings in Chapters Five and Six suggest is a possible way of addressing these challenges.

It is from this understanding around the motivators (Chapter Five) and understanding the perceived value that the volunteers brought to the school (Chapter Six), that a process model is suggested in Chapter Seven. The emerging framework directly influences how the volunteers will take the programme forward in the school and, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, provided a potential framework for other schools to engage with their communities. However, before looking at a potential framework, I explain the need to understand some important elements that emerged throughout the course of the study and impacted on the development of this process model. Among these were defining volunteerism in the context of South Africa and in community schools in particular; exploring a contextual definition of the community school relevant to this context; and advancing a possible additional understanding to school effectiveness, other than the one presently understood by the DBE. The chapter concludes by suggesting a process model informed by data that emerged across the three cycles of the study, the practice of the volunteers in the school and the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORETICAL PROCESS MODEL FOR RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The data that emerged from the previous six chapters has informed the development of this model. Chapter One provided a contextual understanding, which laid the foundation for Chapters Two and Three, in which I explored literature to develop an understanding of the research questions. This understanding then underpinned the methodology that I adopted, discussed in Chapter Four, to understand the issue of volunteer motivation, presented in Chapter Five in this report. In Chapter Six, I presented the findings of the perceived value that community volunteerism brought to the school under study. This chapter draws on all these findings to suggest a possible process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining the involvement of community volunteers in a school located in a socio-economically challenged context. It does this by advocating a model, which emerged from the findings presented in this study. The results of the first two cycles, triangulated with literature and secondary data sources, were validated in the third cycle of the research process (see Figure 7.1), which allowed the participants to collaboratively construct the model. I promised the participants that although I would end my research for degree purposes with this cycle, we would complete what we had committed to at the beginning of the research process, namely developing a training manual to enable interested parties to understand and implement the suggested process for volunteer involvement.

FIGURE 7.1: Third cycle
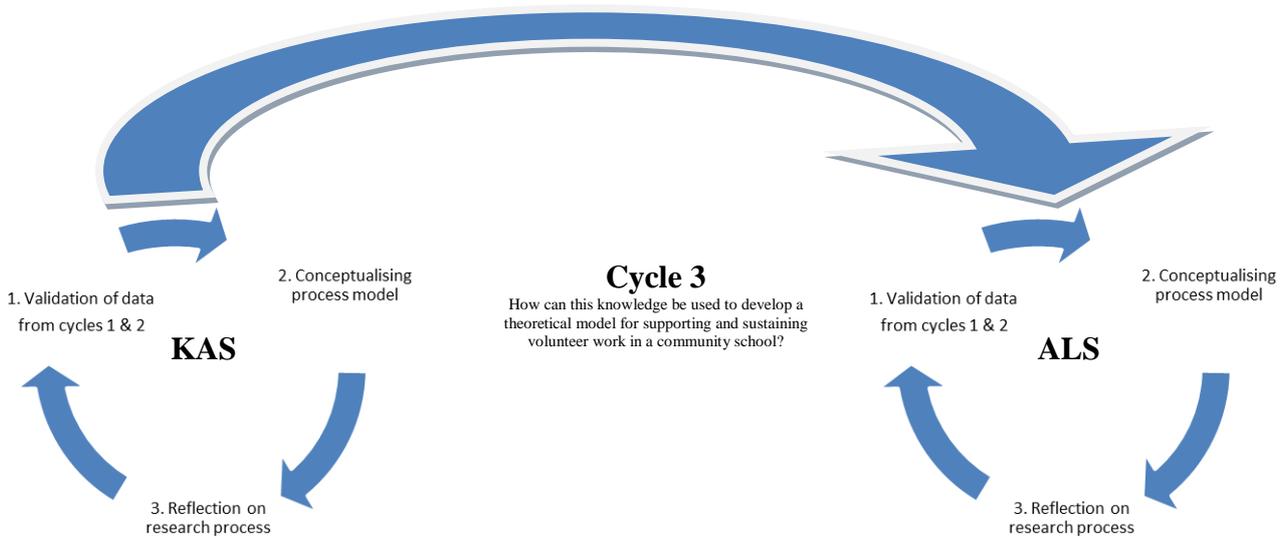
7.2 CYCLE THREE: COLLABORATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROCESS MODEL

The objectives of both the KAS and ALS meetings in this cycle were for a final validation of the data that emerged in cycles one and two, to use as a basis for the conceptualisation of the model. The reflection on the research process followed to date provided valuable insights into the value and operation of the action learning sets included in the model (see 7.3.3). In the KAS meeting, we sifted and prepared the data for presentation in the final action learning set (see Image 7.1).

IMAGE 7.1: KAS meeting cycle three

In the action learning set, we used the world café (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014) as a form of validating the data that emerged throughout the study (see Image 7.2).

IMAGE 7.2: ALS meeting cycle three

It was from these engagements that the process model to recruit, support and sustain the community volunteer in the community school emerged. Although both groups validated the findings regarding the factors that motivated volunteers and what value they brought to the school and received from volunteering, the participants in the final action learning set meeting thought it important to first establish an understanding of what they meant by the term community school. This understanding further needed to be supported by the identification of the values that should be present in such a community school. Moreover, developing this understanding of community school is important, since it is a term that has different meanings in different contexts. For example, in the USA community school is a very different concept (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2009) from the one in this study.

7.2.1   Constructing a Contextual Understanding of a Community School

The participants were adamant that any model of integrating the community volunteer into a school needed to encourage meaningful relationships between community and school. The key premise was that such an integration had to be beneficial for both the community and the school (see Section 5.2.1.3). The insistence by the participants that there should be an integration of school and community underscored the transition from the notion of a relationship with communities and other entities primarily based on the acquisition of resources to primarily or solely benefit the school, to a reciprocally beneficial relationship between the school and community members. I could not find any literature that focused on the mutually beneficial relationship between community members and school: most

literature focused on how parental involvement fostered the interests of the child (Lumby, 2003; Van Wyk, 2001), with no apparent personal benefits for the parents performing the voluntary work. The existing literature, therefore, focused on the creation of an enabling learning environment for the children of the community to achieve their full potential, with little or no mention of how schools could help parents and community members to improve their lives.

Therefore, the participants deemed it important to determine what the term "community school" meant to them in their particular context. In the final action learning set meeting, they formed three groups to discuss and then share their understanding of a community school. These explanations are presented below:

Group one: *"it is a school that works to involve the community, e.g. when something happens in the community, the school opens the doors for the community. And also it is a school that opens the gates even after school for the children, even during holidays."*

Group One highlighted the important role that the school could play in the community outside of school hours, and not just for children, but for all community members that needed assistance. The school should present a source of hope and support to all, and it should be proactive in establishing a collaborative relationship with the community.

Group two: *"Community school is a school that involved the community and helps unpreveledge (sic) children and parents and is mostly based in a location13 and its non school fee payment (sic)."*

The second group also underlined the importance of a community school helping not only children, but also the broader community, since all community members are underprivileged. One of the conditions set was that a community school should be a non-fee paying school.

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13 Local term used to describe an urban township

Group three*: "A community school helps old people to learn new language. A community school is a beacon of hope. Allows everybody to come in developing capacity. A community (school – mine) is working with community and takes every child in with no judging of background. Community school combines parents, learners and teachers to work together."*

Group three reaffirmed the idea that a community school should be a beacon of hope for the community, as it provided an opportunity for all to learn and develop. The community school was seen as an inclusive space that united all stakeholders in creating a non-judgemental and collaborative environment for the children and community members to actualise their full potential. The volunteer song (Appendix – 12) praised the school for providing the space for this unity of stakeholders to occur. It is interesting that none of these explanations talked about the role of the community in the school: again, this highlighted the need to respond to community needs and understand their context before trying to recruit them to work for the school.

After each group had presented their understanding of the concept, the participants integrated these explanations into a combined vision for the community school, which Group 1 explained in summary as *"a school in the house and the house in the school"* (see Image 7.3).

