

An analysis of the Asset-Based Community Development Approach
to Early Childhood Development interventions in Grahamstown
Township pre-schools. A case study of the Centre for Social
Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement.

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Abstract

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? The purpose of this research was to show how Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement applies the Asset-Based Community Development approach in ECD interventions in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The subsidiary goals of the research were to highlight the challenges in the Early Childhood Development sector in Gahamstown, find out how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability, and analyse the challenges that CSD and RUCE face in applying the approach and the relationship between the two organisations. The case study focused on the Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE). These two cases established projects that aim to improve Grahamstown township pre-schools. The apartheid system created a childhood of adversity for black children including inadequate access to social services, quality nutrition, health care and education. Black children in rural areas and townships faced tremendous obstacles in terms of access to quality ECD centres due to poverty and lack of adequate resources. In Grahamstown, various problems such as unemployment, poverty and restrictive apartheid regulations created a need for ECD interventions. Both organisations applied the Asset-Based Community Development approach to improve ECD in Grahamstown. The asset-based approach was created as a response to the impact of the needs-based approach. The needs- based approach focuses on deficiencies that exist in a community and uses outside experts and resources to address the deficiencies.

The needs-based approach builds communities from the outside in, further disempowers community members and creates an environment of dependency. The asset-based approach on the other hand, was created to change the legacy of dependency by focusing on capacity building. A capacity-focused paradigm recognizes the gifts, skills and talents of community members. This approach is bottom- up beginning with what is available in the community and building on that. The approach aims to empower people, create a positive outlook on circumstances, and encourages organisations to work together with community members in community development projects. To achieve the main and subsidiary goals of the research, qualitative research was conducted using the case study method. In pursuing the objective of the thesis, I conducted research among ECD practitioners, student volunteers and staff from CSD and RUCE. Based on the findings it is clear that the application of the Asset-Based approach has a positive impact on ECD practitioners, children at the pre-schools and student volunteers. Through the application of the ABCD approach, ECD practitioners became

proactive and took the driving seat in the development process. The ECD practitioners built strong relationships with community members and outside organisations. They have improved their skills and qualifications, and are on their way to restoring their agency, finding their voice and achieving independence. This has a positive impact on children at the pre-schools as they receive quality education and care. There are various challenges and contradictions in the application of the approach but the ECD practitioners view the communities in which they operate as half-full and not half-empty.

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Acronyms

ABCD	Asset- Based Community Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CD	Community Development
CE	Community Engagement
CSD	Centre for Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
NDA	National Development Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIWC	National Interim Working Committee
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
RUCE	Rhodes University Community Engagement
SAAECE	South African Association for Early Childhood Education
SACECD	South African Congress of Early Childhood Development
SANEP	South African National Education policy
SVP	Student Volunteer Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The field of study for this research is Development Studies with a specific focus on approaches to community development. This research particularly focuses on the application of the Asset-Based Community Development approach (ABCD) in early childhood development interventions. The main aim of this research is to explore how Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) and Centre for Social development (CSD) apply the asset-based approach. In addition, the research aims to find out how the approach contributes towards empowerment, participation and sustainability of ECD programs in Grahamstown township pre-schools. Thus, the research aims to find out why the approach is used, how it is applied, what impact it has in the community in which it is applied and how it contributes to improving the ECD sector in Grahamstown. This research examines two cases, Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement. This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis by unpacking the research question, providing the thesis objectives and presentation of the research.

1.2 Research Problem

When unpacking the research question it is clear that the focus is on highlighting problems in the ECD sector in Grahamstown township pre-schools, the use and application of the asset-based community development approach through various interventions to address those problems, and the impact that the approach has in the particular pre-schools that it is applied to. The research begins by analysing the problems that exist in the ECD sector in South Africa. This is particularly important because one needs to understand the problems in order to understand the interventions implemented in the community. In addition to highlighting the various problems that exist in the ECD sector, the focus will shift towards finding out how RUCE and CSD use the ABCD approach to address those problems.

ECD in South Africa is characterised by a history of inequality. The apartheid system created a childhood of adversity for black children through inadequate access to social services, quality nutrition, health care and education (NDA, 2012, Gardiner, 2008. FirstRand, 2014, Henderson, 1992). Children in townships and rural areas face tremendous obstacles in terms of access to quality ECD centers because of poverty and various problems affecting their particular communities. According to Henderson (1992: 1), there were various problems in Grahamstown

relating to unemployment, poverty and restrictive apartheid regulations, which created a need for ECD interventions in Grahamstown. The ECD sector in South Africa faced multiple obstacles. Historically, the development of ECD was to benefit white children while marginalizing black children through the apartheid system (Williams & Samuels 2001, & Atmore, van Niekerk & Cooper 2012). The transition from the apartheid system to democracy aimed to pave the way for equal education and health care for children in South Africa through the implementation of various policies. These policies include; The White Paper for Education and Training (1995), interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (1996), White paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (2001), White paper 6: Inclusive Education (2001), The national integrated Plan for ECD (2005-2010), The Children's act (2005), Norms and standard for Grade R funding (2008), White Paper on Families (2012) and the (2012) National development plan (FirstRand, 2014: 17-18). Government funding increased in the sector and changes took place to integrate historically disadvantaged children into the education system. However, children in the rural areas and townships are marginalized because of poverty. In addition to affordability, there is the question of access and quality. This is particularly a problem in the townships and rural areas as there are not enough pre-schools and the education at the existing pre-schools are of poor quality (Gardiner, 2008, Statistics South Africa, 2014 & CSD, 2014).

NGOs play a key role in implementing various interventions to combat these problems that affect children living in townships and rural areas. The Centre for Social Development in Grahamstown is a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) that works on improving ECD in Grahamstown and surrounding small towns such as Cradock, Debenek, Hamburg, Keiskammahoek and King Williamstown (CSD, 2015: 5). CSD was established in 1981 with the purpose of getting Rhodes University involved in improving ECD in the townships of Grahamstown (CSD, 2014, CSD, 2015, Henderson, 1992). Rhodes University focuses on three key pillars, which are teaching, research and community engagement (Rhodes University, 2005: 7). The Community Engagement division was established in affirmation with the third pillar mentioned above. The main function of the Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) division is to facilitate the different community development partners that include Non-profit Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, academic department projects and the student volunteer program (Rhodes University, 2005:8-12). Thus, the Centre for Social Development works with the Rhodes University Community Engagement division by getting students involved in community engagement. Community development programs have

received criticism from various scholars as creating dependency and not sustainability. This view of dependency was created by the needs-based approach to community development. The needs-based approach focuses on deficiencies that exist in a community and uses outside experts and resources to address the deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 3-4). This approach builds communities from the outside-in, further disempowers community members and creates an environment of dependency. According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 2), “a legacy of needs-based approach in Africa is that many receiving aid have learned to define themselves and their villages/communities by their needs and their deficiencies to the point where they can no longer identify anything of value around them”. This cripples communities and shifts their focus towards receiving help from the outside and not actively participating towards helping themselves.

The asset-based approach on the other hand, was created to change the legacy of dependency by focusing on capacity building. A capacity-focused paradigm recognizes the gifts, skills and talents of community members. This approach is bottom- up beginning with what is available in the community and building on that (McKnight, 2013: 2-7). In addition, it builds communities from the inside out, relying on community members to take the driving seat for change. The approach aims to empower people, create a positive outlook of circumstances, and encourages organisations to work together in community development projects (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 5-10). Thus, this research aims to find out how this approach is applied, and if it produces the results it aims to produce in the Grahamstown ECD context.

1.3 Thesis objectives

The Asset-Based Community Development approach focuses on reducing dependency while empowering communities to spearhead the change process in their communities. The main objective of this research is to find out how the approach is applied in interventions that are aimed at improving ECD in Grahamstown township preschools. This will be achieved by analysing projects by the CSD and RUCE. The subsidiary objectives, which address the main objective include:

1. Understanding and highlighting the challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown
2. Analysing how the approach contributes to empowerment, sustainability and participation.
3. Analysing the challenges that CSD and RUCE have faced in applying the asset-based approach and the relationship and collaboration between the two organisations.

1.4 Thesis outline

The research starts by highlighting challenges in the ECD sector in South Africa before analysing interventions implemented by the two cases (CSD and RUCE) to address the challenges. Chapter 2 and 3 provide a theoretical framework for this research. Chapter 2 focuses on the contextualisation of ECD in South Africa by focusing on relevant literature that highlights the importance, history and current challenges of the ECD sector in South Africa. Chapter 3 focuses on the ABCD approach by focusing on the theoretical underpinnings of the approach and applicability of the approach in community development. Chapter 4 provides the research methods used to conduct this research.

Chapter 5 highlights the background and functions of the cases to provide a better understanding of RUCE and CSD. This is particularly important because RUCE focuses on community engagement and CSD focuses on community development through the training of ECD practitioners. This chapter provides clarity on the different projects and their contribution to improving ECD in Grahamstown. Chapter 6 provides an analysis and discussion of the findings. The findings are organised and presented in themes. This chapter starts by analysing the findings from the two cases and narrowing down the results by drawing on the connections between the theoretical framing and the empirical evidence of the research. Chapter 7 is the conclusion chapter which encapsulates the findings in the study and provides recommendations for further research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUALISING ECD IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Development (ECD) has gained attention worldwide. Research indicates the social, neurological and academic performance benefits related to attaining adequate development from childhood (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 1-6). This is achieved through ECD centres such as crèche and pre-schools. In the South African context, ECD stems from a history of inequality. The Apartheid system created a childhood of adversity for black children including inadequate access to social services, quality nutrition, health care and education (NDA, 2012, Gardiner, 2008, FirstRand, 2014, Henderson, 1992). The transition from the apartheid system to democracy, aimed to pave the way for equal education and healthcare for children in South Africa. This was to be achieved through various ECD policies. Government funding increased in the sector and changes began to take place to integrate historically disadvantaged children into the education system. However, black children in rural areas and townships faced tremendous obstacles in terms of access to quality ECD centres due to various problems such as poverty and lack of adequate resources. This created a strong need for Non-Government Organisations to be involved in improving the ECD sector in South Africa. This chapter will focus on discussing ECD in the South African context. This chapter presents literature reviewed that is pertinent to the research topic beginning with a conceptual framework that provides clarity of terms, followed by a discussion based on relevant literature.

2.2 Importance and advantages of ECD

Before defining ECD in the South African context, it is imperative to know the importance of ECD. Thus, before focusing on South Africa, the focus will be on the global debate behind the importance of ECD, based on research. ECD has received a tremendous amount of attention and investment over the years. This attention and investment is particularly because early childhood is a critical stage of development that forms the foundation for future learning and wellbeing (UNICEF & WHO, 2012: 1). According to UNICEF and WHO (2012), ECD is the key to a productive and full life for a child and further contributes to the progress of a nation. The purpose of ECD is to re-enforce children's rights and development. This involves cognitive, social, emotional and physical development that leads to future learning and overall

wellbeing (UNICEF & WHO, 2012: 2). Based on literature, there are various areas that develop through ECD programs which include brain and physical development, academic performance and social development.

In terms of brain and physical development, cognitive neuroscience research indicates that the first five years of life are of extreme importance because of rapid brain development (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 6). It is during the first three to five years that the brain grows rapidly and most of the brain's neural pathways that support communication, emotional wellbeing, social development and understanding are developed (UNICEF & WHO, 2012: 2). The stimulation of the brain from an early age creates focused attention and working memory to solve problems. The brain develops and is shaped by stimulation through educational activities and social interaction (Siegel 2012, Healy 2011, Feldman 2009, Zelazo & Frye 1998, Zelazo, Frye & Marcovitch 2003). "Extensive scientific evidence indicates that early life experiences shape maturing biological systems in ways that affect physical and mental health, as well as cognitive abilities and work productivity throughout life, all of which become increasingly more difficult to fix beyond the early childhood years" (Britto, Engle & Super, 2013: 25). In addition to brain stimulation, nutrition is important, as malnutrition is one of the reasons of poor brain development that leads to poor physical and mental development in children (UNICEF & Gabbard & Rodrigues, 2002 as cited in Jackman, Beaver & Skinner-Wyatt, 2015: 17).

In terms of future academic performance, research indicates that children who start their academic journey through ECD centers, experience academic success in primary school (Duncan et al 2007, ECD policy 2015). In contrast, children who do not have access to ECD centers have trouble adjusting to formal education. This leads to a journey of academic underachievement that is associated with an increased risk of dropping out of school (Alexander, Entwisle & Horsey 1997, van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul & Armstrong, 2011). According to the Education White Paper Five on ECD (2001: 8) when children are exposed to ECD programs they learn to grasp language, reading, writing and basic numeracy concepts. Thus, children who start their academic journey on solid ground experience academic success in primary school (Fitzpatrick 2012, Department of Education 2010). In other words, children who had access to ECD have a better chance of transition into the first grade successfully. The American Journal of Preventative Medicine (2003) revealed that ECD increases academic achievement which reduces the possibility of children dropping out because of grade repetition, and it has a significant impact on children with learning disabilities (Anderson et al, 2003).

According to Fitzpatrick (2012:2), school readiness refers to a child's maturity to negotiate classroom demands upon transitioning to formal schooling. Thus, preparing a child for school is a great predictor of their future academic performance, health and personal success into adulthood (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 1). Children who are exposed to ECD programs and school readiness build a solid foundation and that helps them progress beyond grade one (Department of Education, 2010: 55).

For economists, identifying which early capabilities predict achievement and employment potential represents an important investment from a human capital perspective (Duncan et al 2007, Heckman 2006, Murnane, Willet & Levy, 1995 as cited in Fitzpatrick, 2012: 2). Underachievement from the first-grade leads to a high chance of a child dropping out in high school. Young people who drop out of school have a great chance of engaging in risky behaviors such as substance abuse and involvement in criminal activity (Ellickson & McGuigan 2000, Latif et al 2015). This further perpetuates the cycle of poverty in many communities around the world. Thus, school readiness has become an important social preoccupation because of its potential to improve the lives of individuals and communities through academic success (Fitzpatrick, 2012:2).

In terms of social development, research indicates that classroom engagement determines future social development (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 10-14). Children gain more confidence through interaction with other children and this forms the foundation for future development of interpersonal skills (Fitzpatrick, 2012:11-12). ECD programs are important because they provide future positive health and education outcomes. A study conducted by McClelland et al (2013) examined how learning new skills at a young age can impact on future academic and social development. The research found that children who develop productive work habits through activities in ECD centers achieve academic success and social development. This research shows that creating an environment for children to interact and learn from their teachers and other children had a positive impact on their social development. The ability to cooperate with other children on tasks in the classroom setting reduces the likelihood of developing interpersonal conflict, peer rejection and problems with academic adjustments (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 12).

A child's environment has an impact on his or her development. Children from unsupportive households, where the parents are not involved in the child's education, tend to perform badly when compared to children who have support (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 5). From a sociological point

of view, behavioural engagement is consistent with sociological theories of individual development (Fitzpatrick, 2012:5). The willingness to learn and interaction in the class room context is related to positive work habits that are akin to the required skills for future success in the work place (Fitzpatrick, 2012:5). Social development from a young age forms the foundation for future development of social skills that are important for academic performance which is related to the development of skills that equips people for the workplace (Fitzpatrick, 2012: 4-6). A holistic view to Early Childhood Development is vital because it recognizes that there are various factors that shape a child's development and experiences of reality. Therefore, context is particularly important. The discussion above highlighted the importance of ECD and the next section will narrow down the argument to focus on ECD in the South African context.

2.3 Defining Early Childhood Development: South African context

In order to understand ECD in the South African context, it is important to define ECD. Early childhood is a critical stage of development that forms the foundation for future learning and wellbeing (UNESCO, 2008). According to UNICEF (2001), ECD “refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential”.

In South Africa, ECD is defined by the Department of Education as, “the process by which children from birth to nine years of age grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially” (NDA, 2012:1). According to White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001: 8), ECD refers to “a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential”. This definition highlights the important role that parents and caregivers play in the development of children. Thus, based on the above definitions it is evident that ECD in South Africa is a holistic approach that focuses on all aspects of a child's development with the aim of getting the child ready for formal education (ECD Policy 2015, Gardiner 2008). This includes considering the child's health, education, nutrition, psychosocial and other environmental factors such as the family structure and community (NDA 2012, White Paper Five, 2001).

The South African government views ECD as a multi-faceted mix of various services that are targeted at the cognitive, social, physical, moral, and spiritual aspects of development for

children aged between birth and nine years (FirstRand, 2014: 8). This involves the active participation of parents, caregivers and various stakeholders such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and the government (FirstRand 2014, White Paper Five, 2001). As mentioned above, there are various ECD service providers within the government. There are three main departments that are responsible for the sector. The Department of Education is responsible for children aged five to nine. The Department of Social Development is responsible for children from birth to four years of age. The Department of Health covers children from birth to nine years of age (NDA 2012, Atmore van Niekerk & Ashley-Cooper 2012). Based on the definition of ECD in South Africa and the delegation of roles through different departments, there are two main areas of focus which are children aged 0-4 and Grade R (Gardiner, 2008: 24). Thus, these above-mentioned departments provide services based on the holistic definition of ECD that encapsulates child development (Department of Social Development), health (Department of Health) and education (Department of Education). According Williams et al (2001: 5), “ECD encompasses an ideological and political struggle towards the creation of a society founded on human rights which acknowledges the centrality of childhood in human and social development and children as individuals and citizens”. Based on the above discussion it is evident that ECD is important and has been given attention due to the advantages that it provides to children and society.

2.4 Development of ECD in South Africa.

It is imperative to discuss the history of ECD in South Africa to understand the current state of the ECD sector. In 1908 the South African National Council for Child and family Welfare, emerged as a voluntary organisation that would spearhead the research on the causes of endemic fatal diseases in South Africa. In addition, the organisation provided support for families and communities that went through the pain of a losing a child (Williams, Samuels, Mouton, Ratele, Shabalala, Shefer & Strebel, 2001: 8). This research was followed by the interest of creating parent and community initiatives that were aimed at providing care and education outside the home setting. Thus, prior to this interest, children were taught at home by their caregivers (UNICEF, 2005: 2). This is how day-care centres and nursery schools emerged. They are currently known as ECD centres which are defined by the ECD Policy (2015:5) as a place that offers day care and/or preschool programme.