IMAGE 7.3: Participants' understanding of the community school
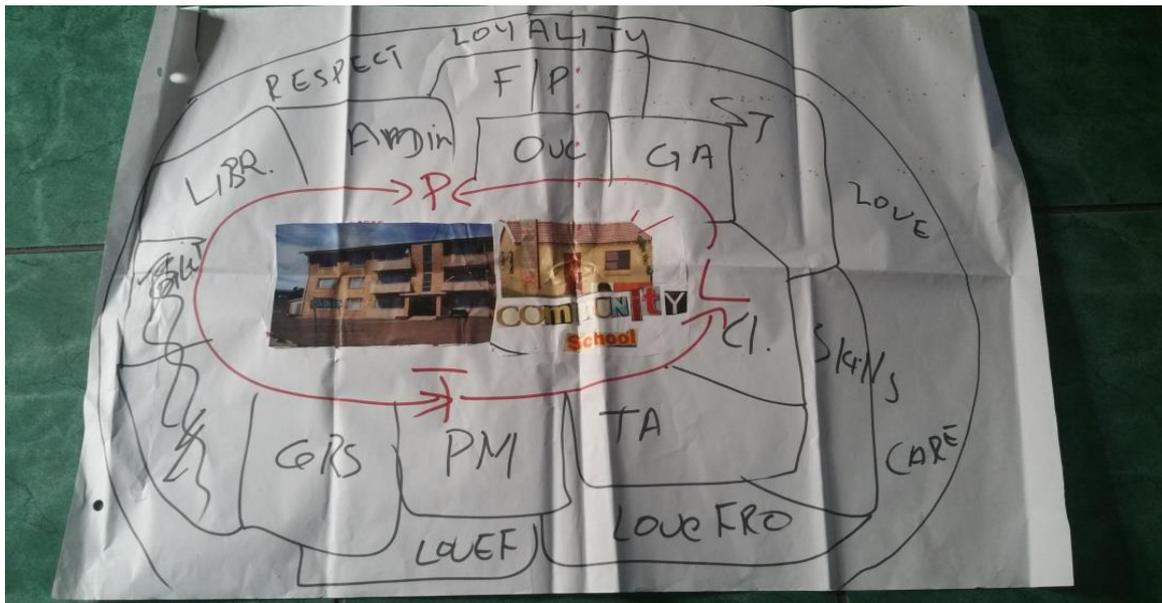
Image 7.3 contains the image of a house and a school, compromising of stakeholders: L – learners, T- teachers and P – parents (volunteers). The outer blocks identify the volunteer areas in which the volunteers were active (see Table 6.1 in Section 6.2.1). The blocks above these volunteer areas highlight their chief motivations for being involved in these volunteer areas (see Table 5.1 in Section 5.2)*.* Finally, the values are reflected that should be present when integrating the school and the community. The integration of school and community serves the purpose of creating the desired mutually beneficial relationship between community volunteer and school, in pursuit of the creation of a positive learning environment for the community and its children. This understanding confirms the findings of cycles one and two (see Chapter Five and Chapter Six) as they underline the agentic role the community could play to support teaching and learning by contributing to the establishment of an enabling environment. This is a reciprocal relationship, as the volunteers benefited from offering their services while they learnt new skills and developed on a personal level (see Section 5.2.1.3).

This was portrayed in the idea of the school as a beacon of hope (see Section 7.2.). The hope evolved through the volunteer being nurtured towards the fulfilment of his or her potential in a value-filled space of interaction among the community volunteer, learners, staff and leadership structures of the school, namely the School Governing

Body (SGB) and the School Management Team (SMT). The interaction created a sense of belonging for the community volunteer rendering a service to the school and, in return, volunteers played a major role in supporting the basic functionality of the school (see Section 6.2.1). This relationship provided respite for the volunteer from the daily challenges they faced in trying to create a meaningful life for themselves in a context of extreme poverty. The vision (see Image 7.3) also highlighted the importance of such interaction being underpinned by democratic and caring values. Without this, the mutually beneficial relationship would not be able to be sustained.

7.2.2 Understanding the Value Blanket of Engagement

The value blanket, taken from the metaphor in the volunteer song (Appendix– 12), is illustrated by the small red circles, in the corners of the house, in the process model (see Figure 7.2). It is the joint ownership of these core values by the internal stakeholders of the school (learners, staff and leadership structures) and the community volunteer that will ensure ongoing collaboration. This joint ownership view is backed up by the Center for Improving School Culture (Center For Improving School Culture, 2004) which states that school values should be negotiated and agreed to among the various stakeholders of the school. The values identified by the participants as being the most important were love, respect, care, loyalty, and trust.

Love was identified as a key value and motivator for getting involved in the school (see Section 5.2). This value was also identified as "the central value" that motivated all stakeholders (Seobi, 2015 p. 153) in another study that investigated improving teaching and learning within the school and supported the importance of basing all interaction within a caring environment. According to Griffin (2015), feeling loved is a prerequisite for attaining self-actualisation, which is a motivator for volunteerism (Sherr, 2008). In particular, participants indicated that this showing of care and love for volunteers should not manifest only in the form of material support, but should cover the spiritual, emotional and physical welfare of all (see Section 5.2.2.1). It is from these expressions of love and care that trust and respect would develop among the various stakeholders. Love was regarded as the foundation for a caring school culture (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004), as it created a climate of trust,

which assisted the school in meeting its obligation of providing quality education to its learners.

Trust was regarded as an essential value, as the lack of it led to problematic relationships (see Section 5.2.3). Apart from the need for interpersonal trust, community members must also trust the school to be an agent to address the challenges experienced by the volunteer and the community. This willingness included providing a quality education that would meet the holistic needs of the children from the community, but also extended to the needs of the community, which impacted on their ability to support the children. This trust encouraged loyalty to the task of assisting the school by supporting the teaching and learning process. Loyalty only emerges when care, love and trust are evident. The embodiment of all these values encourages mutual respect, manifested in the willingness to listen to each other and validate opinions and feelings. If the interaction is based on these values, the school site becomes a home to the community members, the school is in the community and the community is in the school (see Image 7.3).

7.3 A MODEL FOR RECRUITING, SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOL

The vision created by the participants (based on the findings of cycles one and two) was used as the basis for the construction of a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteers. I constructed this model and validated it at a subsequent action learning set meeting with participants, at which we discussed the drafting of the manual (see Section 7.1). The model is presented below.

FIGURE 7.2: A process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining community volunteer involvement in a community school
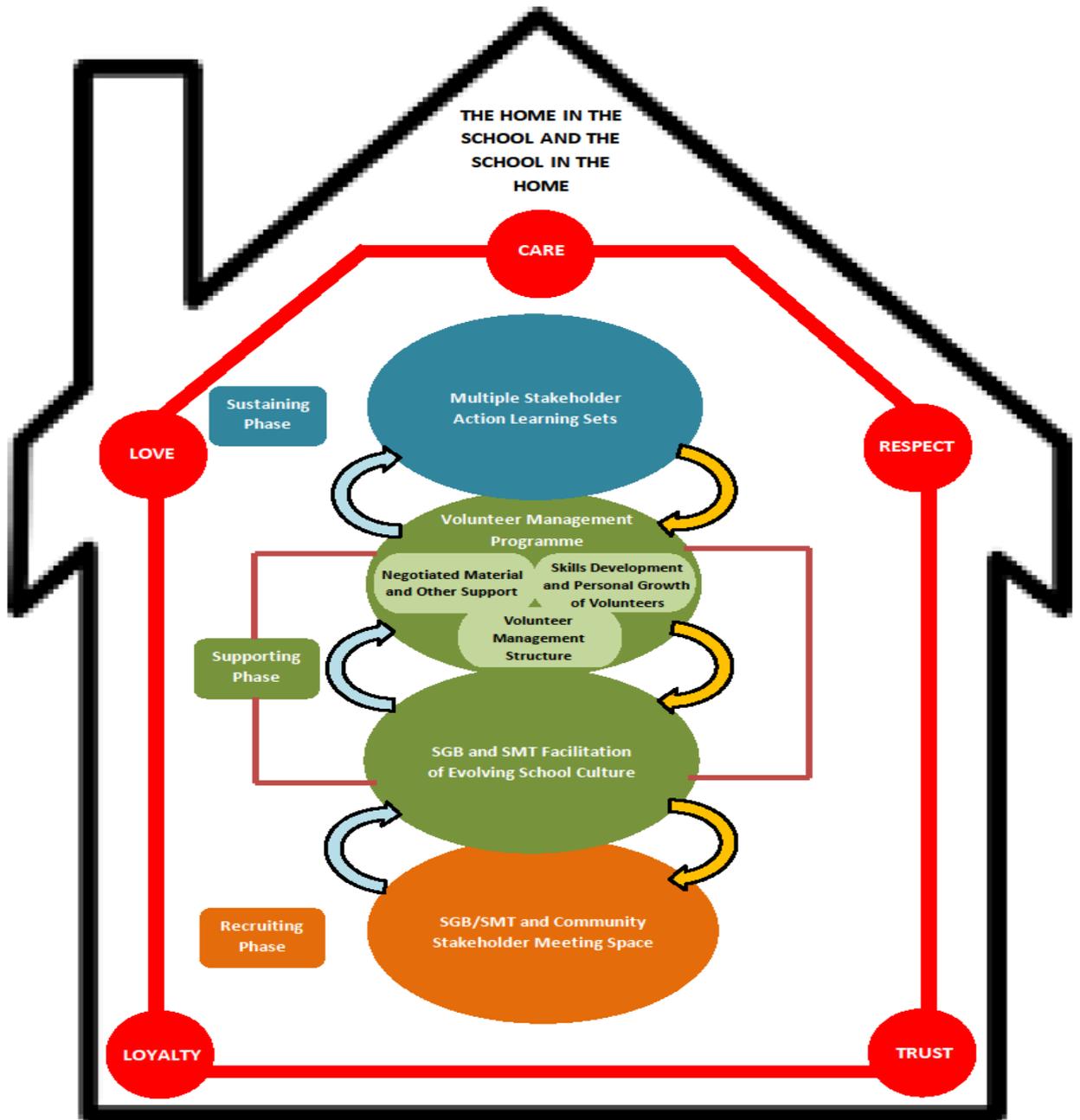
In the model, the process is divided into three phases recruiting; supporting and sustaining phases.

7.3.1   Recruitment of the Community Volunteer

The first phase of the process requires a meeting, convened by the School Governing Body, between the school and multiple stakeholders from the community, represented by the first orange circle at the bottom of the diagram. The school should be represented by the School Governing Body (SGB) and the School Management Team (SMT) because they have powers vested in them to make governance and operational decisions on behalf of the school (Department of Education, 1996). Including the SMT in the initial meeting is imperative, as it is responsible for integrating the programme into the daily operation of the school. Furthermore, it is in this space that various expectations can be sorted out, and this should lay the foundation for establishing the strong relationships required to make the programme work (see Section 5.2.3).

Multiple stakeholders in this meeting should include parents who have children at the school because they are regarded as the primary stakeholders of the school (Department of Education, 1996). In addition, the SGB should invite community members living around the school, representatives of sports organisations, religious organisations and any individual or group that has an interest in supporting the school. It is important to include community members who may not be parents of children at the school – the findings clearly support that the community school should be open to all, not only parents (see 7.2.1). In Chapter Four, Table 4.3 shows that some of the volunteers active in the school in the study did not have children attending the school.

This first meeting should encourage discussion and debate to ensure that the representatives of the school fully understand the social, economic and political realities of the community from which the volunteers will come. Without such understanding, they will not be able to respect the volunteers' resilience in the face of the daily adversities they face. The participants in the study saw community members as an integral part of the school and the school as an integral part of their own lives (see Section 7.2). The mindfulness of context, especially in the South African schooling landscape, is supported by various studies that indicate that context matters and impacts on basic school functionality (Christie, et al., 2007;

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Damons, 2012; Ncobo and Tikly, 2010). The context defined in most of these studies relates to the adverse social and economic conditions of these communities. The same adverse conditions were present in the community in which the school under study was located (see Section 1.2). It is against this backdrop that the participants felt that schools should be aware of these adverse conditions when they contemplate introducing volunteer programmes.

Once the context is understood, the members need to work together to develop a common understanding of what constitutes a functional school for the specific environment in which the school is located. The participants in this study chose to define basic school functionality as the process that addressed the holistic needs of the child beyond the classroom (see Image 7.3 and Section 7.2.1). The mission statement of the school was the '*Liberation of the mind from mental inferiority.*' The stakeholders of the school therefore not only saw the school as a centre striving for academic excellence for the learners, but as a vehicle endeavouring to impact on the conditions preventing it from achieving this excellence. In the Bosberaad held in 2000 (Appendix - 13) the community of the school already then recognised the impact poverty had in enslaving the minds of the community – probably the reason why context was identified as so important in this study. The various complementary programmes at the school spoke to the need to impact on these external factors (Damons and Abrahams, 2009), as discussed extensively in Chapter Five and confirmed by the participants in the final action learning set.

The arguments raised in Chapters Five and Six highlights the importance of the co-construction of an organic understanding of basic school functionality. Organic implies a collaboratively and context specific construction of this understanding of functional by all stakeholders who have an interest in a school. As Patricia reminded us in Chapter Five: the community knows best what it requires for its children (see Section 5.2.1). Furthermore, the three focal points identified in Chapter Six (provision of academic support; community involvement and relationships; and resource provision and support) can complement the discussion on the organic understanding of school functionality. The focal areas encompass the nine focus areas identified by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as necessary for measuring school functionality (Department-of-Education, 2001). The findings in Chapter Six clearly

indicate the various areas that would require additional human resources in the school. The additional human capability resided within the community in which the school is located. It, therefore, was important that the community and the school agreed on how to recruit the available human resources from the community to achieve the agreed contextual functionality. The understanding of context and the conceptualisation of a community school would enable the participants of this meeting to develop a common understanding of what volunteerism would mean to the community.

The findings of this study extend our knowledge of what volunteerism could mean for this particular context. As discussed in Chapter Three, the importance of volunteerism has been recognised internationally and nationally (see Section 3.2). However, the absence of adequate literature on what motivates volunteers in poor communities in South Africa was raised by Stuurman (2013) in her study. It is possible that it is the absence of this information, coupled with the lack of a clear understanding of the roles that these volunteers can perform, that ignites fear in Principals at the prospect of recruiting community members to volunteer at the school. Sherr's (2008) multi-dimensional framework, albeit framed in a western context, provided a framework for my study to gain an understanding of the possible reasons why persons would volunteer. The findings of this study further advance some knowledge around understanding volunteerism within the context of resource-scarce communities. Volunteerism was defined by the volunteers in their planning meeting held on the 31 January 2014, as a '*general kind and unselfish activity intended to promote goodness by giving of ourselves and through this giving we are able to develop and gain benefit for ourselves in the process of liberating the minds of our children'.* Once clarity has been reached on what volunteerism means for the participants in the meeting, further discussion can take place to understand benefits to both the community volunteer and the school of introducing such a programme.

The nature of the role of the volunteer should emerge once a co-constructed understanding of a functional school has been reached. In return, principles on how the school would provide support for community volunteers should be discussed. The results of our study indicate that the school must have the willingness to use its available resources, as well as work to secure other support for the volunteers (see

section 5.2.1). The question would always be could the vast majority of South African schools, given the context of a resource-scarce environment, manage to provide consistent material support to such volunteers? In South Africa, with so many challenges, it may seem that the ability to provide such sustained material support is almost an impossible task. The participants, however, did provide some insight into how sustaining volunteers beyond material support was possible (see Sections 5.2.1.2, 5.2.1.3 and 5.2.2). The participants in the study clearly stated that the school and the Principal, in particular, should have done more, especially in persuading the government to recognise the work that volunteers had been doing in the school. Patricia argued the case that the volunteers were doing work that the DBE was supposed to be paying for. The government has sufficient job creation programmes available, and an argument could be made for one of these programmes to be structured in such a way that it could be redirected to schools, to support community volunteers who support schools (see Section 5.2.1.1). Finally, it is in this space that agreement should be reached on the principles for the recruitment of community volunteers.

Schools should look at recruiting beyond parents, hence the need to invite multiple stakeholders to this first meeting. Studies (Lumby, 2003; Prew, 2009) have indicated the prevailing parental apathy towards involvement in the education of their children, especially in low-income communities. The identified areas of school functionality should assist in identifying the specific skills the school would require to achieve this functionality. However, again the schools must be mindful that the persons who make themselves available may not (yet) possess the necessary skills and that the school will have to assume responsibility for facilitating their development.