With the emergence of nursery schools and day care centres, a structure that would govern this education sector emerged. In 1939 the Nursery School Association of South Africa which later

became the South African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE) was established for the purpose of creating and enforcing the standards of day care centres and nursery schools in South Africa (Williams et al, 2001: 8). In 1940 the state started getting involved in the funding of day care centres and nursery schools. In addition to the government's financial support, nursery schools and day care centres were part of the education system. This caused a distinction between nursery schools and crèches (crèches being day care centres). The latter was seen as providing a custodial function rather than an educational function (Williams et al, 2001:8). In other words, crèches were viewed as places where children could play and be looked after, while nursery schools were places where children started the education journey that would get them ready for (school readiness) primary school (Williams et al, 2001:8).

With the increased attention and expansion of nursery schools and crèches throughout South Africa, the running cost of these schools and centres increased. This was particularly due to the increase of children and resources needed to meet the standards of early childhood education. Funding by the state was not adequate to keep the facilities functioning, so they relied heavily on money generated by school fees (Williams et al, 2001: 9). The training of ECD teachers was mostly provided by NGOs. The government was not involved in the establishment of training facilities of nursery school teachers but subsidized the facilities that were provided by different organisations (Williams et al, 2009: 9). While progress was taking place within the ECD sector, due to the apartheid policy, black children were completely excluded. The state did not fund black nursery schools and teaching courses for black teachers were limited. The nursery schools remained places where children would go to play but had no school readiness and educational structure within them (Williams et al, 2001:9).

In the 1980's the state acknowledged the importance of ECD in South Africa. Although the importance of ECD was acknowledged, the state had not allocated adequate funds for its improvement. The halt took place in 1983 when the state pulled its involvement in the ECD sector due to the South African National Education Policy (SANEP) formula which was used to determine subsidies and unfortunately those subsidies did not cater for pre-school education (Williams et al, 2001: 9-10). Thus, the Department of Education and Training saw the value of ECD but lacked the resources to improve the sector. This was particularly due to lack of state funding. "State involvement at the time was characterised as inadequate, segregated, fragmented, uncoordinated and lacking a comprehensive vision" (Williams et al, 2001: 10). This placed the responsibility of ECD provisioning on parents, communities and the private

sector. As an attempt for the state to increase its effort in developing the ECD sector, the government introduced the White Education Affairs Act of 1988.

The White Education Affairs Act of 1988 further enforced fragmentation and inequality in society. The act made provision for the establishment and maintenance of public pre-schools, allowed the registration of private pre-schools and provided funding for the maintenance of pre-schools for white children (Williams et al, 2001: 10). Thus, from 1988 SAAECE began to open its membership to other population groups but continued primarily in the urban areas and in relatively advantaged communities. Many of the NGOs were active in calling for children's rights and in developing alternative systems of provisioning and educator training (Williams et al, 2001: 10). The National Interim Working Committee (NIWC) was launched in 1990 to set about creating a new representative national organisation. After a long process of negotiations, the SAAECE and NIWC finally united to form the Congress of Early Childhood Development (SACECD). SACECD played the role in representing ECD educators and addressing issues related to provisioning.

Post 1994 and with the advent of democracy, the step that was taken was deracializing the education system so that black children could exercise their rights to education. Since 1994 South Africa has made progress in dismantling the discriminatory apartheid policies and implementing policies that are inclusive (Williams et al, 2001: 10). The Government further had a holistic view of ECD, acknowledged the complexity and multi-sectoral nature of the sector which will need the integration of various departments working together (FirstRand, 2014:16)

Within the ECD sector, legislation and policies were implemented. The first step was the signing at the Convention of the Rights of the Child by the government in 1995, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Education for all and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. This was followed by equal medical care. The government offered free medical and health care for pregnant women and children from birth to age of six (NDA, 2012: 9). ECD was one of the priorities of the government as it got incorporated into various departments. There are three main departments that regulate the sector which are the Department of Basic Education, Department of Health, and Department of Social Development (FirstRand, 2014:10).

Within the ECD sector, the Department of Basic Education is responsible for children aged five to nine years. The main priorities of the department include: learner support and

equipment, infrastructure, integration of Grade R in ECD, standardisation of training, qualifications and remuneration of staff (Richter, Biersteker, Burns, Desmond, Feza, Harrison, Martin, Saloojee & Stemming, 2012). The Department of Social Development is responsible for children from birth to four years of age within the ECD sector. The department is focused on creating policies and setting minimum standards for provision within the ECD sector. The key priorities of the department include: catering for children with disabilities within the sector, providing support for parents, facilitating access to subsidies for children in ECD centres (particularly in poverty stricken areas), promoting nutrition in ECD programs, providing funding support for home and community-based ECD centres, and promoting ECD provisioning in poor and under-served communities (Richter et al, 2012).

The Department of Health, within the ECD sector, is responsible for children from birth to nine years of age. This department is particularly focused on providing services such as free primary healthcare for children, children with disabilities and pregnant and lactating mothers (Richter et al, 2012). The department is further responsible for nutrition and maternal health, providing antenatal care, taking preventative measures of smoking and alcohol intake during pregnancy, prevention of maternal mortality, early identification of childhood disabilities and overall promotion of child development (Richter et al, 2012). Thus, through the collaborative work of various departments, it is evident that there were various successes since 1994. These successes were achieved through the establishment and implementation of ECD policies.

2.5 ECD Policies in South Africa

In addition to the success highlighted by the National Development Agency (2012: 9-10), policies were formulated to regulate the ECD sector in South Africa. Policies reflect the government's commitment and intentions to meet the needs of children within the sector. These include Acts and Bills, frameworks, white papers, plans, strategies and guidelines. Such policies include, White Paper on Education and Training 1995, Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development 1996, White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development 2001, White Paper 6, Inclusive Education 2001, The National Integrated Plan for ECD 2005-2010, National Development Plan, Norms and standards for Grade R funding 2008, The Children's Act 2005, White Paper on Families 2012, The National Development Plan 2012, Early Childhood Development policy 2015 and the South African National Curriculum Framework (for children birth to four) 2015. These Policies cover a range of development areas. The South African curriculum framework for example is aimed at developing early learning areas such as

wellbeing, identity and belonging, communication, exploring mathematics, creativity, knowledge and understanding of the world (Department of Basic Education, 2015).

The legislative cornerstone in the ECD sector in South Africa is the White paper 5 on ECD (2001), Guideline for ECD (2006), the National Integrated Plan for ECD (2005-20) and the National Programme of Action for children (FirstRand, 2013: 4). All these above-mentioned policies cater for children from 0-9 years in various areas such as, nutrition, health, support and stimulation at home, community-centre-based services, aftercare for school going children, stimulation programme including part-day programmes and family education. These policies serve children in the ECD sector based on the holistic view and definition of ECD which focuses on all areas of childhood development. ECD services that are operating at primary schools are legislated by the Department of Basic Education and community-based centres and home-based programmes are legislated by the Department of Social Development (FirstRand, 2013: 4). South Africa has come a long way in developing the ECD sector. There are various successes throughout the development process and challenges that the sector faced and still faces today.

2.6 Challenges in the ECD sector in South Africa

Children in South Africa have been negatively impacted by a range of social and economic inequalities. Apartheid and the socio-economic inequalities that arose from that system created a childhood of adversity for most African children. These inequalities include inadequate access to health care, education, social services and quality nutrition (NDA, 2012: 1). This is still seen today as ECD centres are more accessible in industrialised areas and suburbs. Townships and rural areas still lack adequate access to ECD centres and the quality there of is poor. The development of the bill of rights made provision for children's socio-economic rights, including the right to basic education, protection from neglect, abuse and exploitation (NDA, 2012: 1). Statistics indicate that there are 6.5 million children from the 0-6 years' age group, of which 3.8 million (59.2%) live in dire circumstances of poverty (NDA, 2012: 1). The FirstRand report (2014: 18-19) highlighted the following challenges in ECD provisioning: lack of parenting support, poor quality of ECD services, inadequate ECD funding, infrastructure, learning and teaching materials, low levels of qualifications, insufficient training, professional support and poor working conditions for practitioners, poor organisational and financial management within ECD centres, insufficient state monitoring of ECD services, and poor integration of ECD services. The main issue that is evident in ECD literature is the impact that poverty has on children living in rural areas and townships.

2.6.1 Poverty

Poverty is a challenge in the ECD sector in South Africa. More than half of South African children live in severe poverty, which jeopardises the realisation of their rights as contained in the South African Constitution. Children living in poverty are extremely vulnerable, discriminated against and isolated. The government helps through child support grants but it is not sufficient (Atmore et al, 2012: 123-126). Young children bear the greatest risk of failure to achieve their developmental potential when families are poor and vulnerable. (Ebrahim, 2010: 1). International research on early cognitive development shows that by the time children enter formal schooling considerable gaps in cognitive ability already exist based on socio-economic status (Lee and Burkham 2002, van der Berg 2008, Feinstein 2003 and Heckman, 2006). Based on the General Household survey (2015: 9), half of children aged 0-4 years stay at home as opposed to ECD centres. This is particularly related to poverty and fees. Parents, who cannot afford to pay the fees, leave their children in the care of neighbours and family members (Statistics South Africa. 2015: 10).

Children living in the township and rural areas are mostly affected because they don't have adequate access to pre-schools, quality ECD programmes and that further entrenches inequality because unlike other children from privileged backgrounds they fall behind (Modisaotsile, 2012: 2). This perpetuates the cycle of poverty and often leads to dropouts, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and crime (Modisaotsile, 2012: 2-4). Children under the age of five years mostly receive ECD services in home-based sites, and five to seven year olds attend community-based or school-based sites. Food insecurity and hunger are a problem in South Africa. Children are disproportionately affected by hunger and malnutrition. Parental involvement is important for academic success and preventing malnutrition (FirstRand, 2014: 16).

2.6.2 ECD Sites and ECD Practitioners

A study done by the Department of Education, Department of Social Development and UNICEF (2011) indicated that poverty, lack of resources and poor infrastructure in ECD centres has a significant influence on the ability to provide quality ECD services to children. In addition, the study concluded that unregistered ECD sites provide low quality services and provide an unsafe environment for children due to poor infrastructure. One of the challenges that the sector is facing is unregistered ECD sites that are rather harmful to children due to their poor infrastructural environment (FirstRand, 2013: 5). Unregistered ECD sites are contrary to

Section 30 (2) of the Children Act, where it states that an ECD site or place of care must be registered to ensure that the ECD site provides a quality service to the children. Almost half of all ECD centres in South Africa are community-based and some of these sites are not registered (Hornby, 2008: 18).

Language is a problem particularly for ECD practitioners. “The dominance of English as the language of instruction across sites and provinces, seemingly irrespective of the home languages of the learners, was found to be a major concern” (Hornby, 2008: 4). The issue of language affects ECD practitioners particularly in relation to training and gaining qualifications. Although a lot has been done, there is a need for resources in the pre-schools, funding to improve infrastructure of pre-schools, a need for qualified ECD practitioners and hygienic pot toilet amenities (Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development & UNICEF, 2010).

2.6.3 Access and Quality of education

Education is a basic human right and is fundamental to building life-long learning and economic opportunities. There is a need for more ECD sites and to improve the quality of education at ECD centres. With regards to children between the ages of 0 to 4 years attending ECD facilities, in 2006 and 2007, the Department of Social Development spent R350 million by providing 5,531 registered ECD sites with subsidies for a total of 314.912 children (Department of Basic Education, Department of Social development & UNICEF, 2010). In recognising the importance of ECD for the country, in his 2009 State of the Nation address, President Zuma mentioned government’s commitment to stepping up the ECD programme with the aim of ensuring universal access to Grade R and doubling the number of 0-4 year olds by 2014 (The Presidency, 2009a as cited in Department of Basic Education, 2010: 13). Public spending moved from being highly unequal based on race under apartheid to being focused on poor children. Despite the government’s efforts of shifting funding towards poor children, the low quality of education in historically disadvantaged schools was a problem. This was a problem because low quality education restricted the ability of the education system to provide a pathway out of poverty for poor children (van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull and Armstrong, 2011:1).

Children living in poor conditions receive poor quality education due to lack of resources. This further perpetuates the cycle of poverty because they end up lagging behind which leads to dropping out or poor academic performance in the future. Sherry and Draper (2013) argue that

majority of children in South Africa are disadvantaged by a cognitive developmental lag caused by lack of adequate ECD foundation. This refers to access to ECD sites and the quality of education and development that the ECD sites provide. In addition to the problem of access to ECD sites and quality education, parents and caregiver have an important role to play in helping their children develop holistically. However, due to poverty and restrictive apartheid laws, many black people in South Africa are considered illiterate because they lack the basic skills in using numbers, reading and writing (Gardiner, 2008:25). This affects the developmental stimulation that children should receive at home to help them develop academically.

Learner achievement data for South Africa shows that particularly large inequalities are evident as early as the third grade and that the school system is failing in closing such gaps thereafter. This indicates the importance of quality early educational interventions (van der Berg et al, 2011:19). The main question of quality is related to academic activities that take place at ECD sites. This refers to school readiness and given the different languages and contexts in South African communities, a one size fits all approach or curriculum is neither beneficial nor productive. “The one size fits all trends in South Africa educational provisioning and curriculum development, although intended as a means to ensure more equitable access to education for the poor, in many instances effectively exclude the very children it was intended for” (van der Vyver, 2012: 142). This statement not only speaks to quality but also questions the curriculum or structure of academic activities.

Pre-school children need to be prepared for formal schooling and that is often difficult in disadvantaged areas due to lack of resources which then makes it difficult for the ECD practitioners to follow and cover all the educational activities they are supposed to cover with the children. There is also a question of, how ECD sites that do not have adequate resources still manage to produce quality educational activities? This is particularly related to the leadership and management of ECD sites.

Leadership in school affects performance at the sites. If there is strong leadership from ECD practitioners, the pre-schools tend to function better than pre-schools that lack adequate leadership (Spaull, 2013). A closer analysis of access to education in South Africa thus points to a deeper problem of quality. The role of an ECD practitioner at an ECD site is important because the ECD practitioner is responsible for designing quality ECD programs that help children develop holistically in the approach of learning (Hornby, 2008: 21). However, the question of quality is also related to the challenge of low pay, poor conditions of service and

under-skilled workforce which affects the quality of education that children receive (van der Vyver, 2012).

2.6.4 Children with disabilities

Children with disabilities often face various obstacles such as inadequate policies and legislation, inadequate services, negative attitudes from people in their communities and lack of an accessible environment that allows them to learn and grow (UNICEF & WHO, 2012:5). Early interventions for children with disabilities is essential to prevent the development of secondary disabilities and to assist with overcoming learning barriers. Inclusion of children with disabilities at ECD level lays the foundation for social integration (UNICEF, 2007: 1). An estimated 4 % of the South African population are children with disabilities. This indicates that about 206 000 children are in need of special services (UNICEF, Department of Basic Education & Department of Social Development, 2007: 12). Additional training on effective techniques for working with children who have cognitive or physical challenges would benefit these children and their teachers alike.

2.6.5 Health and the impact of HIV/AIDS

According to the Department of Basic Education (2010: 8) education helps to improve child survival and maternal health, contributes to fight against HIV/AIDS, and helps to fight poverty and spur economic growth. South Africa has a high number of people living with HIV (UNICEF, Department of Basic Education and Department of Social Development, 2007: 14). This pandemic creates child headed homes, orphans, and shifts the responsibility to grandparents who look after children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, Department of Basic Education & Department of Social Development, 2007: 14)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (1989) states that every child has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. In South Africa, one of the millennium development goals (adopted in 2000) for reducing poverty and inequality in the world, aims to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two-thirds from the 1990 to 2015 (UNICEF, Department of Basic Education and Department of Social Development, 2007: 14). Child hunger is an issue. The South African constitution states that everyone has the right to sufficient water, as well as to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being (SAHRC & UNICEF, 2012: 4). Water is a requirement for health, hygiene and sanitation. Sanitation problems such as the use of pit latrines, buckets and/or, open land are an issue in

ECD sites and primary schools. Inadequate sanitation results in young children becoming susceptible to a range of illness and diseases that compromise their health and nutritional status (SAHRC & UNICEF, 2012; 4).

The Minister of Basic Education Mrs Motshekga stated that, “delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling can often have long lasting and costly consequences for children, families and society. The most effective and cost-efficient time to intervene is before birth and the early years of life. Investment in Early Childhood Development should be a key priority” (Department of Basic Education & UNICEF, 2005: iii). The current crisis in education demands that we increase our ability to understand which skills, if targeted, are likely to bring about improvements in children’s academic performance, high school completion, and eventual productivity in the workplace (Fitzpatrick, 2012; 23).

2.7 Conclusion

South Africa has come a long way in developing the ECD sector and that journey is marked with success and failures. There are various challenges that exist in the ECD sector that need to be addressed. These challenges created a need for NGOs to intervene with the aim of building communities and improving the ECD sector. This section focused on the importance of ECD, definition and development of ECD in South Africa and a thorough discussion on the challenges in the ECD sector in South Africa. The next chapter will focus on theoretical framework of the Asset-Based Community Development approach, the application of the approach, and the impact of the approach in community development.

CHAPTER THREE: ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted challenges in the ECD sector in South Africa. The challenges mentioned may be applicable to one community and not another. One community may have a problem with the supply of water and electricity in the area, which affects the day to day running of the pre-schools. Another community might have water and electricity but face the challenge of substance abuse, which leads to neglect and physical abuse of children. Thus, knowing your context is important in community development. As mentioned in chapter one, the aim of this study is to find out how the Asset-Based Community Development approach is applied to address challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown. Chapter two highlighted challenges that exist in the ECD sector in South Africa and this chapter will focus on the Asset-Based Community Development approach, beginning with a conceptual framework that provides clarity of terms followed by a discussion of the community development approach.