After the conclusion of this phase, the SGB and SMT of the school would have to go back and evaluate how the existing school culture would have to evolve to embrace the community volunteers entering the school, indicated by the second circle, after the recruitment phase. In addition to giving attention to the school culture, the SGB and SMT would further have to ensure that the volunteer programme is successfully integrated into the daily operations of the school.

7.3.2 Supporting Phase

7.3.2.1 *The evolving school culture to accommodate the community volunteer*

The findings suggest that the introduction of the model has to occur in an environment that is welcoming and accommodating of all, including the community volunteer (see Section 5.2.2). The integration of the community volunteer may necessitate the development of an alternative school culture to the one prevalent in most schools. This change in culture may be necessary, as most schools may not have had community volunteers on a daily basis. Van Wyk (2001) cautions that educators are not fully capacitated to support community involvement in the school, while most educators tend to blame parents for lack of participation in schools. The culture should move away from one that blames towards one that embraces multiple stakeholders intent on creating the collaboratively agreed functional school. The integration could prove initially challenging to most schools, because of their existing organisational hierarchal nature (Christie, 2010).

When introducing the programme, schools should be mindful that traditional ways of doing will have to change. For instance, power will have to be carefully negotiated (Sherr, 2008; Wilson, 2012) and various meeting spaces, discussed later under the section on sustaining the programme, need to be created to deal with matters that may emerge as a result of the engagement. The findings of this study may present, in my opinion, a somewhat limited understanding of the complexity of some of these tensions. This view is informed by the fact that in this study we did not explore the tensions in too much detail; also, the tensions may vary according to the different contexts of the schools. However, they do provide certain elements that one should be conscious of when engaging with the integration of community volunteers into a school. Furthermore, in my experience of working with volunteers for more than 12 years, those tensions have always been there. I am, however, of the opinion that it is how we manage these tensions that will determine whether or not the programme will be successful. The key to the management of the programme and possible accompanying tensions is the school principal.

The principal should play a significant role in managing these tensions and should be instrumental in creating these spaces where tensions could be engaged with and managed. The role of the principal (Christie, et al., 2007; Christie, 2010; Prew, 2007; Witten, 2006) in ensuring the effective development of all programmes in a school, was extensively recorded and further recognised by the participants in this study (see Section 5.2.3). Furthermore, principals in particular and teachers, in general, will have to recognise that the traditional perception of the school as a space that belongs only to the paid professional staff (Reed *et al.,* 2015) will have to change. However, I am of the opinion, concurring with Sherr (2008) and Wilson (2012), that because of the complexity of relationships in general and schools, in particular maintaining harmony may be difficult. We, as paid staff, need to give up some of our space and power so that we can tap into the agency that the community offers. On reflection, we might have avoided a lot of tensions present in the programme if we recognised and acknowledged this at the start of the volunteer programme in the school under study.

It is in getting to know the various roles and purposes of the various stakeholders that one could work to achieve this harmony. The next green oval in the diagram suggests how the integration of the community volunteer into the daily operations of the school can occur.

7.3.2.2 The process of integrating the community volunteer into the school

Now that the community volunteer is in the school (see the third circle from bottom), action must be taken to support, manage and sustain the programme. This is necessary to both address the needs of the community volunteer (motivations) and the legislative requirements of the Department of Basic Education (Department-of-Education, 2001). Departmental policy (Department-of-Education, 2001) indicates three broad areas that need to be developed to ensure the functionality of the school: academic support; stakeholder relationships; and infrastructural support (see section 6.3). These processes are integrated and must take into account the two concepts, as defined by the participants in this study, of the organic contextual definition of a functional school (see Section 7.3.1), and the concept of a community

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school (see Section 7.2.1). Table 7.1 below gives an indication of how volunteer support allows for the integration of these broad areas of legislative functionality and the integration of the organic definition and concept of the community school. This integration was extensively discussed in Chapter Six (see Section 6.3).

TABLE 7.1: **Areas of volunteer support that support school functionality**

Broad areas of school functionality	Academic support	Stakeholder relationships	Infrastructural support
Related focus areas of the whole development model (Department-of-Education, 2001)	Quality of teaching and educator development, Curriculum provision and resources, Learner achievement	Leadership management and communication, Governance and relationships, Parents and community involvement	School safety, security and discipline, school infrastructure
The areas of volunteering that relate to these areas	Teacher assistants, administrative volunteers, library volunteers, orphans and vulnerable children caregivers, clinic volunteers	Project manager, SGB members part of volunteering teams, non-parents part of volunteers	Grounds and security volunteers, toilet volunteers.

The three mini circles within the second green oval describe what programmes need to be set in place to support the volunteers as they support the school to achieve this integrated functionality. The findings indicate that the volunteer programme needs to address the material and personal needs of volunteers, the management of the volunteers and the services they perform. This is in addition to the empowerment of volunteers at a personal and skills level that would help them to not only carry out

their duties within the school, but also improve their lives outside of their volunteer role.

Material and personal support for the community volunteer

It is evident from the findings that schools must be able to provide the community and community volunteers with assistance and support, in return for the services provided by the community volunteers. The principles of such support would have been debated during the first multi-stakeholder meeting. At this stage, the specifics of that support should be clarified between the school leadership teams and the potential volunteers. The findings clearly indicate that this type of assistance can be mobilised from both within and outside the school, especially by enlisting the support of external stakeholders who can and want to play a role in supporting the school (see Section 2.4.3)*.* This support will require schools to be creative, depending on their context. Over the years, the school in the study was creative in taking care of some of the basic requirements of the volunteers (see Section 5.2.1.1) and by developing relationships with various external stakeholders to complement this support (See section 5.2.1.3). The provision in the basic needs incentive becomes an initial motivation to invite the community volunteers into the school. However, in this study, the younger volunteers provided a sense that the material incentive could be the stepping stone to allow for the evolution of higher-order commitment to the process of volunteering (see Section 5.2.2.1)*.* This conclusion seems to support the view of Griffin (2015), citing Maslow, namely that once the lower needs of humans are met, the evolution of higher order self-actualisation needs could occur (Sherr, 2008). Once an agreement has been reached on how the school will support the volunteer, a volunteer management programme needs to be developed to integrate the services of the volunteer into the daily operations of the school.

Management of the volunteer programme

It is important that the volunteers develop a structure that could regulate their activities at the school. Again, being very mindful of the various contexts in which schools find themselves, the management of the programme should be context specific. The participants in this study highlighted the challenges of managing the

programme at the school (see Section 5.2.3); however, in the final set meeting, they endorsed the existing structure, but argued that it needed to be improved (Appendix - 14). They would use the manual that emerged from the findings of this study to improve their practice and management in their programme (Appendix - 1). They argued for a democratically elected volunteer leadership team, which should be responsible for the management of the various areas in which volunteers would be active. The leadership team would then elect an executive committee, which would then serve as a liaison with the leadership structures of the school, namely the SGB and SMT, and external stakeholders. The third mini-circle in the overlapping process of integration will open the space for the development of skills and personal growth of the volunteers.

SGB/SMT and volunteer leaders must negotiate opportunities for skills development and personal growth of volunteers

The volunteers will have to perform services across the nine areas of school functionality, as prescribed by the whole school development model of the Department of Basic Education (Department-of-Education, 2001). The participants emphasised the need for training and support in all the volunteer areas in which they were active (see Section 5.2.1.3) – something they identified was not always present in the existing programme. The support provided volunteers with the skills to perform better in the focus areas and empowered them with additional skills, especially the younger volunteers, to add to their curriculum vitae. The training and support can be facilitated with the help of outside agencies or by utilising internal stakeholders, who may have the appropriate skills sets required. The support should extend beyond the boundaries of skills development to support school functionality. The development should also include programmes that promote the personal well-being of the community volunteer.

The promotion of the personal well-being of the volunteer will bring about meaningful change in the life of the individual (Sherr, 2008). The existing volunteer programme at the school included health programmes offered to all volunteers; those were extended to the broader community as well (Damons and Abrahams, 2009). The health programmes were complemented by other programmes promoting spiritual

and personal wellness (see section 5.2.2.1). The participants suggested that these programmes contributed towards their willingness to be part of the school volunteer programme. The approach of the volunteer programme of the school in the study supported Perkins and Zimmerman's (1995) argument that empowerment should be linked to individual wellbeing, then linked serving a bigger purpose. The bigger purpose relates in this instance, through volunteerism, to the contribution that the community members made to the children of the community, which they were not necessarily able to provide in the community.