3.2 Community development in context

Before a community development initiative could commence, it is important to understand the context of the particular community (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006: 5). Each community has unique obstacles that prevent development. However, the community may also have unique resources and assets that could support community development (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006: 6). According to Ferguson and Dickens (as cited in Haines, 2009: 38), community development is focused on asset building with a specific aim of improving the quality of life from low to moderate income communities. Community building is the process that consists of actions that are aimed at strengthening the capacity of communities and identifying opportunities that can foster and sustain positive change in the particular community (Chaskin 2001 as cited in Haines, 2009: 38).

According to Green and Haines (2007 as cited in Haines, 2009: 39), community development is a planned effort that is aimed at producing assets that increase the capacities of community members and improve their quality of life. Vidal and Keating (2004 as cited in Haines, 2009: 38) define community development as a place based approach that focuses on creating assets that benefit poor communities by building links to external resources. Thus, based on the above definitions of community development, it is evident that the focus is on improving communities

through capacity building and building links to external resources to improve conditions in poor communities.

According to Swanepoel (1989: 2-8) there are nine characteristics of community development which include: addressing human needs, community development is a learning process, requires collective action, it is objective orientated, it is action at grassroots level, leads to community building, creates awareness and leads to further development. In addition to the nine characteristics outlined by Swanepoel (1989), there are key themes that emerged in the community development field. These key themes include institutions, participation, training, community coordination, project management, the influence of politics on community development and funding (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997: 1).

According to Swanepoel and De Beer (1997: xi), in addition to the above-mentioned themes there are three particular concepts that gained prominence on the development agenda, “and they were that there had to be a human orientation, participation by the poor masses and sustainable development”. Thus, empowerment, participation and sustainability have been on the community development agenda throughout the history of community development (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997: xi).

The above-mentioned concepts are open to various interpretations. The problem of concepts being open to interpretation is that the wrong interpretation could be a waste of time and scarce development resources. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (1997: xii) empowerment is the process of enabling people and communities to take charge of their own lives, it involves a bottom up process where people in the community make decisions and take action to solve problems. Participation involves community members mobilising to address challenges in their communities. The relationship that exists between community members and outside resources such as NGOs affects participation and the outcome results of community development. In other words, participation depends on the kind of relationship that exists between the community members and the NGO (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005: 21). When community members are involved in the change process they are more likely to be invested in the process and take the driving seat in solving issues in their communities. On the other hand, if NGOs do all the work for the people it further cripples the community, leads to dependence on the NGO and capacity building will not take place in the community. This will affect sustainable development.

Sustainability refers to the community's ability to keep moving forward and thrive on its own. This requires community members taking action and continuing and maintaining the solutions to the issues that existed in the community before intervention (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997). The paradigm of sustainability requires empowerment. People in the community have to be encouraged and willing to take the responsibility for their own development in order to build a better future and environment for their children. In order for sustainable development to take place, the local development must be in harmony with the local ecology (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997: xii). The local people play a vital role in sustainable development because they are the experts of their own environment. The indigenous knowledge that they possess will help them make the best decisions and take the best actions to ensure sustainable development (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997: xii). This is possible through empowerment and participation of community members (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2005: 10).

Linked to sustainability is the issue of expectations. Community members become discouraged and disappointed if their expectations regarding a specific community project are not fulfilled or if promises are not kept. Thus, researchers and developers should be clear about whether their projects are addressing symptoms of deeper issues or the problem itself (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006: 24). Thus, the role of NGOs in community development is important.

3.3 The role of Non-Government Organisation's in community development.

NGOs are defined in various ways. NGOs are defined as organisations that are engaged in development and work that is based on poverty reduction on a local, national or international level (Zhang, 2005: 6). According to the World Bank 1990 (as cited in Zhang, 2005: 7), NGOs are defined in several ways. Firstly, NGOs are defined as non-profit making, service orientation, voluntary, development oriented organisations that are for the benefit of members (grassroots organisations) or of other members of the population (an agency).

Secondly, NGOs are further defined as organisations of private individuals that believe in certain basic social principles and therefore structure their activities to bring about change and development in communities that they are working in. Lastly, NGOs can be defined as social development organisations that work on empowering people and are established by and for the community without or with little intervention from the government (World Bank, 1990 as cited in Zhang, 2009:7).

NGOs are viewed as being instrumental in changing mind-sets, attitudes and more efficient in providing goods and services (Zhang, 2005 & Nelson, 2007). NGOs undertake a variety of

activities such as advocacy, analysis and awareness raising. These activities involve researching and informing the public about issues, mobilising people to act through media campaigns and other various forms of activism (Nelson, 2007: 2). Other activities involve brokerage, which entails acting as an intermediary between sectors and groups. Secondly, conflict resolution, which involves acting as a mediator and facilitator and capacity building which involves providing information, education and training (Nelson, 2007: 2). Lastly, delivery of services which involves the delivery of humanitarian, social and development services, monitoring and evaluation which involves serving as a third party or independent auditor for accountability and transparency (Nelson, 2007: 2).

NGOs come into existence with the aim of addressing a problem or several problems in the field of development (Swanepoel and de Beer, 2011: 22). NGOs have social or economic development aims and are non-profit organisations that depend on funding from business (large corporations), government aid agencies and donations from the public (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011: 22). According to Styger and Cameron (1992 as cited in Zhang, 2005: 36), the role of NGOs assumes the following dimensions.

- Sustainable and participatory development which is a partnership between NGOs and communities. For this role to be fulfilled, NGOs have to demonstrate that they believe in the potential of people in the communities that they work with, respect their indigenous knowledge, allow them to establish ownership of the development initiatives and most importantly acknowledge the part they play in revitalising the society.
- The role of NGOs is not to provide pre-existing solutions and knowledge to address challenges but to help and include community members in the process through collective reaction, decision making and action. “This requires not only technical or so-called hard skills but also the social or soft skills necessary to elicit participation (Styger and Cameron, 1992 as cited in Zhang, 2005: 36).
- NGOs provide a wider perspective through their knowledge and expertise through establishing mutually productive relationships with communities or people that they are working with.

There are various roles that NGOs play in community development depending on the aim and focus of the NGO. NGOs had to step in because government and private sector failed to effectively address issues in the ECD sector. This research focuses on two cases which are the

Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) division. CSD is a NGO and RUCE is a division at Rhodes University that focuses on integrating teaching and learning with community engagement. There are three commonalities between the two cases, firstly they are both based in Grahamstown particularly Rhodes University. Secondly, they both have projects that focus on the ECD sector in Grahamstown particularly focusing on township pre-schools. Lastly, both cases use the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.

3.4 Asset-Based Community Development: shift from the Needs-Based Approach

People in different parts of the world live in impoverished communities that are characterised by various challenges. In response to the challenges, two divergent paths were followed to address them. The first path focused on the needs of communities, deficiencies and problems in communities. The second path focused on discovering capacities and assets in communities (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:1). The former is known as the needs-based approach and the latter is known as the asset-based approach. The needs-based approach affects how community members view themselves and their communities. They view themselves as being fundamentally deficient and as victims that are incapable of taking charge of their own lives and future of their community (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4).

The needs-based approach views communities as an endless list of problems. The allocation of resources is based on the needs of the community and directs funding to service providers and not residents (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4). Providing resources based on needs can have a negative impact on the nature of local leadership in the community. For example, if leadership is measured based on the leader's ability to attract resources, then local leaders are forced to denigrate their communities by highlighting their deficiencies and problems which causes them to ignore their capacities and strengths (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4).

Providing resources based on the needs-based approach underlines the perception that only outside experts can help because people in the community do not have those resources. Focusing on providing on a needs-base creates dependency because community members will not learn to create their own resources but rather receive resources from outside experts and that can cripple community members and create dependency (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4). This approach also leads concerned outsiders into becoming charitable fixers and this is not effective in establishing long lasting change (Bergdall, 2003: 1). Thus, this approach

builds communities from the outside-in and further disempowers community members by creating an environment of dependency.

According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 2), the needs-based approach viewed poverty as the lack or absence of basic elements that are required for human survival. This approach was preferred by NGOs in Africa throughout the 1950s and 1960s. However, the needs-based approach had a negative impact as people began to feel powerless and began to depend on outside help to meet their basic needs. “A legacy of needs-based approach in Africa is that many receiving aid have learned to define themselves and their village/communities by their needs and their deficiencies to the point where they can no longer identify anything of value around them. They have come to believe that only a state of degradation will enable them to attract resources” (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 2).

An interesting point that was raised by Russel and Smeaton (2015: 2) was that the need-based approach creates vulnerable citizens that become even more vulnerable when they have to deal with another crisis because they traded their self-reliance and social capital that grew naturally for millennia within Sub-Saharan African communities and their inter-dependence on family and community members for dependence on outside NGO support and foreign aid. Thus, community members do not see the assets and growth potential in their own communities. What they see is a place characterised by deprivation, hunger, health crisis, poor sanitation, drought and injustice (Russel and Smeaton, 2015:4).

Over-reliance on outside services could result in disappointment because communities are defined as places where people live and build their sense of identity through cooperation, caring, connecting, association and shared problem solving (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 4). People can live with disappointment but what they cannot live with is the over-reliance that underlies this disappointment. Thus, people become receivers and not drivers of their own development, which leads to dependency, and they view themselves as people who cannot contribute to society because they lack the skills and resources to do so. There was a need to change this approach to one that would motivate people to act, to take the driving seat in the change process which would lead to sustainable development. It was for this reason that the Asset-Based Community Development approach was developed.

In contrast to the needs-based approach the asset-based approach is focused on mobilizing individuals and community assets as opposed to focusing on problems and needs (Kretzmann and McKnight, 2003: 5). This alternative path leads towards the development of activities and

policies based on the skills and assets of communities. According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 4), every struggling community is like a glass that can be perceived as being half-full or half-empty. The ABCD approach focuses on the optimistic half-full view rather than the pessimistic half-empty view, as this enhances citizen driven development (Russel and Smeaton, 2015:4). Thus, the needs-based approach focused on deficiencies using outside experts and resources to solve problems. The ABCD approach focuses on empowering people and strengthening government and agency effectiveness, collaborating with local community member's resources, skills, abilities and knowledge to address challenges and solve problems (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 5). This approach was pioneered by Professor John McKnight and John Kretzmann at the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University in Chicago. This approach is now used worldwide by various organisations in the development of impoverished communities.

This approach was created to change the legacy of dependency by focusing on capacity building. A capacity focused paradigm recognizes the gift, skills and talents of community members. This approach is bottom- up beginning with what is available in the community and building on that (McKnight, 2013: 2-7). In addition, it builds communities from the inside-out, relying on community members to take the driving seat for change. It is an approach that empowers people, creates a positive outlook of circumstances, and uses collaborative work with organisations (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 5-10).

3.5 Asset-Based Community Development theoretical frameworks

The theory underpinning the approach firstly focuses on assets, skills and talents that already exist in the community. The aim is to build on the skills of community members by drawing on existing community strengths to build stronger communities (Lilley, 2014, Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). Assets such as time, skills, vision and energy are acknowledged as assets that strengthen the social fabric of the community. This approach does not ignore the problems that exist but is focused on what is already available in the community to address those problems. Focusing on the successes and small triumph as opposed to looking at what is missing or negative about the community provides a positive outlook of the community (Haines, 2009: 38). This positive outlook of focusing on the positive aspects of the community such as existing skills, gifts and abilities can create confidence and empowers community members to take the initiative in community development projects (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003 and Russel & Smeaton, 2015).

Secondly, the approach is internally focused and relationship driven. ABCD approach is focused on social relations that build networks within the community and with outside resources by working with organisations towards change (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002 and Russel and Smeaton, 2015). This relationship driven approach increases the social capacity of community members and is often referred to as social capital (Pinkett, 2000 and Carnegie Trust, 2011). Social capital is comprised out of interactions among groups of people or individuals such as networks, values, norms and trust that facilitates the cooperation for mutual support (Carnegie Trust, 2011:4). Through relationships, community assets are strengthened as they are connected to other skills and resources that exist in the community which results in the mobilisation of the community to take the driving seat in the change process.

Thus, external organisations do not do things for the community but they work with the community to address problems (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 9). According to McKnight (1995 as cited in Russel and Smeaton, 2015) civil society becomes weakened when social service institutions replace neighbourly connections with services and agencies. Thus the role of external agencies is to facilitate the process and let community members take the leading role which shifts community members from being clients to citizens, and this is referred to as 'leading by stepping back' (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 482).

Thirdly, the approach is focused on participatory models to development. As mentioned before this approach focuses and begins with assets. Every person has gifts and skills in a community. As communities begin to recognise those gifts they begin to work together. According to McKnight (2013: 13), community means people in relationships and associations mean people in powerful relationships. Therefore, the roles of connectors are important because the gifts of a person become powerful when they are connected to another person. Thus, relationships become powerful when they are connected to the gifts of other individuals and association becomes even more powerful when they are connected to other associations (McKnight, 2013: 13).

The key principles in the development process are empowerment and participation. Empowering community members to take the lead in the development process leads to sustainability because the community members were involved from the beginning and can continue with what they have invested in. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993: 9), sustainable improvements in communities take place when community members discover their own power to act, in other words, when community members restore their agency. Thus, the

key terms that are important in the development process are invitation, participation and connection.

Lastly, the approach aims to strengthen civil society and it is a strategy for community-driven economic development (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 481). As mentioned, the needs- based approach created communities that are dependent on outside organisations which come into their communities and provide for their needs. This created dependency as people saw themselves as being weak, poor and in need of external help (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 2). Community members are on the receiving end and they do not reproduce for themselves. When community members became producers rather than consumers, this allows them to contribute and engage with the private and public sector on a macro level (Venter, 2010: 42).

In addition to the theory underpinning the approach, there are a set of values and principles underpinning the ABCD approach. According to Foot and Hopkins (2010: 7) the values and principles are as follows:

- Identifies and makes visible the health-enhancing assets in a community;
- Sees citizens and communities as the co-producers of health and well-being, rather than the recipients of services;
- Promotes community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment;
- Identifies what has the potential to improve health and wellbeing;
- Supports individual's health and wellbeing through self-esteem, coping strategies, resilience skills, relationships, friendships, knowledge and personal resources;
- Empowers communities to control their futures and create tangible resources such as services, funds and buildings.

The ABCD approach was created to address the problems caused by the needs-based approach such as disempowering communities, creating dependency and the creation of a negative perception of impoverished communities. The table below provides a comparative understanding of the differences between the needs-based and asset-based approach. (Ebersön & Eloff, 2006: 24-25 as cited in Venter, 2010: 37).

Needs -Based Approach	Asset-Based Approach
Ontology	Ontology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on deficits and needs • The glass is half empty • Disabilities • A singular reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on assets and capacities • The glass is half full • Abilities • Multiple realities
Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a service • Are experts • See dysfunction • Label • Have exclusive Knowledge • Collect data about problems • Inform • Emphasis reason and rationality 	Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect “clients” to assets • Are networkers • See adaptive coping • Understand • Offer shared Knowledge • Collect data about assets and capacities • Connect • Emphasis relationships
Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternalistic • Provide funding for despondency • Provide fragmented services • Discipline-specific approach 	Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Provide funding for proactivity • Establish a cycle of enablement • Encourage collaboration • Functional approach
Clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients • Denial and ignorance • Have limited power 	Clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts • Essential viewpoint • Have optimal power

3.6 Assets and Asset Mapping

The section above focused on introducing the ABCD approach and outlining the main features of the ABCD approach. Central to the approach is that it is focused on assets that already exist in a community. Through the asset-based approach, communities are no longer viewed as complex masses of problems and needs but rather as drivers and potent webs of gifts and skills. The ABCD approach focuses on building upon assets that already exists in the community. According to Foot and Hopkins (2010: 7), these assets include the following:

- The practical skills, capacity and knowledge of local residents;
- The passions and interests of local residents that give them energy for change;
- The networks and connections-known as social capital, in a community, including friendships and neighbourliness;
- The effectiveness of local community and voluntary associations;
- The resources of public, private and third sector organisations that are available to support a community;
- The physical and economic resources of a place that enhance well-being.

These above-mentioned assets are identified in the community through a process referred to as asset mapping. Identifying and mapping a community's assets is the place where this path begins (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993: 346). Asset mapping is a process where community members make a map of resources and skills of individuals, associations and organisations (Foot and Hopkins, 2010: 20). According to Foot and Hopkins (2010: 20), asset mapping categorises assets into six levels which include, the assets of individuals, the assets of associations, the assets of organisations, the physical assets of an area, the economic assets of an area and the cultural assets of an area.

As mentioned above the asset mapping process has various levels of categorising assets. The basic levels are assets of individuals, associations and organisations (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The ABCD model is relationship driven and that makes the role of outsiders and insiders important in the approach. Thus, the process of asset mapping should include members of the community and external organisations. The Diagram on page 39 provides an example of an asset map and outlines the three levels discussed by Foot and Hopkins (2010:21). Based on the Diagram there are three basic levels which are assets of individuals, assets of associations and assets of organisations.

In terms of the individual level, everyone has gifts and assets in communities. These assets include skills, time, passions, networks and interests. They are also referred to as skills of the heart, head and hand (Foot and Hopkins, 2010:20). During this process of identifying assets, community members are encouraged to look at the good aspects of the community and how they can use what is available to improve life in the community.