The final task in the initiation phase is developing a process that will ensure that the volunteer programme is sustained, represented by the last blue oval in the diagram (Figure 7.2).

7.3.3   Sustaining the Involvement of the Community Volunteer in the School

One of the leading causes of tension in the present programme, as highlighted by the findings (see Section 5.2.3)**,** was the lack of ongoing engagement with the various internal and external stakeholders of the school around matters related to the volunteer programme. The last oval in Figure 7.2, therefore, introduces the creation of multiple action learning sets, where internal and external stakeholders can engage with one another around these issues.

The participants and the SMT focus group in the study identified that the absence of spaces that allowed the various stakeholders to meet was a weakness of the existing volunteer programme (see Section 5.2.3). They were of the opinion that the opportunity to meet regularly to discuss the needs, progress and outcomes of the volunteer programme could have assisted in alleviating some of the tensions present in the programme. These spaces are important, because, as Amagoh (2008) further recognises, these types of systems should pay attention to various relationships between stakeholders and other factors over which the organisation may not have control. In cycle three, the participants identified four spaces (action learning sets) that need to be created to support the effectivity and sustainability of the volunteer programme.

The first action learning set should allow for engagement between the volunteers and the teachers. The findings indicated that trust, discussed in value blanket, needed to be developed between the volunteers and teachers (see Section 5.2.3). This action learning set could address the tensions raised in this study, as well as the concerns identified in the studies of Van Wyk (2001) and Nojaja (2009) around the role and purpose of the volunteers. The participants suggested that it was in this space that relationships between the volunteers and the teachers could be built. Also, the action learning set could clarify the expectations of the community volunteers of the teachers and address the possible confusion of overlapping roles. Initially, it might be a good idea if this action learning set met quite frequently, perhaps twice a term, at the beginning and again at the end of the term. As the volunteer programme becomes more integrated into the operation of the school, the meetings could be reduced to once per term. The content of these meetings could be negotiated between teachers and volunteers. In addition to the teacher and volunteer action learning set, the model advocates for an action learning set consisting of the volunteers only.

The participants in this study further felt that there was a need to create an action learning set that afforded the volunteers an opportunity to talk among themselves (see Section 5.2.3). Also, this action learning set should allow the space for volunteers to reflect on their existing roles, as well as make recommendations regarding potential areas of improvement and support required to do their work. It may be important for them to meet at least twice a term until the community volunteers feel confident and integrated into their various roles at the school. Furthermore, these meetings will allow for the integration of new volunteers or deal with the constantly changing circumstances that characterise life in these communities.

The third action learning set in the sustaining phase allows the school, including representatives from the volunteers and external stakeholders, to engage the support provided to the volunteer programme. This space supports Witten's (2006) school-based complementary framework (SBCLF), which argues for multiple stakeholder support, especially for schools in socio-economically deprived communities. The external stakeholders, as highlighted in the findings and literature,

could be from the government, business, higher education, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and any other interest groups that could add value to or contribute to the volunteer programme. It is from this space that programmes could emerge that could support the work volunteers do in schools, as well as programmes developed that could provide further motivation to the volunteers. The school in the study demonstrated that this was possible (Damons and Abrahams, 2009).

The final action learning set suggested, is that of the volunteer leadership and school leadership – SGB and SMT – to attend to the matters that emerge from the other action learning sets. The leadership action learning set should connect the important issues of the management and integration of the volunteer programme into the daily operations of the school. Furthermore, it is this space that will allow the leadership teams to interact with the decisions made by the various structures of the school, which could include the implementation of the agreed roles of volunteers and the different levels of support needed for the programme. They should formally meet on a regular basis and as the need arises, which may be dictated by operational requirements.

The research method of this study, PALAR (see Section 4.5), advances a possible framework of how engagement could occur in the various areas of the advanced process model. The values discussed in Section 7.2.2 should be present in all spaces of engagement, including these action learning sets. The PALAR design was used in this study to foster the creation of a community of common purpose through the encouragement of voice and agency among the participants (Zinn and Rodgers, 2012). The participants recognised, in the final action learning set of cycle three, how collaborative working together had added value to our study. The honest engaged approach focused on a shared goal (Freire, 2007) seems to be achieved if authentic dialogue is encouraged and takes place. Majiros (2013) further states that the climate of this engagement should encourage informal relationships and reciprocal actions to benefit all parties involved.

Although the initial set-up stage of the model, from the multi-stakeholder meeting to the creation of the four action learning sets, may appear linear, it is important that

each step feeds into one another, as suggested by the arrows on the left-hand side. The arrows on the right-hand side indicate that, once the programme has been established, the activities in the various spaces in the model should continue and constantly inform one another, as a means of maintaining the programme.

7.4 SUMMARY

In suggesting a process model, I wanted to stay true to my stated objective at the beginning of the study, namely to remain faithful to the voice of the participants. In my view, the suggested model (Figure 7.2) for recruiting, supporting and sustaining community volunteers, captures the integration of the voice of the participants with the relevant literature and secondary data reviewed. Chapter Seven, therefore, explained how this model was based on the findings of this collaborative study, supported by theory and existing literature.

Chapter Eight will present a summary of the findings of the study, to answer the main research question. The chapter will further also contain a personal reflection, in particular relating to my role as school principal and researcher. Also, Chapter Eight will identify the limitations of the study, explain its contributions to knowledge and make recommendations, based on the findings, to various stakeholders. The final chapter concludes by suggesting potential areas for further research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1   INTRODUCTION

The analysis and integration of previous chapters of this study answered the main research question, namely how to recruit, support and sustain community volunteers working in a community school. Chapter Seven advanced a process model, based on the knowledge generated throughout the study, with suggestions for implementing it. The knowledge was generated through a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) process, conducted with 15 community volunteers who were active in a community school.

Chapter Eight presents a summarised overview of the study and how the research findings answered the research questions. The chapter further includes a personal reflection on my learning as both Principal and participant researcher, which I structured according to the seven Cs (communication, commitment, competency, character building, critical reflection, collaboration, coaching) and the three Rs (relationship, reflection and recognition) of PALAR (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). After acknowledging the limitations of the study, this chapter will present its potential contribution to knowledge and make recommendations to various stakeholders in education for implementation. Chapter Eight concludes with recommendations for future research.

8.2   SUMMARISED OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Chapter One provided an overview of the study, setting the context and rationale for the study. An initial literature review was presented on schooling, to support the rationale for the study and determine the gap in knowledge that the study purported to address, namely the lack of understanding about how to recruit, support and sustain the involvement of indigent community members in a school. Furthermore, the chapter introduced a justification of my use of theoretical frameworks, namely the School Based Complementary Learning Framework and the Multidimensional

Theory, to inform the construction of the emerging knowledge to address the formulated problem statement.

Chapter Two critically explored what defined efficiency and effectiveness, in trying to achieve basic school functionality and highlighted various perspectives on this functionality. I then critiqued the 'one size fits all' approach adopted by the Department of Basic Education when measuring basic school functionality, especially in schools located in communities faced with extreme poverty. I then looked at certain models of schooling that advanced different programmes to support schools. Schools serving communities who live in contexts of poverty require complementary support programmes to achieve relative degrees of functionality. I put forward an argument for the need to have extra human support for these programmes. I suggested and explained the School Based Complementary Framework (SBCLF) as a theoretical lens for understanding how schools could be supported in their endeavour to become more functional.

In Chapter Three, I critically discussed the concept of volunteerism through the second theoretical lens used in the study, namely the multidimensional framework. I argued that there was not a sufficient understanding of volunteerism in South Africa, especially in communities faced with extreme poverty. I explained the gap in the literature concerning volunteerism at community schools. I pointed out that existing theory lacked the contextual insight needed for application in South Africa and other developing economy contexts.

Chapter Four explained and justified my choice of PALAR as a research methodology, as it allowed me to conduct the research in a way that was true to my ontological values of honouring the voices and agency of the participants. I described how a PALAR design, underpinned by my epistemological paradigms, critical and empowerment theories, assisted me in achieving this. I explained the establishment of my primary data generation space, Action Learning Set (ALS), and how this was supported by the creation of a Key Advisor Set (KAS) as an additional data generation space during the study. I then justified the identification of appropriate data generation methods, which included transcripts of these set meetings, photo voice, world café, and a focus group held with the School

Management Team (SMT). I concluded the chapter by explaining the ethical considerations, both at institutional and participant levels, in addition to the action research principles followed in the study.

It was from this road map that the findings of our first cycle emerged regarding what motivated community volunteers to become involved in a community school.

Chapter Five reported on the first cycle of the research process, which focused on the first sub-question. *What motivates the community volunteer to do this work?* I advanced the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for volunteers to become involved in a school, which included the enabling conditions that further encouraged the involvement of the volunteers in the school. In addition, the data that emerged from this cycle provided insights around tensions that could prevent community volunteers from becoming involved in a school.

Chapter Six Cycle Two of the research process, focused on the sub-question: *How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school?* In this chapter, I described not only how the volunteers provided value at the level required by the Department of Basic Education, but how their involvement impacted beyond the legislative requirement.

Chapter Seven, which reported on the third cycle, addressed the third sub-question: *How can this knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer work in a community school?* It is in this chapter that I advanced a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining community volunteers working in a community school, based on the findings in cycle one and two, further validated in the third cycle and triangulated with literature and secondary data sources. The model suggests to schools in a similar context, a conceptual framework for recruiting, supporting and sustaining community volunteers in a school setting.

8.3   SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section synthesises the research findings in answer to the research questions: *What motivates the community volunteer to do this work*? and *How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school?* and *What is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school?* to be able to answer the final research question: *How can this knowledge be used to develop a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining volunteer work in a community school?*

8.3.1   What Motivates Community Volunteers to Do this Work?

The main finding that emerged from this study was that the volunteers expected support from the school in exchange for offering their services to it. However, what was significant and not so obvious, was the type of support that the volunteers regarded as important.

The following factors were found to be significant motivators for community volunteers from under-resourced communities:

8.3.1.1   Support from the school

The results of the study indicated that the school must not only be mindful of the context of the volunteers, but also responsive to the extreme poverty that the volunteers faced. The findings support existing literature that posits that satisfying the basic living needs of humans encourages them to move to higher levels, such as self-actualisation. It was important to the volunteers that the school explicitly expressed its intention to source financial incentives and food parcels on the volunteers' behalf. The school should also be willing to share some of its own resources to meet some of the basic intrinsic needs of the volunteers. For instance, the provision of meals from the School Feeding Scheme, and access to and use of, for example, telephone and fax facilities, when the volunteers had a need for them.

Beyond tangible material support, the participants were motivated when the school expressed an interest and willingness to support and develop not only their spiritual, physical and emotional needs, but also the needs of the broader community as well. Finally, the volunteers were motivated by the idea of the school as a space in which they could develop their skills, both through experiential learning from the voluntary services they will be rendering as well as through other programmes offered by the school through external stakeholders, for example, health training at the local municipal clinic. Although material support, skills development and personal growth were the main motivators, this had to happen within a space deemed to be a humanising space.

8.3.1.2   The climate must be enabling

The study proposed to make a notable contribution to understanding some additional enabling motivators not reported in existing literature. Firstly, the climate within which the volunteers work and interact with other stakeholders must be characterised by a feeling of love, which must permeate all the different relationships within the school and between the school and community. Love could be expressed by a simple 'thank you' for work done; a feeling of being respected by teachers; or of being appreciated by learners. Recognising and acknowledging the contribution of all towards the functionality of the school encouraged and motivated the volunteers. It is through this support of the teaching and learning process through the volunteers' involvement in the various areas of the school that the study goes some way towards further enhancing understanding of the impact that the community could have on the education of their children, complementing literature on the topic of community and parental involvement. However, the findings indicate that even in this value filled area of engagement, there were many tensions, which could impact on the motivation of potential volunteers.

8.3.1.3   Potential tensions threaten motivation

Several potential areas of tension were identified that could lower motivation. It is important to note that these tensions were felt within the different levels of stakeholder relationship within the school, which supports existing literature about

the challenges of integrating the community into the school. It was found that these tensions may have existed due to a lack of opportunity for structured interaction between the different groups of stakeholders.

8.3.2   How do community volunteers perceive their roles and tasks at the school and what is the perceived value of volunteerism for the effectiveness of the school?

The volunteers were able to identify the value they added to the functioning of the school. The findings suggest that their involvement provided important support in the nine key focus areas of Whole School Development, which were condensed into i) provision of academic support (teaching assistants, administration, library); ii) community involvement and relationships (caregiver support, clinic); and iii) resource provision (food garden, maintenance, grounds and security, toilets). However, in contrast to the silo approach of the whole school development model, the findings indicate that the value that the volunteers brought, extended beyond the support of school functionality, as defined by the whole school development model. The added value includes having additional adults on the premises who could express love and care towards the children from their community. The findings confirm that volunteers are a rich source of complementary support needed in schools located in contexts of poverty. The findings further add to existing knowledge by suggesting a framework for how this can be achieved. Additionally, it was found that the volunteers could provide personal insight that assisted the school management in responding to the needs of the children and that children also tended to confide more easily to volunteers about social matters that might impact on their schooling.

8.3.3   How can this Knowledge Be Used to Develop a Process Model for Recruiting, Supporting and Sustaining Volunteer Work in a Community School?

The knowledge that emerged from the first two questions was then synthesised to suggest a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining the involvement of community volunteers in a community school.

8.3.3.1   Recruiting phase

In contrast to the literature, which normally expects community volunteers to walk in and do the work prescribed by the school, the findings of this study suggest the need for an initial meeting that allows for the co-constructing of thoughts around important matters that will impact on the volunteer programme, which will require support. The School Governing Body and School Management Team should initially meet with various community stakeholders.

The purpose of such a meeting would be to help the school understand the community context and the community to understand the concept of a functional school, to allow for the co-construction of an understanding of community volunteerism. In this meeting, they would agree on the mutual benefits for the school and the community volunteers, recruitment principles, as well as the key values that should drive the process.

8.3.3.2   Supporting phase

Once recruited, schools need to ensure that volunteers remain motivated. One very important finding not reported in existing literature is that the principal and school management need to adjust and revise existing school systems to ensure that a welcoming and supporting environment is created for the volunteers. The key values, as identified in the recruitment phase, should be embodied in the daily interactions. This stems from the finding in this study that some teachers and administrative staff did not perceive the value that volunteers could add to the school. It is also important that the volunteers, together with school management, decide on a structured programme to ensure the integration of the volunteer work into the daily functioning of the school. The programme should define what material and personal support will be provided to the volunteers; how the volunteers will be managed and what skills and development programmes should be in place to facilitate the volunteer process.

8.3.3.3   Sustaining phase

To sustain the effectiveness of volunteer involvement in the school, structures need to be in place to allow for regular communication between the different groupings of staff, management and community volunteers. This is to allow for ongoing dialogue to improve the volunteer experience for all parties. Dialogue needs to be guided by the key values identified during the recruitment phase.

This process will allow for engagement between school and community that encompasses the idea of the community school as *"a school in the house and the house in the school"*.

8.4   REFLECTION OF THE PROCESS AS PRINCIPAL (PARTICIPANT) AND RESEARCHER

I offer this reflection on my learning to provide insight to other school leaders who may want to involve community volunteers in their school.

8.4.1 Reflection on Process

The action research process is a messy process, and being a very structured person, I had to make several personal adjustments, which proved to be challenging, painful and confusing at the time, but liberating in the end. These personal adjustments will be reflected through the guiding principles of PALAR (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

8.4.1.1   Communication

PALAR encourages symmetrical communication through relationship, vision and team building activities as essential for the programme to be effective. Yet, as a school principal, I tended to become so task-oriented that I seldom made time to pause and reflect to create, nature and sustain authentic relationships. Informed by my personal belief system and paradigms of the study, I had to consistently review the assertive, opinionated and all-knowing attitude I often displayed as a principal

and consciously work on embracing the values of a PALAR researcher that sought to build democratic, participatory relationships where all voices were listened too. As principal and participant researcher, I had to constantly remain mindful of how I spoke, making sure that I engaged as participant and did not dominate the discourse in the action learning set meetings.