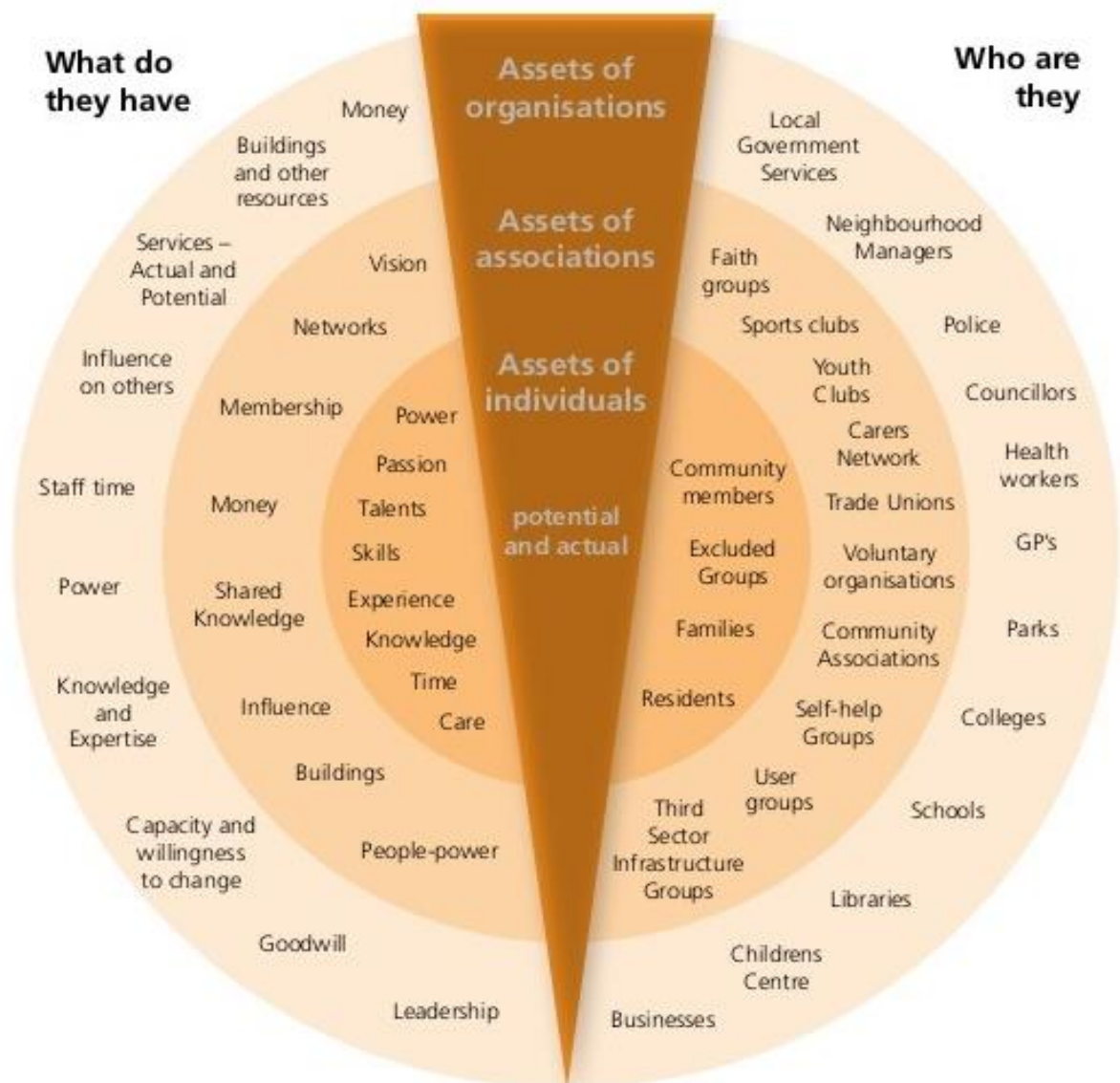


Figure 1: Asset Mapping
Source: Foot & Hopkins, 2010:21

In terms of the association's level, all networks including community organisations, voluntary groups and informal networks come together. These include football teams and small informal groups of people, such as clubs. Assets of the organisation refer to not only services that organisations provide locally, but also assets they control such as community centres, faith buildings and parks. The physical assets in an area include buildings, unused land, markets and transport in the area. Mapping the physical assets can help community members appreciate their value and potential productive uses (Foot and Hopkins, 2010:20).

The economic assets of an area refer to the economic activity which is at the heart of rebuilding communities. This includes looking at what skills are being used in the local economy, how local associations contribute to the local economy and how residents can spend more money on local shops to increase their local economic activity. Lastly, cultural assets of an area refer to mapping local talent for art, music, drama and any other opportunities available for community members to express themselves creatively. This process reflects their values and identities and tackles their lack of voice, in other words restores their agency and voice in society (Foot and Hopkins, 2010:20). This process begins with community members mapping assets in their community with the support of skilled community organisers. In the process of asset mapping and development process, it is important to outline the role of insiders and outsiders.

3.7 The role of Insiders and Outsiders

Some communities are comprised of residents, associations, businesses and institutions. Through the ABCD approach, skills, resources and commitment of community members are mobilised. The approach is focused on building communities from the inside-out, but some form of external stimulus is involved in the process (Bergdall, 2003: 1). These outsiders are there to empower community members to take the lead in the change process and they play the facilitation role by not doing things for the community but doing things with the community. Bergdall (2003:3) refers to these facilitators of change as catalysts.

These catalysts begin by shaping the way community members view their community. In other words through the needs-based approach people in impoverished communities viewed their communities in a negative way as communities that do not have resources and skills. This changed the way they view themselves and crippled community members to become receivers and not producers. Thus, to establish the ABCD approach in a community, the old pessimistic way of thinking has to be replaced by the new optimistic asset-based way of thinking (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). According to Bergdall (2003: 3) this understanding about change can be summarised in five points as follows: 1) people live out of images, 2) images control behaviour, 3) images are created by messages, 4) images can change and 5) when images change, behaviour changes. The process above indicates how the paradigm shift from needs-based to assets-based approach takes place through empowering community members to participate and lead in the change process.

Thus, there are various roles that catalysts play in order to achieve this paradigm shift. The purpose of a catalyst is to stimulate change, This was highlighted through the five step process that occurs to stimulate a new way of thinking about communities (Bergdall, 2003: 2). This involves both insiders and outsiders. In other words both insiders and outsiders should have a positive, optimistic view of the community. Catalysts play the role of a facilitator not a direct implementer (Bergdall, 2003: 3). This refers to the catalyst leading by stepping back. In other words they do not do anything for the community directly but encourage people to do things themselves. This leads to communities developing themselves and taking the driving seat in the development process. Catalysts build trust and this refers to transparency and accountability where the catalyst is upfront about the roles and intentions so that members of the community can know the purpose and motives of the projects being implemented (Bergdall, 2003: 5). Lastly, catalysts have an agenda. This agenda is to see the development process driven by the community. This agenda is based on a coherent strategy that guides the asset mapping process and all the development steps in the ABCD approach (Bergdall, 2003: 6). This involves being clear about the aims of the projects and way of monitoring and evaluating the impact of the projects. In addition to asset mapping and the role that the catalysts play, there are project implementation steps that guide catalysts in the practical application of the ABCD approach in communities.

3.8 Practical application of the Asset-Based Community Development approach

As mentioned before, asset mapping is a method of the ABCD approach that is used to identify assets that already exist in the community. Asset mapping is also the first step in the five steps of the ABCD approach. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993: 345) there are five basic steps that act as a guide in the process of mobilising communities. The first step is asset mapping which entails identifying assets of community members, institutions and organisations. The second step is building internal relationships. This involves building relationships between community members and building relationships among local community assets. The third step involves mobilising for economic development and information sharing. This involves mobilising community assets for economic and social development. The fourth step involves convening the community to develop a vision and a plan. This process of community based planning provides a way for defining and developing the local vision that is accompanied by strategies that move the vision to reality (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993: 351). The fifth step involves leveraging outside resources to support locally driven development. When communities have identified assets in the community and they can produce for

themselves, then only can they begin to consider leveraging from the outside (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993: 353). The theme and vision behind revitalising the community needs to be concrete so that people know what they are aiming for and how they will achieve it. This should be achievable with the resources available in the community. The resources should bring people together by using their skills, and should finally reinforce strengths and self-confidence (Foot and Hopkins, 2010:23). It is important to note that with the steps guiding the process and the outcomes of the approach, there are various limitations to the ABCD approach.

3.9 Challenges and limitations of the ABCD approach

There are various questions and challenges that arise from the approach that needs to be explored. The first challenge is fostering an endogenous process. The process fails to clarify the exact role of external agencies (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 482). The external agencies take the role of facilitators so that community members can take the lead that will lead to sustainable development. The challenge however is to avoid the level of involvement that can induce dependency in the development process. Thus, the exact role of external agencies and how they go about the facilitation process is not clear enough on how they can avoid inducing dependency in the process. The second challenge is in terms of fostering inclusive participation (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 483). The approach fails to deal with unequal power issues. The approach does not confront the issue of unequal power within society but instead focuses on using power to act in the shared interest of the common good and to uncover the strengths of people who might be less valued. It is not clear how agencies can go about addressing those power issues in communities.

The third challenge is fostering community leadership (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 483). The ABCD approach does not clearly address how to foster community leadership in varying communities and settings. The ABCD approach is community driven and the role of external agency is limited, thus for the leadership to sustain a strength-based approach like the ABCD approach becomes a central challenge (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 483). Thus, as the process unfolds in varying settings it is important to learn about the qualities of essential leadership in terms of the individuals involved and the nature of leadership itself. According to Mathie and Cunningham (2003: 484) there are various questions that the approach does not answer such as, “is the leadership, for example, an individual or a group of individuals, is it formalised, or is it a function of individual or group initiative at particular times? What kinds of associations nurture the best community leaders? How does leadership help link the

associational base to external resources? The forth challenge involves selecting enabling environments (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 483). The external environment has an influence on the capacity of communities in their quest of realising their potential. “The degree to which regulatory environments and local institutions are fair and responsive, and the degree to which norms of trust and reciprocity extend beyond the associational level, are important considerations for the introduction of ABCD” (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 484). The approach does not provide a way of identifying and creating openings in a hindering environment (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 484).

The last challenge involves handling the fluidity of associations. Changes take place in terms of social and economic circumstances that in turn affect and may change the form and functions of informal networks and associations. Thus, it is important for users of the ABCD approach to understand historical patterns of associations and networks. According to Mathie and Cunningham (2003: 484), it is important to consider the implications of associations becoming institutionalised in the ABCD approach and strategy. With that in mind, will this institutionalisation stifle ABCD or will new associational forms emerge in the process? (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003: 484).

3.10 Conclusion

Based on literature reviewed in this research, it is evident that the Asset-Based Community Development approach was created in response to the negative impact that the needs-based approach had in the process of development in communities around the world. The needs-based approach focuses on deficiencies that exist in a community and uses outside experts and resources to address the deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 3-4). This approach builds communities from the outside-in, disempowers community members and creates an environment of dependency. The ABCD approach on the other hand, was created to change the legacy of dependency by focusing on capacity building. A capacity focused paradigm recognizes the gift, skills and talents of community members. This approach is bottom-up beginning with what is available in the community and building on that (McKnight, 2013: 2-7). In addition, it builds communities from the inside-out, relying on community members to take the driving seat for change. It is an approach that empowers people, creates a positive outlook of circumstances, and uses collaborative work with organisations (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 5-10).

There are various challenges in community development and the ABCD approach has various limitations and challenges. However, it offers a positive and optimistic view of impoverished communities and provides a way of empowering people in communities to participate and lead in the process of change. The chapter focused on the theory and practice of ABCD which lays the foundation for understanding the theory that the two cases in this research apply in community development. The next chapter will focus on the methodology that guides this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

Community development programs have received criticism because they are often viewed as creating dependency and not sustainability. This view was created by the needs-based approach to community development. The needs-based approach focuses on deficiencies that exist in a community and uses outside experts and resources to address the deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 3-4). This approach builds communities from the outside-in and further disempowers community members by creating an environment of dependency. The asset-based approach was created to change this legacy of dependency into a legacy of sustainability and empowerment (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 5). The asset-based approach is based on capacity building. A capacity focused paradigm recognizes the gift, skills and talents of community members. This approach is bottom- up beginning with what is available in the community and building on that (McKnight, 2013: 2-7). In addition, it builds communities from the inside-out, relying on community members to take the driving seat towards change.

This research provides an analysis of how the Asset-Based Community Development approach is applied to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The study focused on projects from the Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE). The research highlights how the approach interprets and contributes towards empowerment, sustainability and participation in the different projects and initiatives. Thus, the research aimed to find out how the approach is applied and to find if the approach achieves what it seeks to achieve in practice. This chapter describes actions that were taken to investigate the research problem, such as how data was collected and analysed using the qualitative research method.

4.2 Qualitative Research

As one has mentioned in the introduction, social research helps us make sense of the world around us. This is done through qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2013: 13) “qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counter disciplinary field”. This indicates that qualitative research crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters. It employs a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions (Neuman, 2003: 14-15). Qualitative research includes the studied use and

collection of a variety of empirical materials such as case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interviews, artefacts and cultural text to generating meaning, and understanding reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 10-13).

In addition, qualitative research uses a variety of methods to provide in-depth study of social phenomenon. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 31-38) there are seven main steps to qualitative research which include; acknowledging social self, adopt perspective, design study, collect data, analyse data, interpret data, inform others. The most important step is the first step of a researcher's self-assessment and reflection about themselves as situated in a social historical context. This speaks to the researchers' position in society. "Qualitative researchers do not narrowly focus on a specific question, but ponder the theoretical-philosophical paradigm in an inquisitive, open-ended settling in process as they adopt a perspective (Neuman, 2003: 15). Thus, context is of utmost importance because the society under study needs to be at the centre of the study and the context of the society needs to be taken into account.

According to Neuman (2003: 13), there are features that define the qualitative approach; the qualitative approach constructs social reality and cultural meaning, it focuses on interactive processes and events, authenticity is key and values are present and explicit, theory and data are fused, uses a few cases or subjects, thematic analysis and the researcher is involved or immersed in the study. The purpose of a study could be to explore, describe or explain. Description takes place when one wants to describe a social phenomenon by presenting a picture of the specific details of a situation or event. An explorative study takes place when the issue of study is new or researchers have written little on it. Explanation takes place when one has encountered an issue that is already known and has a description of it and wonder why things are the way they are, so it goes beyond describing social phenomena but also giving possible explanations of social phenomena (Neuman, 2003: 19-20).

In order to describe, explore and understand these social phenomena, researchers with in social science use different research methodologies. Qualitative research involves in-depth study to provide understanding of social phenomenon. Qualitative research contends that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed by its participants (Neuman, 2003: 11-20). This refers to ontology and epistemology of qualitative research. Thus, ontology and epistemology determines the type of methods one uses in research. Researchers in the social sciences have argued that the relative preference of each methodology depends on philosophical issues

related to the question of ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge) (Neuman, 2003).

Based on the research question, this research takes the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm views reality (ontology) as the product of social process. Reality and meaning-making is socially constructed and people make sense of social realities. This paradigm investigates, interprets and describes social realities. Thus, there is no single reality or truth, reality is created by individuals in societies and that reality is based on experiences (Neman 2003 and Denzin & Lincoln 2003). Epistemology on the other hand refers to how one can know reality. Basically, asking how we know what we know or what counts as knowledge. The interpretive perspective views the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced by people through interactions with each other. Therefore, the nature of enquire is interpretative and the purpose of enquiry is to understand and articulate phenomenon (Neuman, 2003: 9-14).

Thus, epistemology and ontology can help to link history to current reality. The communities view and understanding of community development and community engagement is derived from various factors such as the socio – economic stance of the community, prior experience, current situations that they face and that is what they use to construct reality. Staff members from CSD, RUCE and volunteer students might view the community based on their backgrounds, education and experiences. There is no single reality so taking the local context seriously is important. This research aims to give the ECD practitioners a voice to speak in the Grahamstown context, bearing in mind the history and the current situation of the context. Thus taking the local ontology and epistemology is important because the people have a voice and their voice needs to be heard.

4.3 Research goals

This research aims to provide an analysis of how the Asset-Based Community Development approach is applied to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The main focus was on analysing projects from the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement. The Asset-Based Community Development approach also known as the ABCD approach, is focused on reducing dependency while encouraging communities to spear head the change process in their communities. This research seeks to find out if that is the case in practice by focusing on CSD and RUCE as the case studies. The secondary goals include:

1. Highlighting the challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown;

2. Analysing how the approach contributes towards empowerment, participation and sustainability.
3. Analysing the challenges that CSD and RUCE have faced in applying the asset-based approach and the relationship and collaboration between the two organisations.

4.4 Sampling

Before collecting data, it is important to specify who we are collecting data from and why. Sampling refers to the selection of individuals to be studied (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 287). The selection of individuals can be done in various ways depending on the nature of the research question. For the purpose of this research, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling requires the researcher to have a set criterion for the inclusion or exclusion of respondents before conducting interviews (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 287). This involves the process of identifying and selecting respondents that are knowledgeable about the research question or the area that is being studied (Creswell, 1994: 148). This research focused on collecting data from the two organisations under study, being the Centre for Social development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE). The Directors at the respective organisations were the main respondents. ECD practitioners formed a very important part of this research. Pre-schools were chosen on the basis of their affiliation with the organisations under study. The criteria for choosing pre-schools for this study, was based on the pre-schools involvement in the ECD Residence Programme, Siyakhana@Makana project and the Toy Library. All the pre-schools had to be part of both ECD Residence program and Siyakana@Makana project to allow a comparison of how the two projects implement the ABCD approach and how effective they are in improving the ECD sector in Grahamstown township pre-schools. Five ECD practitioners from various pre-schools were chosen for the purpose of this research. The students that were chosen for this study were volunteers at ECD centers through the ECD Residence program, Siyakhana@Makana project and the Toy Library. These involved 5 students in the residence ECD program, 2 volunteers from the CSD Toy Library and 5 volunteers in the Siyakhana@Makana. Twelve students were selected to be interviewed for this study.

4.5 Data collection methods

As mentioned above, this research is qualitative, using the interpretive paradigm. This research aimed to interpret the reality and understanding of perceptions and relationships that emerge through the application of the Asset-Based Community Development approach (Neuman,

2003: 19). This was done by analysing this approach not just in theory but in practice. In other words, this research focused on the impact of this approach, in ECD interventions with a specific aim of bringing in the voice of ECD practitioners.

We understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's lives. Human studies are thus founded on the relation between lived experiences, expression, and understanding. The methods used to study human affairs needs to capitalize upon the natural powers of people to experience and understand (Neuman, 2003: 24). The case study method provides an understanding and extension of experiences. The cases in this research are the Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) in relation to Grahamstown Township pre-schools (ECD practitioners and community partners). This approach was chosen because an organisation, a program, a collection or a population can be cases. Features of a case study include; descriptions that are complex, holistic, involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables, data that is likely to be gathered at least partly by personalistic observation, writing style that is informal, perhaps narrative, with verbatim quotation, illustrations, and themes (Stake, 1978: 7). This approach aided in an in-depth study of the organisation and the community by the use of various data collection tools. Case studies examine many features of a case in depth and over duration of time. The data is more detailed, varied and extensive. It also allows the researcher to put all the focus on the case to analyse and interpret the complexities that exist within that case and the various ways in which meaning is constructed (Stake, 1978: 6-9). The research tools that were used in the case study approach were in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that is used when conducting individual interviews with a small number of respondents, in order to explore their perspective and experience on the topic at hand (Boyce & Neale, 2006: 3). This process involves asking 'why', to get a more personal reflection of what the respondents think and know about the subject that is being studied (Boyce & Neale, 2006: 3). In-depth interviews are useful when detailed information is required about a respondent's thoughts, ideas and perceptions, to explore new issues in depth (Boyce & Neale, 2006: 3). The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide more detailed information than other data collection methods such as surveys. This technique not only allows you to find out what opinions people hold but also why they hold those opinions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 291). This research tool allows the researcher to observe body language, engage with respondent in a comfortable space that

is conducive to building conversation and expression from respondents (Boyce & Neale, 2006: 3). In-depth interviews were used to explore perceptions and understanding of the Asset-Based Community Development approach and the application of the approach at the different ECD sites by ECD practitioners and student volunteers. The interviews in addition highlighted perceptions of community engagement, community development and challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown.

Participant observations were another data collection tool that was used. Participant observation is a qualitative research tool that has its origins in ethnographic research (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005: 13). The qualitative researcher presumes that there are or will be multiple perspectives within any given community. Researchers are then interested in finding out what those diverse perspectives are and in addition understand the interplay between them. The role of the researcher is to learn what life is like for an insider, while remaining an outsider (Mack et al, 2005: 13). According to Mack et al, (2005: 14), participant observation is useful in gaining an understanding of the cultural, social, physical, and economic contexts in which the participant lives or works.

In addition, it helps in gaining information about the relationships that exist among and between people, contexts, ideas, norms, and events. People's behaviours and activities in terms of what they do, how frequently, and with whom, can be observed. This helps the researcher understand the context of the study. Data that is collected through this technique serves as a check against the participant's subjective reporting of what they believe and do (Mack et al, 2005: 14). This was particularly important in this study because one of the objectives was to find out how the Asset- Based Community Development Approach shapes the way in which ECD practitioners operate at the pre-schools and the relationships they have with volunteers at their sites.

This method helped in getting a closer look at the practices and methods used and immerse oneself in the process. This gave a clearer view of relationships between students, staff and ECD practitioners by taking part in their daily volunteer sessions to develop a deep understanding and observation of the various features that exists. This is particularly important because it is one thing to receive training about the approach and it is another thing to apply what has been learnt. This method helped in terms of connecting the dots of theory and practice of the approach in the Grahamstown ECD context. Observations took place at the chosen pre-schools, Toy Library, Student Volunteer Program (SVP) training and Siyakhana@Makana project training session.

In addition to in-depth interviews and participant observation, this research utilised the documentary analysis method. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating and reviewing documents such as public records and personal documents. This includes annual reports of an organisation, journals, flyers, handbooks and training material (Bowen 2009). This method involves the use of interpreting documents to give voice, elicit, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge that pertains to the research topic (Bowen, 2009: 27-28). Document analysis produces data that is organised into themes and categories through content analysis. This research method is usually combined with other research methods and in this research this method was combined with in-depth interviews and participant observation. This combination of research methods is done as a means to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Eisner, 1991: 110 as cited in Bowen, 2009: 28).

The documents evaluated in this study include RUCS and CSD annual reports, student volunteer handbooks and additional documents that were applicable in this study such as publications by the organisations. This was particularly important in this study as it aided in finding out how the organisations interpret empowerment, participation and sustainability in the various ECD projects and initiatives in Grahamstown. In addition, it provided the link between theory and practice in terms of what the organisations wanted to achieve in applying the Asset-Based Community Development approach and the impact it has at the ECD sites. In addition to the above mentioned data collection methods, pictures were taken at the respective pre-schools and added in this research to add more value and content. The various research methods insured validity and reliability of this study.

4.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of working systematically and thematically with the data gathered in the field (Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006: 320). This involves the process of organising the information received from data collection. For the purpose of this research, thematic analysis was used to organise and interpret the data received from the field. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012:10), thematic analysis moves beyond identify phrases and counting explicit words but rather focuses on identifying and describing ideas within the data, this is known as themes.

After data collection through in-depth interviews, participant observations and document analysis, the data was organised based on themes that emerged from the information gathered. These themes included; social problems, empowerment, participation, asset mapping,

relationship building and collaborations and sustainability. The different data collection methods used provided a wide range of data which allowed for interpreting the data into different themes. Themes provided a structure for presenting the findings of this research.

4.7 Fieldwork challenges and ethical considerations

The main challenge was access to staff and students. Given the protests on campus it was difficult to get student respondents. There were various year-end functions and awards ceremonies so some of the staff members that had be interviewed were unavailable. This was particularly a problem because data could not be analysed until all the respondents were interviewed. I received consent from all the respondents in terms of consent to mention their names or keep them anonymous. Through consent from the participants, the directors of the organisations and ECD practitioner's names and names of their pre-school were included in the study. However, most of the student volunteers felt more comfortable voicing their opinions about the ECD projects without their names being mentioned. This was particularly due to the challenges they faced in the respective ECD projects. Thus, all the student volunteers' names have been changed as per their request.

CHAPTER FIVE: Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE): background, aims, functions and programmes.

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on describing actions that were taken to investigate the research problem. This chapter presents a discussion on the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement. This was achieved by analysing founding documents and annual reports of the two cases. This chapter is particularly important because it provides a discussion on the aims, functions and programmes of the organisations. In addition it provides background information on the programmes that are analysed in chapter 6 to provide clarity and understanding of the analysis.

5.2 Background: Centre for Social Development.

The Centre for Social Development in Grahamstown is a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) that works on improving ECD in Grahamstown and surrounding small towns such as Cradock, Debenek, Hamburg, Keiskammahoek and King Williamstown (CSD, 2015: 5). The organisation was established in 1981 and Thelma Henderson was the first director of CSD. Henderson was involved in the Woman for Peace Movement in 1976. This movement involved women of all races who took a stand against all injustices and problems that were affecting their communities at that time. It was there that she was able to understand what black and coloured communities go through and what challenges and problems they face in their communities on a daily basis. Henderson's constant engagement with the people living in Grahamstown townships, provided her with knowledge about the geographical layout, the paucity of facilities and various problems that the communities were facing. Thus, understanding and knowing the context led to understanding problems and challenges that people in the township were facing (Henderson, 1992: 41).

In the same year (1976), Henderson delivered a key note address at a national conference that was held in Grahamstown by the South African Association for Early Childhood Education (SAAECE). The key note address shed light on the pre-school situation in South Africa and what could possibly be done to alleviate the problems (Henderson, 1992: 43). The address stressed the importance of good food to combat malnutrition and the provision of home care centres as an alternative for formal facilities. Other suggestions included training of pre-school workers and the establishment of educare and a family counselling centre. It was from this address that the first few ideas emerged and were used and implemented in CSD projects. The

CSD was established to address the problems that the Grahamstown community was facing in the township at that time, which included boycotts and riots, unemployment, housing structures, overcrowding, inadequate provision of services and the prevalence of disease. The aim was to provide members of the disadvantaged communities with access to existing resources, to assist community integration through grassroots self-help projects, to provide recreational, cultural, counselling and vocational services for young people, and lastly to provide parents, especially mothers with supportive services and skills (Henderson, 1992: 44).

The initial purpose was to get Rhodes University involved in improving ECD in the townships of Grahamstown (CSD, 2014, CSD, 2015, Henderson, 1992). The centre built a strong relationship with the Rhodes University Education Faculty as a way of improving the skills that ECD practitioners acquire through the centre. CSD envisions vibrant communities that take responsibility for the early development needs of their children as a foundation for achieving human potential. The organisation established and is involved in various projects such as training of ECD practitioners, Toy Library, Anglo American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme, Jim Joel Mentoring Programme and Resource Programme. This study will highlight the various projects with a specific focus on the training of ECD practitioners and the Toy Library.

5.3 Centre for Social Development projects

The CSD motto is, 'it takes a village to raise a child' (CSD, 2014:5). Thus, the organisation does not work in isolation but with community members, volunteers (students) and multiple organisations and institutions such as Rhodes University Education Faculty and Rhodes University Community Engagement (CSD, 2015: 5). The main role that the CSD plays is to provide training of in-service teachers who are given a chance to develop themselves to improve their lives and communities (CSD, 2014: 9). There are various other roles that the centre plays which include:

- Training in-service teachers both in the rural and urban contexts of the Eastern Cape;
- Training CD practitioners in the rural settings;
- Running a Toy Library, resource centre, recyclable material depot and mentorship programmes for local teachers and parents;
- In addition, the centre has developed open source material through collaboration with NPOs that have been in the ECD sector for many years.

5.3.1 Education: ECD practitioners and CD practitioners training

CSD provides ECD practitioners with training programs that pave a way to access a degree which qualifies students as foundation phase teachers. This programme is possible through the collaboration with the Rhodes University Education Faculty. The positive relationship with the education faculty created collaborative contribution on the B.Ed. programme and assisted in the development of a Grade R Diploma (CSD, 2014: 9). This collaboration allows the sharing of skills and knowledge to better the lives of people who go through the educational programs. The organisation seeks to improve the quality of ECD in the Eastern Cape by providing teaching programs that help ECD practitioners improve their teaching skills and qualifications. “By helping to ensure that we send out well-equipped pre-service teachers and mentor in service teachers, we are able to make a difference to the quality of education in the Eastern Cape” (CSD, 2014: 9). Educational programs offered include the ND ECD Level 5, FETC Level4, which leads to a degree in foundation phase teaching and postgraduate studies. Refer to appendix A for the education and training career path chart.

In addition to ECD qualifications the centre offers Community development level 4 (FETC) courses that develops and trains future community development practitioners. Community Development is viewed as the art of working with people and promotes human development by empowering individuals and groups to influence and change their own communities. Thus, the courses support, stimulates and encourages growth and need for CD practitioners in communities (CSD, 2014:14). A very unique program that the centre is co-ordinating is the Bachelor of Education part-time foundation phase degree. This degree allows ECD practitioners to further develop their skills and qualifications through part time study. This also allows them to run their pre-schools and fulfil other obligations while developing their skills and qualifications. ECD practitioners develop themselves through the unique career path that the CSD offers in collaboration with Rhodes University (CSD. 2014:43). “Rhodes University is the only university in South Africa that offers this unique career path for adult learners who would otherwise not have this opportunity to further their studies and contribute to Foundation Phase education in South Africa” (CSD, 2014: 43). (View appendix A for CSD ECD career path Diagram)

5.3.2 The Toy Library

The Toy Library is a non-centre based programme that gives children, their families, early childhood facilitators and practitioners access to a variety of carefully selected educational play materials, books, early learning sessions and toys in their own communities (CSD, 2014: 33). The Toy Library is located at the Joza youth-hub, which is located in a township called Joza in Grahamstown. The library can be accessed by pre-schools, parents and community members. The main aim of the Toy Library is to ensure that children have access to educational development opportunities and help children to get ready to adapt to crèche and Grade R (CSD, 2014: 33). Language acquisition, motor skills, problem solving and social behaviour are critical skills which are advanced through structured educational activities with young children (CSD, 2014: 33). There are various workshops that are held that educate and support parents on how to stimulate children with special needs (CSD, 2014: 12). There are open sessions during the week that allow pre-schools to bring their children for story time and art activities. These sessions create a space for learning that supports what takes place in the classroom. The toy library is also a place for non-centre based learning that is targeted at children aged 0-4, who are unable to attend a pre-school. The functions of the toy library include: (CSD: 2014:33).

- Regular sessions for children in the toy library to expose them to toys they would otherwise not have access to;
- Community capacity building sessions for parents, primary caregivers and other stakeholders where general health, education and psychosocial information is disseminated;
- A borrowing service where members take out educational toys and books for their children, so that children have play and learning opportunities at home;
- Creation of a forum which meets once a quarter at the toy library to borrow toys and receive training from a volunteer or staff member of CSD;
- Conducting of events in line with the Rhodes University Calendar as well as other Government Departments throughout the year;
- Operating an educational theme bag system which allows trained volunteers to go out into the community and extend the services of the toy library to stakeholders, including children with disabilities, who cannot attend the toy library sessions and allow them to experience the benefit of structured play and other capacity building sessions.

5.3.3 Anglo American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme

AACF parent's project aims to educate and empower parents to support the health and education development of their children aged 0-6 years. The role of a parent in the early years of a child's development are crucial and this projects helps and educates parents on how to better stimulate their children for future academic, social and physical development. It provides a platform for parents to better understand themselves in order to understand their children (CSD, 2014: 14). The organisation states that, "the NPO's involved in developing and piloting this programme believe that in order to transform the educational and resultant life-long, opportunities of South Africa youth, it is essential to empower and mobilize parents"(CSD, 2014: 16). This project equips parents with the knowledge about their responsibilities towards their children and helps them to be more actively involved in their children's education. The projects are founded on the belief that teachers, schools and children can be transformed by positive involvement and support from parents. The topics that are covered at the sessions include reflections on understanding how children develop, management committee and school governing body, communication and conflict resolution (CSD, 2014: 41). The project was designed for the following reasons: (CSD, 2014: 16)

- Help parents to better understand how their child learns and develops;
- How to support development and learning;
- Their rights and responsibilities with regards to their children's education;
- The importance of good health and nutrition to the optimal development of young children.

5.3.4 Jim Joel Mentoring Programme and Resource Programme

The Jim Joel Mentoring Programme is aimed at working with experienced ECD practitioners and equipping them with new ideas and sharpening their skills (CSD, 2015: 16). This project is crucial especially in this fast paced world that we live in, it is important to constantly develop and learn new ways of teaching children. The centre recognised that ECD practitioners are enthusiastic during training and the journey towards acquiring their qualifications. It is however challenging to sustain this enthusiasm once they get into the workplace. This programme provides support to ECD practitioners through workshops, resources and site assists that help them improve their practice. The centre conducts research to find out what challenges the ECD

practitioners face and what they need in order to address the challenges and problems in the workshops. (CSD, 2014: 52).

The Resource Programme feeds into the Jim Joel Mentoring Program. The Resource Programme involves teaching ECD practitioners how to use recyclable material in toy making and art activities (CSD, 2015: 17). This is particularly useful to ECD practitioners because they create various crafts during the workshops which they take back to the pre-school. This creates an environment that stimulates creativity, ideas and innovation. The Resource Programme adds a practical aspect to the Jim Joel Mentoring Program. ECD practitioners learn from the facilitators and each other. This fosters an environment of reciprocity and collective skill development through the trading of ideas and practices.

5.4 Background: Rhodes University Community Engagement division

The Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE) division was established in 2010 with the aim to drive and facilitate the formulation of a strategy of the University's Community activities involving community development partners that include NGOs, CBOs, the private sector, institutions and the government (Rhodes University, 2014: 18). The vision that RUCE has is to be recognised and respected nationally and internationally as a leader in community engagement. It is committed to social and individual transformation, sustainable community development, student civic responsibility and scholarship of engagement (Rhodes University, 2014: 9). In pursuit of its vision and that of Rhodes University, the community Engagement directorate's role is to promote a reciprocal process of knowledge construction and dissemination. In addition, the mission is to develop and channel the civic and social responsibility of all students, student organisations and staff of Rhodes University through various community engagement activities (Rhodes University, 2014: 9). Thus, contributing to individual transformation and sustainable human and community development in Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape (Rhodes University, 2014: 9).

In the past, the Rhodes University's CE activities were managed by the Centre for Social Development (CSD). Following national policy on higher education community engagement, CE is located as a core function of Rhodes University and integral to teaching, learning and research (Rhodes University, 2011: 6). The RUCE office aimed to: (Rhodes University, 2011: 6).

- Contribute to the vision and mission of Rhodes University through focused and collaborative CE activities;
- Coordinate all university community engagement activities and give strategic directions where needed;
- Promote leadership development of students in order to foster and enhance civic and social responsibilities;
- Facilitate outreach programs, volunteerism and service learning which are developmental in their approach;
- Promote service learning in collaboration with academic departments and community partners;
- Utilise expertise, skills and resources for capacitating and educating university and community partners on community engagement;
- Contribute to knowledge production and dissemination of knowledge through the functions of teaching, learning and research;
- Contribute to the sustainable development of Grahamstown communities;
- Contribute to the development of the Eastern Cape Province through partnership with provincial government departments, NGO's and other institutions of higher learning in the Province.

The university is involved in a wide and diverse range of community initiatives in the Eastern Cape, through both staff and students. These take place on many different levels, from involvement at government level and ground-breaking research to practical effective intervention at a community level (Rhodes University, 2014). Rhodes University's community engagement initiatives are centrally co-ordinated through the community engagement unit and networked with community development partners, which include NGOs, CBOs, institutions, government and the private sector, ensuring effective intervention to the mutual benefit of students and the community (Rhodes University, 2011: 5). Some projects have been commended by local and provincial government and have enjoyed international acclaim. An ethos of community service within the University student body and staff is expressed through sharing knowledge, resources and skills transfer (CSD, 2011: 5).

Rhodes University views community engagement from a social justice point of view that is based on building relationships and working together to improve communities. Universities

have been called upon to become more responsive to local communities and Rhodes is serious about embracing this challenge. At Rhodes University, community engagement is viewed as a critical pillar alongside teaching and research. This means that community engagement - initiatives at Rhodes “go beyond the traditional ‘good deed’ approach, to occupy a more critical social justice approach and strategic role to enhance scholarship, development, social cohesion and transformation” (Rhodos, 2015: 2). Thus, community engagement is a two-way process of learning because staff and students of the institution are continuously learning as they interact with the external community and generation. Reconstruction and dissemination of knowledge are practical outcomes of community engagement (Rhodes University, 2014: 2).