The first issue we had to negotiate, was how I would be addressed as a participant of the action learning set. We agreed that I needed to be called by my first name if I wanted to create the intended optimal conditions for symmetrical communication, open dialogue and the democratic construction of knowledge. I would assume the more formal title of 'Mr Damons' outside of the action learning set. This arrangement was initially uncomfortable for the participants and myself, and I now recognise that this probably related to the hierarchal nature of the school structure. I even made sure that I dressed more casually when I attended the meetings. All this was done to remain true to my vision of creating a space where power would be minimised. Although this may seem like a relatively minor issue, it demonstrated my commitment to creating an equal partnership with the community members. I recorded in my first reflection my anxiety about perhaps speaking too much and being fearful that I might be influencing the participants. This was further confirmed by the transcribers, who felt that they were hearing too much of my voice during the transcription. As the study progressed, I made a conscious effort to 'practise' my listening skills in the school and at home, much to the amusement of colleagues and family, as I struggled with this.

The leadership lessons I took from this, is that as Principal I had to play a major role in fostering symmetrical communication and open dialogue that allowed for the space to emerge for the democratic co-construction of knowledge. An example of how the lessons were implemented, is that when we started any project at the school we first developed a shared vision and explicitly focused on creating trusting relationships between all involved.

On a more personal level, in hindsight, I would have given up my 'title' long ago if I knew that it would encourage the voice of stakeholders to emerge so strongly to support the establishment of a functional school that meets the legislative and

community expectations of functionality but more importantly, can deliver quality holistic education to our learners. I am of the opinion that the more informal communication style adopted made the participants more confident to do their work. In addition to improving their practice, the participants developed the confidence to present their work and the study at various forums. When they presented at conferences, they astounded some seasoned researchers with their confidence and research competence.

8.4.1.2 Collaboration

The research design required collaboration among all participants. This collaboration generated team spirit, encouraged symmetrical communication, and created synergy among the participants. All the participants played an active role in the facilitation of the research process. Everyone was involved to some extent in the research process, whether in the form of setting up the venue, preparing meals for the set meetings, or even supporting one another emotionally during the process. The synergy for the study extended beyond the participants. The School Governing Body and School Management Team also collaborated with us as participants by granting permission to undertake and participate in the study and 'time off' to meet and use a venue in the school for most meetings. The creation of the Key Advisory Set further ensured that I had a team that helped me plan the set meetings and provided insights into the nuances of language and how to facilitate maximum participation. The collaboration continued to right after the conclusion of the empirical journey, as we continued to work jointly on the construction of the procedural manual, as agreed at the beginning of the process.

Collaboration requires an authentic commitment on the part of the leader of the school to commit to the process and lead from the front. During some of the set meetings, I served the tea and coffee and assisted in venue set-ups. The lesson learnt is that as a school leader I had to be willing to do any work to, as a servant leader, convey the sincerity of the quest for democratic relationships with community members.

8.4.1.3   Commitment

Commitment to the group meant completing the project, which will reflect the sustained change and contribute positively to the development, in this case, of the school and community. As an empirical project, the study not only produced this thesis, but also allowed for the emergence of a procedure manual, which will become the intellectual property of the participants. The manual will serve as a guide to further enhance the volunteer programme at the school as well assist other schools that desire to implement such a programme.

Having had experience of PALAR as a design in my Master's studies, I was excited by what this study could potentially offer to address some of the challenges we were experiencing with the volunteer programme at the time. The research we were conducting, was related to the work we were doing in the school, but it required an approach that demanded academic rigour. Furthermore, I knew that the process required commitment on both personal and professional levels from the participants and me.

I had to balance the research with the requirements of my job; so had the participants. At times, I used my personal space and resources to ensure that we kept to the commitments we made at the beginning of the process. In cycle three, for example, when the funding did not come through for the KAS validation workshop, I had to host the set meeting at my home and provide the required catering. We had two children with us; one was a three-month-old baby, whose mother – one of the set members – could not afford a babysitter. Then there was the occasion when we had a set meeting scheduled during school recess: it was pouring with rain, but 14 of the 15 participants still came to the meeting, even though it meant walking through mud with little protection against the elements.

The primary commitment was to make sure that we stuck to the duality of outcome that we set at the start of the process. We committed to complete the empirical journey at the end of the third cycle, but the development of the manual would continue after this process, even though I had left the school by then to assume a position at the local university. I am still workshopping the participants to present the

findings and the manual to the various stakeholders that we identified in our start-up workshop in cycle one. I could easily have used the excuse of a new job to escape this commitment, but that might have destroyed community belief in the school as a whole and so this level of commitment had to extend beyond personal circumstances.

I was also made acutely aware, through participating in the study, that everyone sacrificed and not only me – something I often forgot to acknowledge as a principal.

8.4.1.4   Coaching

Coaching and learning did not occur only within the action learning sets; a great deal of my learning resulted from the feedback I received from external sources, such as the academic group I was involved with. I think that such a sounding board or validating groups should be a required part of a principal's job to enable reflection on their practice. The creation of communities of practices among principals, especially those interested in the model of the community school, could go a long way in assisting principals to engage about matters related to the creation of such schools.

My commitment to developing agency through the research process was vital to enhance the collaboration and learning that transpired. However, I had to learn patience and persistence in order for this to realise. I had to train the participants on how to generate, record and transcribe and analyse data and how to prepare presentations. The lesson here is that one cannot expect community participants to participate equally if you do not first provide training for them to feel competent to do so. Principals have to remain mindful that it is incumbent on leaders to assist in identifying, with stakeholders, which areas require support and to be willing to ensure that sacrifices are made to develop these competencies.

8.4.1.5   Critical reflection

All participants, including myself, critically reflected how the emerging data confirmed and sometimes contradicted existing practices. The participants reflected on the volunteer programme at the school and managed to identify ways in which it could

be improved and to develop an action plan to do so. I learnt that my critical reflection was facilitated by the writing up of summaries after each set meeting, which allowed me not only to reflect on the process critically, but gave me an opportunity to think about my practice as a principal. For instance, the participants suggested I was partly to blame for some of the tensions which helped me to see that I could have been more proactive in creating multistakeholder spaces before vacating my post. I think that school leaders, in general, will benefit from this sort of reflection on a daily or weekly basis.

8.4.1.6   Competency

Although I did not feel very competent initially during the study, the experiential learning and critical reflection helped me to develop in this regard. Importantly, I learnt that every experience was a learning experience – even those we considered to be failures. It was, therefore, vital to ask for feedback at the end of each meeting. I also enlisted external support from my supervisor, validation peer group and internationally renowned action researchers. Principals wanting to involve volunteers would benefit from creating a community of practice who could support and advise them through the various processes.

It was from this growing competency that I could share my learning with the participants. To reach the required levels of competency, required much patience, but my commitment to the development of the capacity of all participants saw participants emerge with new skills gained from the process. This was evident when one of the participants facilitated the final two set meetings in Cycle Three.

8.4.1.7   Character building

For the PALAR process to be successful and to support a character building process, it needs to adhere to the six principles, discussed above. Key values of such a process are integrity, trust, honesty, respect for others, diversity and difference. These values should facilitate resilience and openness to new perspectives, opportunities and innovation – all key traits of action leadership. I am of the opinion that both the action leadership characteristics and the values

presented by the participants were not only present but evolved throughout the study, as reflected in the six principles above.

I was impacted on a personal level, as participants opened up during the meetings and I became much more conscious, at a much deeper level than previously, of the personal struggles of the community.

Principals who want to engage with community volunteers will need to embrace the principles of action leadership (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The adverse socio-economic conditions confronting many schools in South Africa and globally require leaders to be resilient despite these conditions and willing to embrace the complexity that these conditions bring. They have to be open to looking at new ways of approaching schooling as, clearly, present models are failing the majority of the South African population. I would argue that the integration of the community into school and the school into the community, with mutual benefits to the school and community, is one of these innovative models.