The definition of community engagement at Rhodes University can be categorised into 2 sections, which are social and academic definitions. Social community engagement refers to the work that student’s initiate in societies and residences as student volunteers and the involvement of students as volunteers placed with community partner organisation (Rhodes University, 2014: 6). Academic community engagement refers to the community projects which are distinctive to the scholarly work of universities. This involved the application of academic teaching and research to the benefit of communities in mutual interchange for the good of all involved (Rhodes University, 2014: 6). An example of this would be service learning that pharmacy students do as well as penultimate law students in the Legal Aid clinic.

5.5 Rhodes University Community Engagement Projects

Community Engagement at Rhodes University takes a variety of forms and the current programmes include the student volunteer program (SVP), student organisation involvement in community engagement, service learning programs and community based research (Rhodes University, 2011: 6). RUCE offers training to student volunteer before they enter into a relationship with community partners. Training aims to get volunteers ready to work with NGO’s and community groups. The division ensures that NGO’s and community groups are trained on how to get the most benefit out of volunteers, and ensure that volunteers are trained beforehand in line with good development practices to ensure quality contribution to the community (Rhodes University, 2011: 8). This research will focus on the ECD Residence Programme and the Siyakhana@Makana project.

5.5.1 Student Volunteer Programme (SVP) and the ECD Residence Programme.

SVP is co-ordinated by RUCE to connect students with NGO's and CBO's. There are currently a variety of opportunities available through Halls of residence, sports clubs and societies to initiate CE activities and participate as volunteers (Rhodes University 2011 & Rhodes University, 2014). The RUCE division, co-ordinates the student volunteer program, to give students the opportunity to choose between 34 Community Partner sites in Grahamstown. Students are encouraged to choose a site closely related to their discipline so they can enhance their own scholarship through volunteering and to bring what they learn on campus out into the community (Rhodos, 2015: 3). There are various volunteer placement categories which include care, arts and alternative education, mentoring programs (primary and high school learners), Early childhood, literacy and homework, and high school tutoring (Rhodes University 2014: 35-46).

ECD volunteers assist pre-school learners to get ready for primary school by assisting teachers with vital learning areas for basic early childhood education. ECD is not the same as the work done in day care centres, volunteers in ECD have a more academic focus to their work (Rhodes University, 2014: 43). Student volunteers were required to volunteer once a week for an hour at the pre-school of their choice. For example, a student volunteer would volunteer every Tuesday morning from 10 to 11 AM during the first semester or the whole year. Students have a choice to volunteer for only one semester or the whole year. Volunteering takes place during term time and not during the holidays. ECD volunteers are required to facilitate general activities at the pre-school, to assisting with reading stories to the children, playing educational games and helping to ensure learners are acquiring basic reading and writing skills. Volunteers have access to school readiness books and resource packs to help them with the above-mentioned tasks (Rhodes University, 2014: 42).

In 2015, it was decided that the ECD category would be removed from the Student Volunteer Program (SVP) to form the ECD Residence Programme. This program involves assigning a pre-school to a hall or residence. The hall or residence builds a relationship with the pre-schools and students from that hall or residence would volunteer at the pre-school. The pre-schools identify various goals that they would like to achieve and the idea is that the halls would work together with the pre-school to achieve those goals. This project provides a strong focus on building sustainable relationships between pre-schools and Rhodes University Residences.

Refer to the appendix B to view the diagram of pre-school and hall allocation as well as the goals that they aimed to achieve in 2016.

5.5.2 Siyakhana@Makana project

This project is for students who want to build meaningful relationships with community based organisations while gaining a better understanding of the community development process and project management. This is a creative, challenging learning experience where participants will work closely together for 19 weeks (Rhodes University, 2014: 16). Siyakhana@Makana is a project planning process, which seeks to support students who seek to build meaningful relationships with community organisations while working towards a shared co-created project. Working with a select group of dedicated students organisations, community organisations and independent student teams, the Siyakhana@Makana project co-creates a project based on shared goals and interest from the start to finish (Rhodes University, 2014: 16). The main idea or aim of this project is for students to gain a more thorough understanding of relationships building and project management. Students are supported through training and a series of support meetings that will assist them in project planning with the community based organisation they are partnered with (Rhodes University, 2014: 16). See appendix C for the diagram on how the project is structured.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of the projects that will be analysed in this study. This was done with the aim of providing more information and clarity of functions and projects that the two cases co-ordinate. Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the two cases in terms of how they apply the ABCD approach and the impact that it has in the ECD sector in Grahamstown.

CHAPTER SIX: CASE STUDIES OF CSD AND RUCE

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided background information of the organisations and the projects that the organisations have implemented to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. This chapter will firstly discuss the finding on the challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown. Secondly, this chapter will analyse how the cases implement the Asset-Based Community Development approach and how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability of projects. Finally the chapter will highlight problems that the two organisations faced in applying the Asset-Based Community Development approach and the relationship and collaboration between the two organisations. The analysis is presented in themes that emerged through data analysis with a specific focus on the voice of ECD practitioners and student volunteers.

6.2 Problems in Grahamstown township pre-schools.

There are various problems that affect children and ECD practitioners in Grahamstown township pre-schools. These problems will be highlighted and discussed in order to shed light on the context of this study. Understanding the context in which the cases operate is important because it helps in understand why interventions were implemented. Through interviews with ECD practitioners, various problems in the ECD sector in Grahamstown were highlighted. This analysis will firstly focus on the problems that children face in the community and secondly the problems that ECD practitioners face in running the pre-schools in the communities in which they operate.

6.2.1 Social problems affecting children

ECD practitioners were asked to highlight the problems that affect children in the communities in which they live and operate their pre-schools. The main problems that were highlighted were; poverty, teenage pregnancy, alcohol abuse, physical abuse, neglect, crime and violence and HIV/AIDS. The common root of the above mentioned social problems that children face in these communities is caused by the consumption of alcohol. When ECD practitioners were asked why they decided to become ECD practitioners it was clear that they wanted to provide children with a good foundation and create a safe space for children to learn and grow. The ECD practitioners emphasised the importance of ECD and the challenge of educating parents about the importance of ECD. The ECD practitioners in this study stressed the importance of

children building a foundation early because it has a long-term impact on future academic development. As Ms Florence Gongqa and Ms Nokuzola Nojoko explain:

“We ask for them to come but the mother will say the child is too young they will come when they are maybe 5 years old but they must start learning early because you find the child is struggling in grade 1 because they don’t have the foundation”¹

“Poverty affect the childrens. The fees at the pre-school are R150 a month... and the parents struggle to pay the fees so some of the childrens stay at home because they struggle to afford”²

Ms Gongqa’s statement indicates that children who are not given the opportunity to learn at an early age will find it difficult to adjust to formal schooling. However, on the one hand, parents do not see the importance of sending a child to pre-school at an early age and on the other hand, as Ms Nojoko stated, parents cannot afford pre-school fees. According to Ebrahim (2001:1) children bear the greatest risk of failure to achieve their developmental potential when families are poor and vulnerable. This is particularly a problem in Grahamstown because of unemployment. Grahamstown has a population of 80 390 of which 78% are black Africans, unemployment is 32,5%, dependency rate is 44% and 44% of households have female heads (Statistics South Africa as cited in CSD, 2014: 7). Based on the responses from the ECD practitioners, parents do not bring their children to the pre-school because they cannot afford to pay fees and they depend on the child support grant they receive from the government. In addition, poverty also affects nutrition. All the pre-schools cook for the children and follow a meal plan that makes sure that the children receive breakfast and lunch each day.

Another reason that emerged was that the parents are not employed so they stay at home with the children. Thus, there is no urgency to take children to pre-school before the age of five. These reasons contribute to the understanding of the statistics that the 2015 household survey in the Eastern Cape indicated. The 2015 household survey indicated that in the Eastern Cape 30, 5% of the 0-4 year old cohort attended ECD centers and 57.6 % stayed at home with their parents or guardians (Statistics South Africa, 2015: 8). Observations at the pre-schools

¹ Interview with Ms Florence Gongqa, ECD Practitioner at Boy-Boy Mginywa pre-school, 26 September 2016, Grahamstown.

² Interview with Ms Nokuzola Nojoko, ECD Practitioner at Tyhilulwazi pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

indicated differences in the amount of children in each category and class. The observation was substantiated by Ms Lungelwa Kotela's response.

*"The big children are more at the pre-school the other classes are a few children and the babies we look after because the mother she is working and we look after the children until the mother come after work"*³

Based on the observations of the classes at the pre-schools, the 4-5 year's classes have more children than all the other classes. The pre-schools in Grahamstown cater for children from 3 months to 5 years. Based on the observations at the five pre-schools there are more children in the 4-5 year old category class than there are in the baby and toddler classes in all five pre-schools that were involved in the study. The pre-schools have a high enrolment rate in the 4-5 year category. Space is limited at the pre-schools because the classrooms can accommodate a limited number of children. The ECD practitioners usually take in more children in that category because there is a high volume of applications every year. The ECD practitioners indicated that the older children are placed at the pre-school to prepare them for grade R and grade 1. However, the younger children (0-4 years) are placed at the pre-schools because their parents are employed and there are no family members to take care of them at home.

The ECD practitioners mentioned six other problems which are linked in the communities in which they operate which are alcohol abuse, physical abuse, neglect, teenage pregnancy, crime and violence, and HIV/AIDS. The literature reviewed in this research highlighted these social problems and the data collected interlinked these problems in the various communities. Literature on alcohol and substance abuse indicates that there are links between alcohol consumption, risky sexual behavior and HIV infections (Morojele, Nkosi, Connie, Kekwaletswe, Parry & Saban, 2013: 1). As mentioned in the literature reviewed in this research, one of the impacts of HIV/AIDS is that it creates child headed homes, orphans and leaves the grandparents to take care of children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2007:14). The number of people living with HIV in South Africa has increased from an estimated 4, 02 million in 2002 to 6, 19 million in 2015. An estimated 11, 2% of the total population in South Africa is HIV positive (Statistics South Africa, 2015: 6).

Thus, HIV affects many communities in South Africa. Based on observations at the pre-schools, the ECD practitioners have access to first aid kits and information about HIV/AIDS.

³Interview with Ms Lungelwa Kotela, ECD Practitioner at Noncedo pre-school, 27 September 2016, Grahamstown.

They are well informed about issues surrounding confidentiality of information. That was indicated when they mentioned that there are children in their pre-schools that are infected and affected by the disease. They also made it clear that although they know that the children are in the pre-school, they do not treat the children differently nor do they reveal their status to others. All the ECD practitioners in this study commented on this aspect and indicated that it is a symptom of the core problem. The core problem that was indicated was the consumption of alcohol. The pre-schools are situated in different parts of the townships in Grahamstown and based on the responses, alcohol abuse is at the core of all the problems. As Ms Nokuzola Nojoko explains:

*“There is abuse of the children, too much drinking by the parents and the young girls and some they get pregnant and umakhulu (grandmother) takes care of childrens”*⁴

Ms Nojoko's response shows that young people are engaging in risky sexual behaviour because of alcohol consumption which leads to teenage pregnancy in the township. That is not the only reason for teenage pregnancy in Grahamstown but it was one of the factors leading to teenage pregnancy that the ECD practitioners mentioned. Another feature that emerged from the responses is that this not only leads to HIV infections and teenage pregnancy but also change in family roles. According to Ebrahim (2008:1) families form a critical pillar in society. In HIV affected communities, family structures and roles change. A study done by UNICEF (2007:14) indicated that the HIV/AIDS pandemic creates child headed homes, orphans and grandparents often take the role of primary caregivers of children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. There are children at the five pre-schools in this study that are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Although substance abuse plays a role in teenage pregnancy and HIV infections, it also has another health implication when mothers continue consuming alcohol when they are pregnant. This health implication is fetal alcohol syndrome. As Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo noted:

*“I looked after a child with fetal alcohol syndrome and did not know what was wrong with the child. It was the nurse that told me what is wrong with the child. It is difficult because of alcohol and abuse of the kids, and we talk with parents but alcohol is a big problem here and I wish to myself it would stop really it must”*⁵

⁴ Interview with Ms Nokuzola Nojoko, ECD Practitioner at Tyhilulwazi pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

⁵ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.

Ms Mtwalo's response speaks to the issue of substance abuse and the impact it has on the health of a child. However, in this study only two cases of fetal alcohol syndrome have been reported. This indicates that the prevalence of the syndrome is not high but it exists in the communities. According to a study conducted by Viljoen, Gossage and May (2005), fetal alcohol syndrome had a high prevalence in wine farm communities in the Western Cape. The study indicated that the syndrome can cause mild or severe physical and mental birth defects. These defects, affect future academic performance and physical development.

The story that draws more attention on the matter is based on Ms Mtwalo's response. She had a two year old child at her pre-school that could not walk or talk like all the other three year olds. At the time she did not know about the syndrome but knew that there was something wrong with the child. She proceeded to seek information from the mother and the local nurse who comes to the pre-school to educate ECD practitioners about health-related topics. It was through this intervention that she learned more about the syndrome and how to improve overall development of the child. In addition to fetal alcohol syndrome, a big challenge that ECD practitioners are concerned about is child abuse and neglect. Ms Bukiwe Gqike further notes that:

*"I think a problem that some children in Grahamstown face is coming from abusive homes and that causes the children to be neglected"*⁶

Substance abuse is linked to child abuse and neglect in this study. This is particularly indicated in the responses from ECD practitioners stating that there are children living in abusive homes and are neglected. All the ECD practitioners commented on this aspect but linked it to neglect more than child abuse. However, when asked about preventative measures in these situations it was clear that the ECD practitioners had knowledge about the correct channels to follow when dealing with such issues. They had access to information about organisations that can help children in abusive homes. In addition to neglect and child abuse, crime and violence is another factor affecting children.

Earlier in this chapter, ECD practitioners indicated that they decided to become teachers because they wanted to create a safe space and because of the passion they have for children and teaching. However, all the respondents emphasised creating a safe space because of crime and violence in the communities. Creating an environment where children are safe to learn,

⁶ Interview with Ms Bukiwe Gqike, ECD Practitioner at Nompumelelo pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

play and grow is important to the ECD practitioners. This section discussed problems affecting children in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The next section will discuss problems affecting ECD practitioners in Grahamstown township pre-schools.

6.2.2 Problems affecting ECD practitioners

In addition to the above-mentioned problems that children face in the community, ECD practitioners also face various problems in the communities in which they operate. The main challenges that they face includes parents not paying fees, parents not knowing the importance of ECD, teaching children with learning and physical disabilities and parents not coming to meetings at the pre-schools.

The issue of fees is related to the issue of poverty. There are various reasons why parents do not pay fees and from the ECD practitioners perspective it is because they struggle financially to balance buying food, paying bills and taking care of immediate and extended family. From the ECD practitioners view, parents often question why they need to pay fees because they view the pre-schools as being well-resourced. This is particularly because of the buildings, toys and resources that the pre-schools received as donations from various organisations. According to ECD practitioners, some parents complain about fees and the use of fees at the pre-schools. It was also indicated that some of the parents struggle financially so they fail to pay fees regularly. In addition to the problem of fees, parents and care givers do not help their children with academic activities at home. According to Ms Mtwalo:

“Their daily program, that routine is just stuck here at the pre-school there is no continuous routine in their home and making parents know that ECD is important is hard because the grandmother is taking care of the child...it’s very much difficult because umakhulu doesn’t come to meetings about the child and can’t help the child develop because she is old”⁷

There are various advantages of ECD which include brain and physical development, improves future academic performance and social development. According to Fitzpatrick, (2012) it is not only important for children to grow and develop through ECD centres, but it is as important for parents to continue helping their children through reading and various activities that will develop them at home. Ms Mtwalo’s response substantiates Fitzpatrick’s (2012) argument that

⁷Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.

it is not only important for the child to follow the daily routine at the pre-school but should continue learning and developing at home. However Ms Mtwalo's response links the problem back to the restructuring of family role due to HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and parents working far from home.

In the previous section, it was discussed that family structures change because of the impact of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy in the communities. Various issues are linked because the issue of HIV/AIDS has affected many families and grandparents take the role of parents. Change in family roles is also due to parents finding employment far from where they live and they send their children to live with their grandparents. Thus, the problem is the lack of educational stimulation at home, particularly because some of the children stay with their grandparents. It becomes difficult for a grandparent to help a child because they themselves lack the understanding and skills required to help.

According to Gardiner (2008) the absence of opportunities to learn due to the apartheid system, caused many black people in South Africa to lack basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. They are considered to be illiterate. It then becomes difficult for the grandmother to teach the child at home and that is the issue that Ms Mtwalo faces in her pre-school. She knows that most of the children are looked after by their grandmothers and they struggle to help the children because they lack the skills to do so. The children that stay with their parents still face the same problem because their parents do not help their children with educational activities at home. This is often addressed at meetings with parents, where ECD practitioners motivate parents to help their children at home by reading to them and helping them improve their writing skills. This is however not received well by the parents and care givers. The ECD practitioners mentioned that some parents and caregivers often retaliate by saying that this is not their role it is the ECD practitioners role to educate their children. Thus, there is minimal involvement by parents and care givers in the pre-schools. Another challenge that ECD practitioners face is poor meeting attendance by parents and care givers.

The reason for poor meeting attendance is lack of urgency and knowledge. According to the ECD practitioners, parents do not come to meetings because they do not know the importance of ECD. This is particularly linked to findings in the previous section that indicated that children at the pre-schools are there because the parents work and there is no one to take care of them or they are there to prepare for formal schooling. This is also indicated by some parents not wanting to play a role and stating that ECD practitioners are paid to educate their children.

This is highlighted in all the responses from the ECD practitioners but Ms Kotela's response encapsulates the impact of this perception on children and ECD practitioners.