In summary, as a leader, I have begun to realise the importance of **Reflection** on self and process as it unfolded. The empirical journey was an amazing, messy, exciting and confusing experience at times, but it made me take a critical look at my leadership and the systems of operation in the school. I was able to encourage similar reflection among teachers, management and volunteers. I have also learnt that **Relationship building** forms an important part of the empirical journey using the participatory approach. As a researcher, one has to be committed and sincere to the goals and objectives you jointly construct with participants. You must also honestly make yourself vulnerable to other participants, as I am of the opinion that this will encourage the building of trust among the participants. However, I also had to learn to cope with the pain unearthed at the meetings through reflection. We decided to incorporate prayer into our meetings, as a way of helping participants cope with painful reflections. This allowed for the deepening of relationships, but it could also have derailed the process if I had not been sensitive to this danger and able to direct it in a constructive way. The community members faced much adversity, and this had to be acknowledged as a very real part of their daily lives. This enabled me to become more empathetic, patient and understanding of

volunteers. It is also vital to provide an opportunity for the **Recognition** of volunteer contributions. This emerged during our very first set meeting. I explained what the PhD process meant and that I would end up walking across the stage, if the study was successful, to receive recognition for the work. One of the participants wanted to know if they all would be walking across the stage. I, therefore, organised an open community graduation, where I would be presenting certificates of participation to the participants, as well as officially handing over the manual to the volunteer leadership team. In addition, several of the participants co-presented with me at conferences. The process ensured that I not only evolved as a leader, but to a large degree, it assisted in my transition to the higher education sector. However, I have been impacted on a deep personal level to continue to strive for social justice, through education, in a country characterised by so many structural and societal inequalities.

8.5 LIMITATIONS

The study comprised single case research; the findings of such studies are usually relevant only to the context from which they emerge. Therefore, generalisation about the findings will be difficult to make. However, many schools in South Africa and globally are confronted with challenges similar to the school in the study. Similarly, I had to be mindful that my dual role of principal and researcher might impact on the outcome of the findings, principals wield generally much power in communities. The use of critical friends and my approach to the study sought to negate this power. The study did not explore whether volunteerism would lead to improved academic achievement, but instead focused on creating an enabling environment, through community volunteerism, for this to occur.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

8.6.1 Government/Department of Education

With the many challenges facing the majority of communities and schools in South Africa, there is need to re-examine how we view the different organs and institutions of society. This relook includes how we see the agency of schools and communities in addressing some of these complex challenges. The findings of this study suggest

how this can happen but, clearly, it will require the will of the Government and in particular the Department of Education to support this at some levels.

A review of the policy on the roles of parents and communities in the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Education, 1996) could perhaps be the starting point. Instead of only focusing on the legislative responsibilities of parents, it is recommended that policy speaks more directly to the functional role parents could play in creating an environment for the holistic development of children. The findings of the study further argue that context should be taken into consideration when developing policy on the functionality of school. It is therefore recommended that community members be given the opportunity to input into this defining of functionality, which may address some of the lack of clarity around contextual functionality.

However, as the findings suggest, this may require support from various government departments for the integration to be successful. A recommendation can be the redirection of job creation initiatives to schools because, as one participant remarked in the study, volunteers are doing the work that government is supposed to be providing for by law. Having the community in school could provide various government departments with an opportunity to access communities through schools. In this regard, I think of the Departments of Health and Social Development that should have a direct interest in this.

8.6.2 School Leadership

The findings indicate that the school principal and the SMT have to play an important role in the integration of the community into school operations. The participants were clear that the school needed to be prepared for this to happen. My recommendation would be that school cultures need to change, as the findings suggest, and that schools that struggle, should not be afraid to approach outside agencies for support. A key recommendation is that we need to give up some of the physical space traditionally occupied by ourselves and embrace values that will make our new colleagues feel welcome in a space that traditionally belonged to educators only.

8.6.3 Stakeholders

Communities will have to realise that they have the agency to contribute to the create efficient and effective schools for their children. Also, schools and government have to understand that they have a role to play in capacitating these communities to enable them to play this meaningful role. Numerous organisations were running various programmes at the school; however, I would recommend that we have reached the stage where these programmes need to be synthesised to support the understanding around a functional school, as conceptualised by the community and school leadership. These organs could then provide mutual support by building capacity in the community to sustain the work. A recommendation would be that schools develop partnerships with government and external stakeholders to generate incentives and programmes to support mutual reciprocity between community volunteers and schools. A specific recommendation to institutions of higher learning would be to ensure that future teachers and leaders are educated by offering content on the integration of community and school in their curriculum.

8.7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has unlocked knowledge about how to recruit, support and sustain community volunteers working in a community school. However, the findings and the model itself suggest further potential exploration in the following areas:

- What are the systemic processes required for the successful implementation of each phase of the process model?
- What is the link between the integration of school and community and the academic achievement of the learners?
- What impact does the presence of the community in the school have on the learners' behaviour, relationships with one another, teachers and volunteers?
- What are the inclusive, participatory processes required for each of the four meeting spaces to function optimally?
- How can PALAR be used as a method to further develop the process of school functionality support?

8.8 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

8.8.1 Theoretical Contribution

The findings of this study should make a theoretical contribution to the current debates around community engagement by schools. The participatory action learning and action research approach has shown that communities who are usually regarded as apathetic towards their children's education, can play a significant role in creating an enabling learning environment for their children. This alternative approach, which sees parents as an integral, integrated part of the school, stands in contrast to the present models of schooling, which see parents and communities only as occasional visitors to the school, interested only in the academic progress of their children. The integration of community into the school through a structured volunteer programme seeks to support the teaching and learning environment by providing extra human resources to support the academic programme, improve stakeholder relationships, and provide infrastructural support. The model developed in the study provides the process how this can occur and could serve as a useful guide for schools and communities preparing to introduce such a programme in their schools.

The study also makes a further theoretical contribution to the definition of a community school situated in socio-economically challenged communities. The findings suggest that communities should be given an opportunity to define what a community school means to them. The study should motivate the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and schools to give the community a stronger voice in co-constructing the meaning. The 'one size fits all' approach to basic school functionality, as defined by the DBE (Department-of-Education, 2001), is further challenged by this inclusive, participatory approach, in that it argues for different contextual definitions informed both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is not only about results, but about changing the lives of learners and communities. The implication of this is that if the community participates and is supported, they will then support the contextual definition by making themselves available to help the schools.

In contradiction to the literature, speaking of parental apathy, the findings also contribute to greater understanding of how community volunteerism allows for not only parental but also community support to the school. The study further suggests the importance of truly recognising context, so as to understand what would motivate potential community volunteers to become involved in a school, thereby expanding the literature on this, which Schuurman (2013) argues is somewhat limited in the South African context. The study, however, goes further and suggests a process model for recruiting, supporting and sustaining the involvement of community volunteers in the school. The study additionally contributes by showing how the school can serve as a beacon of hope and centre of development for the community. Very little literature exists on this topic, although communities have been recognised as key stakeholders. This study provides additional insight into how this could be achieved.

The process model for integrating the community volunteer into the school can complement the present models of Health Promoting Schools (WHO) and Children Friendly Schools (UNICEF). Where these models advocate for the complementary approach, to supporting schools as promoted by Witten (2006) and Bouffard and Weiss (2008), they fall short of suggesting how human resources to support these complementary programmes can be recruited. The process model, besides strongly advocating for the use of the available human resources located in communities, in particular, those characterised by extreme poverty, goes further to describe in detail how this could occur. The study shows how this is possible, notwithstanding the tensions, and that schools can be remodelled to serve as beacons of hopes in deprived and poverty-stricken communities.

8.8.2 Methodological Contributions

The methodology used in the study demonstrates how stakeholders can actively engage in a meaningful way. Opening the space to welcome the voices of the community into the school can motivate the community to play a significant role in the education of the children from the community. The principles of PALAR further indicate how a participatory approach could allow for the voices and agency of a marginalised community to contribute to the establishment of an enabling

environment in the school. The methodology not only provides us with an inclusive, collaborative approach to engaging the community, but provides principals with a tool that can be used to guide them in the leadership and management of their schools.

8.9 CONCLUSION

This study has contributed not only to theory and methodological knowledge, but has also changed me as a school leader. The lessons I learnt, I will take into my new position as an educator of school leaders. It has also changed the community participants. At a time when there is so much turmoil, not only in our country, but also globally, we should be constantly looking at ways that can improve the lives of marginalised communities. These communities are largely ignored and are not provided with a space where they can feel valued and confident that they can make a meaningful contribution to the complex challenges and circumstances that confront them on a daily basis. My study not only shows how changing the traditional way we think about schooling can open up a space for the voices of these communities to be heard, but also that through their own agency, communities can impact on the education of their children, and through this possibly also impact on the trajectory of their own lives.

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