*"The parents, they come to the meetings but some they don't come, they want us to take care of the childrens but not that much working together with us"*⁸

Thus, some parents view the ECD centre as having a more custodial rather than an educational function. This is directly linked to literature on the development of ECD in South Africa, which was reviewed in chapter two. According to William et al (2001: 8), during the apartheid system, pre-schools in townships and rural areas, also known at that time as crèches, were viewed as places where children could play and be looked after. In other words that view still exists as some parents bring their children to the pre-schools and expect their children to be looked after with little or no attention to their educational needs. The final challenge that the ECD practitioners face is teaching children with physical and learning disabilities. As Ms Gongqa explains:

*"Working with disabilities of children is a problem some you can see they are disabled but the other you can't see but you know something is wrong with them"*⁹

According to research conducted by UNICEF, Department of Basic Education and Department of Social Development (2007), 4% of the South African population consist of children with disabilities. The research also indicated that early intervention for children with disabilities is essential to prevent the development of secondary disabilities and to assist with overcoming learning barriers. Thus, additional training on effective techniques for teaching children who have cognitive or physical challenges would benefit these children and their teachers alike. As seen in Ms Gongqa's statement, children at the pre-school have physical disabilities that she can identify and they have learning disabilities that she fails to understand. This causes a lot of frustration because she often does not know how to help children with learning disabilities. It is important for children with learning and physical disabilities to receive early intervention but the ECD practitioners often struggle to help them because of limited skills and knowledge.

This section focused on analysing and discussing the problems that children in Grahamstown township pre-schools face in their community. In addition, the section focused on the

⁸ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Kotela, ECD Practitioner at Noncedo pre-school, 27 September 2016, Grahamstown.

⁹ Interview with Ms Florence Gongqa, ECD Practitioner at Boy-Boy Mginywa, 26 September 2016, Grahamstown.

challenges that the ECD practitioners face in Grahamstown township pre-schools. Due to various challenges in the past and present, there are interventions that the CSD and RUCED developed and implemented, to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The next section will focus on the projects that the two organisations implemented to deal with past and present challenges in Grahamstown township pre-schools.

6.3 Application of ABCD by the Centre of Social Development

The Centre of Social Development's motto is, "it takes a village to raise a child" (CSD, 2014: 5). Thus, the organisation does not work in isolation but with community members, volunteers and multiple organisations and institutions such as Rhodes University Education Faculty and Rhodes University Community Engagement (CSD, 2015: 5). "The CSD performs a number of complex roles linked to the ECD sector. These roles include training in-service teachers both in the rural and urban contexts of the Eastern Cape; training CD practitioners in the rural setting; running a Toy library, Resources Centre, recyclable materials depot and mentorship programmes for our local teachers and parents" (CSD, 2014: 6). The above mentioned projects are achieved through collaboration with community members, particularly ECD practitioners.

6.3.1 Collaboration between the Centre of Social Development and the community

The collaboration between CSD and the Grahamstown community is particularly based on the relationship between CSD and ECD practitioners. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:5) before a community development initiative can be implemented, it is important to understand the context of the particular community. This involves knowing the challenges in the community, understand the unique obstacles that prevent development and identifying the unique resources and assets that could support community development. Through the ABCD approach CSD focuses on building relationships and working with the community in initiatives. As Dr Giulietta Harrison explains:

"What we can do is go and find out what are you doing already and then how can we assist you to improve on that and what do you identify as your gaps so , it's a much more complex and different way to approach things" ¹⁰

Based on Dr Harrison's response, it is important to establish a relationship with community members before implementing initiatives. This involves building relationship with community

¹⁰ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

members and working with them and not for them. According to Styger and Cameron (1992 as cited in Zhang, 2005: 36), the role of an NGO is to believe in the potential of people that they work with in the community. This is done by respecting their indigenous knowledge, allowing community members to take ownership of the development initiatives and acknowledge the part that community members play in revitalising the society. Thus, it is important for CSD to not provide pre-existing solutions but rather establish mutually productive relationships.

This shift of focusing on working with community members and not for community members shows a shift from the needs-based approach to the asset-based approach. This is particularly indicated in DR Harrison's response as to why the organisation uses this approach as opposed to any other community development approach:

"I think history has shown us that there is absolutely no point in going and saying listen I know better than you and I'm going to impose my thinking on you, you must follow what I'm saying and just get on with it, what we try and do is try and look at what people are bringing to this equation and how do we work with that"¹¹

Thus, the above response indicates that historically doing things for the community did not work. Focusing on a relationship based approach gets buy-in from the community, fuels collaborative work and reduces over reliance. Communities are defined as places where people live and build their sense of identity through connecting, caring, cooperation, association and shared problem solving (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 4).

Working with communities through the ABCD approach promotes community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring mutual help and empowerment (Foot and Hopkins, 2010: 7). Thus, CSD is focused on building and maintaining relationships with community members and working with community members in projects and initiatives. The relationship driven focus, impacts how CSD implements projects and views community development.

¹¹ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

6.3.1.1 Community Development

As mentioned in the theoretical chapters community development has various definitions. It is evident from the above section that CSD focuses on building relationships in the process of community development. However, they view community development from a human development perspective focusing on working with ECD practitioners to find their voice and be independent. According to Dr Harrison:

“You are trying to develop a group of people whatever that community might be it might be one or two people it might be the whole of Grahamstown it could be the whole of South Africa , whatever the size of the community is irrelevant but what you wanting is that when a community is developing, developing by its very nature means change but I think what we are implying is change for the better not change for the worst so if you link that to the voice and independence , community development should be developing communities to be independent and to have a voice”¹²

The organisation views community development as, “the springboard to reach communities that envision human development as key to empowerment of individuals and groups, to influence issues that affect families and their communities” (CSD, 2014: 13). In addition to viewing development from a human development perspective, CSD offers a community development course that people can take to improve their communities. The CSD in collaboration with the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development has expanded the community development course to the youth. The course was available to older adults in the community but now will focus on getting the youth involved. This program is part of the National Skills Development Plan and would benefit the youth in the Eastern Cape where youth between the age of 18 and 24 years are unemployed (CSD, 2015: 3). Thus, the centre aims to contribute towards youth capacity building so that young people can continue developing their own communities. Thus, empowerment plays a vital role in capacity building

6.3.2 Empowerment through ECD training

According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 5), the ABCD approach focuses on empowering people, strengthening government and agency effectiveness, collaborating with local community member’s resources, skills, abilities and knowledge to address challenges and solve

¹² Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

problems. CSD holds the same sentiment but further views empowerment as the process of working with ECD practitioners to find their voice and be independent. As Dr Harrison explains:

“I think two things come to mind the one is independence and the other is finding your voice so...they could suck us dry if they needed to but take what they need from us but not just take it , use it , internalise it and develop it further so that ultimately they are completely independent of us and being recognised in their community as the school that people must go to and then finding their own voice and that’s what I mean by internalising what we have given them so yes, CSD has taught us ABC we have looked at that, we like ABC and we are going to modify it further to be specific to...and now we are going to stand and shout from the roof tops, this is our voice , this is what excellence in our community looks like so for me empowerment is achieved in that sort of thing, independence and a voice”¹³

The above statement from the director of CSD indicates how the organisation views empowerment. The organisation is willing to do all that it can to ensure the pre-schools in Grahamstown improve and maintain that level of excellence. Thus, by applying the ABCD approach they aim to empower ECD practitioners to take the lead which in the long term will lead to independence. In addition, through the process of empowerment the aim is to help ECD practitioners to find their voice, to improve their confidence in their abilities and restoring their ability to speak and act on issues that affect them as opposed to waiting for someone from the outside to do things for them. This process of empowerment involves shifting perceptions, shifting roles and capacity building through training

6.3.2.1 Shifting perceptions

As mentioned above CSD is focused on empowering ECD practitioners to find their voice and to be independent. This process involves shifting perceptions of community development. The theoretical chapter discussed the shift from the needs-based to the asset-based approach. “A legacy of needs-based approach in Africa is that many receiving aid have learned to define themselves and their village/communities by their needs and their deficiencies to the point where they can no longer identify anything of value around them. They have come to believe

¹³ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

that only a state of degradation will enable them to attract resources” (Russel and Smeaton, 2015: 2). The quote above indicates how the needs-based approach affected perception and how people think. The question that needs to be answered is that through the ABCD approach are the ECD practitioners perceptions about their communities and themselves changed? Through responses from ECD practitioners, it was evident that the change process was not easy. They struggled to identify and acknowledge their abilities and skills but with time and training that negative view changed. This shift was achieved through providing ECD training and workshops that helped ECD practitioners improve their skills and qualifications. According to Ms. Kotela and Ms. Mtwalo:

“The training is good because I was scared of teaching the kids and making a mistake but after training and meeting the people of CSD I am more confident at the pre-school. I think I was afraid because the love and support and motivation that the centre gave me is good because I wanted to be a practitioner but some things I did not know so now I know I can teach and talk to them if I struggle with anything”¹⁴

“For me CSD improved my confidence, I was afraid when I started being a practitioner even when I was doing the course with them, when they watch me in the classroom yohh I was so afraid because I was thinking maybe I am doing something wrong but now I do my work and go to the workshops and enjoy the kids”¹⁵

Based on the responses from the ECD practitioners, it is evident that the way they perceive their abilities changed because of the training they received from CSD. This process of change was not easy for them because based on the responses they were afraid of making mistakes. They were afraid of being evaluated by CSD staff while they were teaching in their classrooms. The fear subsided through motivation and support they received from the CSD staff. This fueled their confidence and improved their skills. They began to view themselves as able and capable of teaching. This alleviated their fear and improved their confidence. Thus, CSD empowers ECD practitioners by providing training and qualifications that improves skills and confidence in teaching. Through training, the way ECD practitioners view their abilities changes and they begin to view themselves as capable and confident. According Mathie and

¹⁴ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Kotela, ECD Practitioner at Noncedo pre-school, 27 September 2016, Grahamstown.

¹⁵ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.

Cunningham (2002) and Russel and Smeaton (2015), the Asset-Based Community Development approach creates a positive outlook by focusing on positive aspects of the community such as existing skills, gifts and abilities. This creates confidence and empowers community members to take the initiative in community development projects. It is evident that empowerment through training improves skills and confidence of ECD practitioners. However this change process was not easy and they were reluctant at first to receive help due to fear of making mistakes and feeling inadequate. To achieve the shift in perceptions, a shifting of roles had to take place.

6.3.2.2 Shifting Roles: Leading by stepping back

The shifting of roles is important because it impacts the shifting of perceptions. How the organisation interacts with the community will impact how the community responds. As mentioned above, CSD focuses on empowering ECD practitioners by improving their skills. The main goal of empowerment is to work with ECD practitioners to find their voice and independence. According to DR Harrison, CSD aims to achieve this goal by building relationships, working together and facilitating the change process as opposed to imposing ideas and taking the lead.

“What we can do is go and find out what are you doing already and then how can we assist you to improve on that”¹⁶

Based on the above response from DR Harrison (Director of CSD), the organisation focuses on playing the facilitation role by assisting ECD practitioners and not taking the leading role. Mathie and Cunningham (2010: 483) state that civil society becomes weakened when social services institutions replace neighbourly connections with services and agencies. Thus, the role of external agencies is to facilitate the process and let community members take the leading role which shifts community members from being clients to citizens. This is often referred to as ‘leading by stepping back’. Foot and Hopkins (201:7) further substantiate Mathie and Cunningham’s (2010: 483) argument by stating that through the Asset-Based Community Development approach external agencies should see citizens and communities as co-producers rather than recipients of services. It is evident that CSD leads by stepping back by allowing

¹⁶ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices

ECD practitioners to take the lead. ECD practitioners are encouraged to think of ideas and plans to improve their pre-schools and CSD assists with the plans. ECD practitioners initiate the plans and implement the plan with assistance from external agencies. Thus, change begins with them and they take the driving seat in the change process. This finding was further substantiated by the ECD practitioners in this study. They attend workshops that CSD provides and they implement what they learned in the class room. They follow a daily program, provide healthy meals and their classrooms are organised in a similar manner. Thus, through the shifting of roles and shifting of perceptions, CSD focuses on capacity building by providing various programs that aim to improve and address challenges in Grahamstown township pre-schools.

6.3.3 Capacity Building through CSD programs

CSD is focused on capacity building through various projects and programs. The main program that this study focused on was ECD training program. Other programs that were highlighted and discussed were the Toy Library, the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme, Jim Joel Mentoring Program and Eyethu Resource Hub.

According to Professor Di Wilmot (Dean of the Education Faculty) , “the Centre for Social Development, with its focus on early childhood education and capacity building through its ECD practitioners training programmes, plays an important part in social development in the Eastern Cape Province” (CSD, 2014: 7). The Asset-Based Community Development Approach is based on capacity-focused development. This approach aims to develop activities and policies based on skills and capacities of communities. (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993: 5). Thus, development needs to begin within the community. CSD applies the ABCD approach by providing training to improve the quality of teaching in Grahamstown township pre-schools.

As mentioned in chapter five, CSD in collaboration with Rhodes University Education Faculty provides FETC level 4, ND ECD Level 5. These qualifications open the door for ECD practitioners to continue their studies by studying towards a bachelor of education degree foundation phase, honours, masters and PhD. The diagram that depicts this unique career path is found in Appendix A. CSD focuses on two areas of capacity building which are ECD practitioners and parents

In terms of ECD practitioners, training and workshops are provided to improve their teaching skills. As mentioned above CSD provides a part time B.Ed. foundation phase degree to allow ECD practitioners to teach, take care of their families and improve their qualifications. The

impact of training ECD practitioners resulted in more structure and teaching skills at the preschools in this study. The pre-schools all follow a strict routine that they learned when acquiring their qualifications and through regular workshops that CSD conducts. According to Ms Gqeke and Ms Mtwalo:

*“In the preschool, we are following the daily program starting from 7:30 to 15:00 which are stimulating activities for the kids. When I said stimulating activities, the kids are developing holistically, socially and emotionally”*¹⁷

*“We have a progress report that we give to parents so when the kids are here we look at how they are developing. We want them to develop so we monitor the development every day and help them where they are struggling”*¹⁸

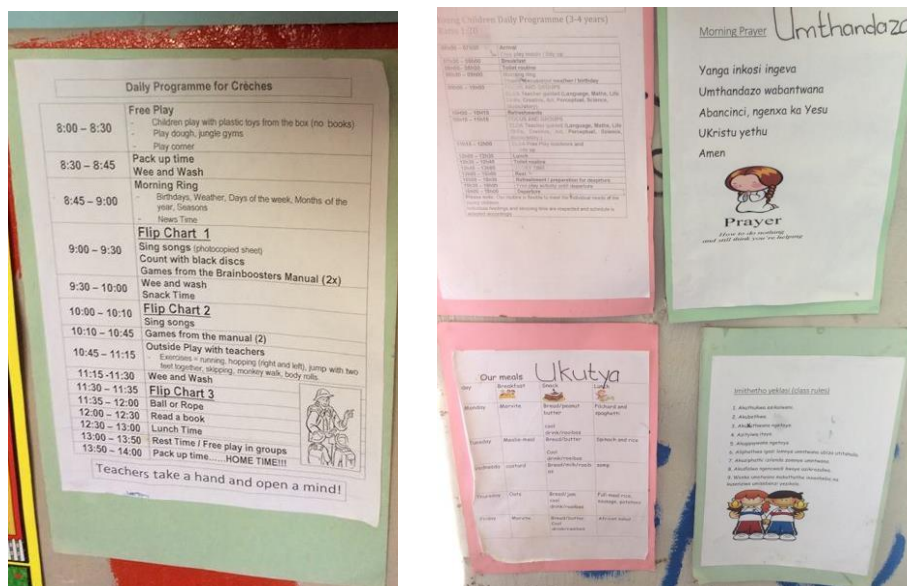
The above quotes indicate that the ECD practitioners are applying what they learned through CSD. Based on the CSD facilitators report, the aim of the courses is to help the ECD practitioners gain the relevant skills and knowledge for best practices in teaching. This includes creating structure and routine in the classroom, knowing when to have group activities and when to have one on one contact with children (CSD, 2014: 35). This is evident at the pre-schools and all the pre-school in this study have a similar daily program.

The ECD practitioners use the daily program to structure the activities at the pre-school. The children know when they do group activities, when it time to play and eat. The classrooms are colourfull and full of posters and art work from the children. When conducting observations at the pre-schools it was evident that the ECD practitioners were in control of their classrooms because of the structure they apply through the use of the daily program.

Ms Mtwalo, an ECD practitioner at Little Flower Day Care centre, explained that by having a daily program, the teachers know what they need to do and it causes less confusion for the children. She had a copy of daily program, daily prayer, meal plan and classroom rules on the wall in her classroom. Below is a picture taken from her classroom that shows the daily program and meal plan.

¹⁷ Interview with Ms Bukiwe Gqeke, ECD Practitioner at Nompumelelo pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

¹⁸ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.



Pictures showing the daily program, daily prayer, meal plan and classroom rules. Pictures were taken at Little Flower Day Care Centre in Grahamstown.

In addition to the daily academic program, the pre-schools have a meal plan that offers breakfast, snack and lunch. All the pre-schools in this study offer similar meals. Breakfast includes mealie-meal porridge, morvite porridge or oats. During snack time the children receive a fruit or yogurt. During lunch time the children receive a meal that includes vegetables, rice or samp. All the meals are healthy and provide the required nutrients that help children grow.

Ms Gqeke, an ECD practitioner at Nompumelelo pre-school, explained that it is better to have the meal plan at the pre-school as opposed to allowing children to bring lunch from home. She further explained that it would be a problem because some children are less fortunate than others and would not be able to have packed lunch every day. When observing the pre-schools, the area where the food is pre-pared is neat and far from the classrooms. The children are not allowed in the kitchen and the lady that is employed to cook for the children makes sure of that. This is done to make sure that the children are safe at all times. The pictures on page 80 shows the daily program and kitchen at Nompumelelo pre-school.



Pictures showing the Kitchen and the daily meal plan. Pictures were taken at Nompumelelo pre-school in Grahamstown.

When observing the pre-schools it was clear that they had good infrastructure ranging from brick walls to colourful walls with paintings and colourful writing. Inside the classrooms there were educational activities such as puzzles and toys. The classrooms had book corners stacked with books in English and isiXhosa, colourful posters, children's art work and small tables and chairs for the children. Below are pictures from Noncedo pre-school, showing the colourful environment inside and outside the classroom.



Pictures showing the children's art work, posters, toys and colourful painting of the pre-school. Pictures were taken at Noncedo pre-school in Grahamstown.

The environment is colourful and vibrant. All the pre-schools in this study have similar posters, and colourful classrooms. The variance in the pre-schools was the book corners. Two of the pre-schools had a variety of books while three of the pre-schools had a few books on display. While observing the play grounds it was clear that the pre-schools had a variety of outside activities. The playgrounds at the pre-schools are spacious with jungle gyms and swings. However, playground equipment is not enough to accommodate all the children at the

respective pre-schools. In response to that, the ECD practitioners taught the children how to share and divide the outdoor activities equally to give every child a chance to play. Ms Nojoko, an ECD practitioner at Tyhilulwazi pre-school, explained that with the help and donations from CSD and various organisations, the pre-school was able to add classroom containers and playground equipment. The pictures below were taken at Tyhilulwazi pre-school showing the playground and colourful containers that were donated and are used as classrooms.



The first pictures shows the colourful playground with swings and jungle gym. The second picture shows one of the three containers that were donated to the pre-school. The colourful containers are used as classrooms. Pictures were taken at Tyhilulwazi pre-school.

In terms of interaction with the children inside and outside the classrooms it was evident that the ECD practitioners enjoyed teaching the children. When visiting the pre-schools, I was welcomed by ECD practitioners and given a tour of the pre-schools. I could hear children singing English and isiXhosa songs in the classrooms. The pre-schools had clean bathrooms, kitchens and colourful classrooms. The ECD practitioners were welcoming and had control of the classroom setting. It was evident that the children knew the daily program and followed the instructions of the ECD practitioners. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm from the ECD practitioners while they interacted with the children. This kept the children interested and encouraged the children to participate in the lessons. This is particularly important because research indicates that class room engagement determines future social development. Children gain confidence through interaction with other children and their teachers. This forms the foundation for future development of interpersonal skills (Fitzpatrick, 2012:11-12). Through the daily routine, children gain confidence and control because they know when it is time for a lesson or play and this eliminates confusion in the classroom. In addition to working with ECD practitioners, CSD focuses on improving the involvement of parents in the pre-schools. According to Dr Harrison:

“There is that sacred triangle teacher, parent, child , and they all need to be talking together so what we felt was we needed to support the parents and also empower them to require more from their teachers so raise that accountability level”¹⁹

In terms of capacity building of parents, CSD has various programs in place for parents. The Toy Library and the Anglo-American Chairman’s Fund Parent Program are the main programs. The Toy Library is based in the township at the Joza Youth Hub. It can be accessed by ECD practitioners, children and parents. Based on the site observations, the Toy Library is a small white container with colourful paintings on the outside. Inside the toy library, there are various educational toys and books. The picture below shows the container used for the Toy Library and the books and toys that ECD practitioners and parents are encouraged to borrow for their children.



The first picture shows the colourful container used as a Toy Library. The middle picture shows the variety of books in English and IsiXhosa. The third picture shows the toys and educational activities that parents and ECD practitioners are encouraged to borrow for their children.

Parents are encouraged to loan books and toys for their children. The Toy Library offers open sessions during the week that allows pre-schools to bring their children for art activities and story time sessions. The nearby pre-schools take their children to the Toy Library where student volunteers play educational games and read to the children. As mentioned in chapter five, the toy library provides a space where community capacity building can take place.

¹⁹ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices

Capacity building sessions are held at the Toy Library for parents and primary care givers. These sessions disseminate information about topics such general health, education and psychosocial development. There are various workshops that are held to help support parents and ECD practitioners on how to stimulate children with special needs (CSD, 2014: 12).

The Toy Library has a positive impact on the ECD practitioners and pre-schools that use the services at the library. However, it is situated very far from some of the pre-schools in Grahamstown. There are a few pre-schools in Grahamstown that can access the Toy Library because it is in walking distance from the respective pre-schools. There are two pre-schools in this study that are close to the Toy Library. These pre-schools are Nompumelelo pre-school and Noncedo pre-school. The Toy library is across the street from Nompumelelo pre-school and a street away from Noncedo pre-school. When the ECD practitioner at the above mentioned pre-schools were asked about the impact of the Toy Library, they explained that it helped with resources, they learned new skills, provides a space for children in the community to play and encourages reading. As Ms Gqeke and Ms Kotela explain:

“Here at the pre-school we use the Toy Library, we borrow the toys and books to read to the kids and we take them to do educational activities with student volunteers from Rhodes”²⁰

“The Toy Library benefits the community because children are encouraged to read, and it is good for them to love books at an early age, because when they grow up they will love to read. Also, the children can play with other children outside and we learn new games and activities, so it is a fun place for children”²¹

According to the ECD practitioners, the children enjoying going to play with the toys and listening to volunteers read stories. This encourages reading at an early age. In addition to the Toy Library, the Anglo-American Chairman’s Fund Parents Programme is also geared to help parents. This program aims to educate and empower parents to support the health and education development of children aged 0-6 years. This project was implemented with the aim of educating parents about the importance of good health and nutrition, how they can support

²⁰ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Kotela, ECD Practitioner at Noncedo pre-school, 27 September 2016, Grahamstown.

²¹ Interview with Ms Bukiwe Gqeke, ECD Practitioner at Nompumelelo pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

the development and learning of their children and how to better understand how their children learn and develop.

Another project that the CSD established was the recycle material workshops also known as Eyethu. This project encourages ECD practitioners to use materials such as bottles, paper, plastic to create toys and classroom decorations.

“We have Eyetho which is our recycling depo which provides teachers with resources to make things and we also run workshops with them to show them how to do those things and It just means that they get to realise that they don’t have to have a whole lot of money to do a good job, they can really do a good job with what is available ok so we do that”²²

Based on observations and interviews, this project seems to have been well-received by ECD practitioners. This was observed at the five pre-schools as the classroom had containers that were painted and used as storage for crayons and pencils on the tables. There were boxes on the shelves that were used to pack files and other important documentation. The CSD has a resource room on their premises where they store recycle materials. These materials come from various residences and offices and are available for ECD practitioners to reuse in creative ways (CSD, 2015). The ECD practitioners are taught how to use recycle material through workshops and are encouraged to come to the centre to get the recycle material.

This is the ABCD approach at work. Through these workshops ECD practitioners are taught to use what they can find to create something they can use. As mentioned above by the Director of CSD, this helps ECD practitioners to realise that they can reuse their everyday products into something creative that they can use in the classroom. The workshops give the ECD practitioners the skills to think creatively and create something out of nothing. CSD focuses on capacity building through the above- mentioned programs. However, there are various challenges the CSD faced in terms of participation.

6.3.4 Participation in CSD programs

Various challenges surfaced in terms of participation from ECD practitioners and parents in the various projects. There is an additional category to the above categories in this section

²² Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

which is the participation of Rhodes University student volunteers at the Toy Library. The above section focused on discussing how CSD aims to achieve capacity building through the ABCD approach. However there are various challenges that CSD faces in terms of participation and commitment from ECD practitioners, parents and student volunteers. There are various challenges that CSD faces in the ECD training program:

“ I think my experience so far has been that our ECD practitioners are struggling, on the one hand they are very vocally saying that we need your help and in fact they are almost wanting us to come in and just impose everything and magically make it perfect but on the other hand they are also very guarded , they are scared of people coming into their space , they feel threatened by it partly because some of them know that they are not necessarily doing a good job and partly because they feel their inadequacies rightly or wrongly they feel it so when you come in and say well we know how to do ABCD and we know how to solve ABC they half embrace it and there is the other half that is still afraid of it and when they also recognise that to be a good practitioner it means actually a lot of work , it's not just a babysitting job , this is actually a lot of work , some of them and it's a very small percentage embrace that and others will say sorry I'm not paid enough, or I'm not motivated enough or I'm far too old to be doing this or whatever the reason there is but you see them retreating ”²³

The above statement from the director of CSD highlights the challenges that the staff at the organisation face in training ECD practitioners. One of the challenges they face is helping the ECD practitioners improve their teaching skills. Some are reluctant to receive help while others embrace it. Each pre-school in this study has three to four classrooms. Thus, there are a variety of ECD practitioners and the way they apply what they have been taught varies. When interviewing ECD practitioners at the pre-schools they mentioned that they work together as a team and they help each other. However Ms Nojoko mentioned how difficult it was for her to improve her teaching skills, change the negative perception she had about her skills and recognise the assets that exist in her community.

“The trainings are good but they are hard. I struggle with English and speaking you see and when the people come I become afraid because what if I do a mistake ... but

²³ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

now I can teach, I work with the volunteers, yahh I am better I can say but it was not easy”²⁴

Ms Nojoko explained that she was reluctant at first to receive training and work with student volunteers. This was particularly because she lacked confidence in her abilities and could not articulate herself well with student volunteers because of the language barrier. She further explained that with time, she managed to improve her teaching skills and learned how to speak English. ECD facilitators from CSD face various challenges when training ECD practitioners towards gaining their level 4 and level 5 ECD qualification. Attendance, language barrier, plagiarism, lack of confidence in their abilities, and poor implementation of what they were taught in training (CSD, 2015). The issue of attendance is a common challenge as ECD practitioners have various reasons for not attending regularly. These reasons range from balancing family responsibilities, health issues and balancing working and studying (CSD, 2015). Language and plagiarism are related challenges as the ECD practitioners fail to understand the content because it is taught in English and they are not strong in their second language. Thus, they struggle to comprehend what they are being taught and therefore are unable to explain the work in their own words. This leads to the issue of plagiarism (CSD, 2014: 24). When the ECD practitioners highlighted their challenges in completing their courses they were similar to the challenges that the CSD facilitators mentioned. Firstly, in terms of attendance the ECD practitioners mentioned that they struggled balancing studying and working at the same time or working and taking care of family responsibilities. All the ECD practitioners in this study have ECD training ranging from Level 4 to Diploma in ECD. Thus, the training programme from CSD reduces unqualified ECD practitioners in the Eastern Cape.

As mentioned in the CSD report (2015) that the women receiving training are between the age of 24 to 62. Thus, the older women have responsibilities that they have a hard time balancing. Language was another issue that the ECD practitioners mentioned. They speak isiXhosa and they were taught mainly in isiXhosa when they were in school. Thus, they struggled to learn and understand English. The last challenge that the ECD practitioners highlighted was lack of confidence. This was particularly because one of the ECD practitioners felt scared because she was assessed in the classroom and because she was afraid that she would do something wrong. She overcame her fear and gained confidence through practice. She emphasised that she has a

²⁴ Interview with Ms Nokuzola Nojoko, ECD Practitioner at Tyhilulwazi pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

passion for teaching so she pushed herself to get better. In addition to problems of participation from ECD practitioners in the training program there are various problems at the Toy Library. As Dr Harrison explains:

*“Interestingly enough it has been a difficult project because what I found is that the teachers are hesitant to come, the parents are also hesitant to come so it’s really been hard work sort of pounding the paper kind of hard work to get them aware of this amazing resource on their doorstep and to use it wisely”*²⁵

Parents in the area are encouraged to borrow toys and books so they can read and play with their children at home. However, the Director of CSD highlighted that there is reluctance from parents and ECD practitioners to use the resources available at the Toy Library. That being said there are parents and ECD practitioners that do use the resources available at the Toy library. The ECD practitioners bring their children to the toy library and Rhodes University student volunteers hold various sessions with them ranging from reading to outdoor activities. The student volunteers state that the sessions that they have with the children have a positive impact and the Toy Library should try to accommodate more children by expanding and extending their services to different areas in the township: One student volunteer at the Toy Library explains:

*“I feel that it needs to be rebuilt, we need a larger, I feel like a container is really not doing justice to this place and the kind of stuff that happens here because I feel like there is room for much growth”*²⁶

The student volunteer was referring to the size of the Toy Library. The small container can take a maximum of about 20 children. The volunteers have sessions with the children during the week in the mornings and on Saturday morning. Student volunteers have built a relationship with the librarian and the ECD practitioners of the pre-school close to the toy library. This helps them structure the sessions with the children and also make sure that they include as many children in the sessions as possible given that the space in the library is limited. One of the student volunteers at the site expressed how difficult it was to retain volunteers because they would make promises to come and they would not attend the volunteer sessions.

²⁵ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

²⁶ Interview with Veronica, Rhodes University student volunteer at the Toy Library, 20 October 2016, Grahamstown: Toy Library.

“The biggest challenge was actually first getting the volunteers, so that was the biggest challenge, then after wards was getting the volunteers who said they would volunteer to actually volunteer, so you find that commitment was an issue, so many people came up to me , they were like yes I am really interested , I am gonna come Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and then , some of them will , well half of them , I had like 50 something participants that were interested but at the end of the day , I ended up with like 20 people and of those 20 only 12 were coming through so people say they want to and then they slack and so commitment was a challenge”²⁷

Thus, commitment of student volunteers was a problem at the site. It is important to note that the students that volunteer at the Toy Library are not trained by CSD but they are trained by RUCE. The Toy library falls under the ECD residence program and the student volunteers received no training from CSD. This is the collaboration between CSD and RUCE. Lack of commitment and participation of student volunteers creates frustration. In addition it creates a strain on the student volunteers that are there because there were 50 students that signed up but only 4 attend the sessions regularly. Thus, participation of volunteers from the ECD residence program is low and affects the structure and activities of volunteer sessions. In addition to the Toy Library, CSD works on educating parents through the Anglo-American Chairman’s Fund Parent Program. As stated by DR Harrison:

“The Anglo American program specifically has two strands to it the one has to do with informing the parents on how to be better parents...and then we have a series of workshops informing the parents on how to work with the schools to improve their child’s education and improve that whole environment and contribute to the school themselves , it’s not just I go barging into the school and demanding to do a better job , it’s a case of I’m coming to the school , yes I’m requiring you to do better but I’m also here to assist you to do better, how can I as a parent a part of this school to make a difference”²⁸

Parent’s involvement at the pre-schools is a challenge that the ECD practitioners highlighted. Thus, based on the above response from the director of CSD, this program aims to address the problem of parents not being involved at the pre-schools. This project seeks to address that

²⁷ Interview with Yvonne, Rhodes University student volunteer at the Toy Library, 22 October 2016, Grahamstown: Toy Library.

²⁸ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

issue by educating parents about the importance of being involved in their children's education and development. According to the annual reports from CSD, attendance was still an issue but the parents that have attended the sessions gained a lot of insight on how their children learn and how they can support their children. As a way of ensuring sustainability and gain more attendance the parents that have been in the program take the lead. In other words the facilitators are parents who have gone through the program and this was done to encourage more parents to come to the sessions (CSD, 2014). CSD applies the Asset-Based Community Development approach in various ways that encourages participation from parents and ECD practitioners. Thus, how does CSD ensure sustainability of what they teach the ECD practitioners and projects they implemented?

6.3.5 Sustainability of CSD projects

CSD uses the Asset-Based Community Development approach because it ensures sustainability. This is achieved through the changing of roles from leading to facilitating. The aim of CSD through the ABCD approach is to assist the ECD practitioners to improve their teaching skills and be able to work independently and have a voice. According to Dr Harrison:

“what we can do is go and find out what are you doing already and then how can we assist you to improve on that and what do you identify as your gaps so , it's a much more complex and differently way to approach things but I'm thinking in terms of sustainability , it's a much better approach to adopt so that is how we sort of go about it so meetings with the teachers , meeting with their communities , it often takes a lot of meetings to even shift a millimetre but if you got the buy in , you're going to work together , if you haven't its completely pointless exercises it's just a case of well I'm throwing resources at you and nothing is really going to change”²⁹

Dr Harrison (director of CSD) quoted a Chinese proverb that speaks to the importance of learning. “Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere” (CSD, 2014: 8). Thus, learning is sustainable. The ECD practitioners will always have the skills that they received through training and they need to continue learning to acquire more skills. The projects at CSD have various funders that make it possible for the organisation to teach as many ECD

²⁹ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices.

practitioners as possible. That reduces the challenge of having unqualified ECD practitioners. There are various funders that helped to improve the facilities at the ECD centres.

Training ECD practitioners is sustainable because after training and receiving qualifications, they are able to teach in the classroom. As a way of ensuring sustainability the CSD offers a mentorship programme that helps the ECD practitioners once they have completed their qualification. This program helps the ECD practitioners to implement what they were taught and get guidance on how to improve on their teaching skills. This helps ECD practitioners to improve their teaching methods and be up to date with the latest teaching practices in ECD. CSD conducts site visits to help ECD practitioners with anything that they might struggle with, this is to ensure that they continue growing and learning.

CSD also provides staff development courses so the staff can be up to date with the current best practices (CSD, 2015). The centre offers a career path for ECD practitioners in Grahamstown Township pre-school. The ECD facilitators at the centre were once ECD practitioners teaching in the township pre-schools, and now they are employed at the centre. This section of analysis focused on the Centre for Social Development and the next section will focus on Rhodes University Community Engagement.

6.4 Application of ABCD by Rhodes University Community Engagement

As discussed in chapter five, there are various projects that the RUCE division implemented to improve ECD in Grahamstown Township pre-school. The main ECD projects are the ECD Residence programme which was implemented in 2016, and the Siyakhana@Makana project management project implemented in 2013 (refer to appendix B for diagram). As mentioned, the ECD Residence programme was implemented in 2016 and it forms part of the Vice Chancellors Education Initiative which aims to revive and improve the quality of education in Grahamstown. Appendix C shows the various education projects and organisations involved. The Rhodes University Community Engagement division was established in 2010 with the aim of formulating a strategy that would facilitate the university's community activities and involving community development partners that include NGOs, CBOs, the private sector, institutions and the government (Rhodes University, 2014: 18). According to Ms Diana Hornby:

“Well, all Universities were mandated to establish community engagement directorates or community engagement within the Universities as one of three key areas, they

*elevated right up to, alongside, teaching, learning and research. So, it was, you know, started based on a mandate the white paper but more than that it was really started because there was a commitment from our Vice Chancellor who really believed that it could add value and that universities should be more responsive and not the kind of little Islands that they have often been in the past”*³⁰

The above statement by the director of RUCE indicates why the division was established and how this changed the focus and aim of Rhodes University. Rhodes University is referred to as the small university with a big heart (Rhodes University, 2014). This is particularly because the university has three critical pillars which are teaching, research and community engagement (Rhodes University, 2009: 1). The university focuses on merging teaching, research and community engagement. This involves departments that have courses that include a service learning component or research teams that work on finding solutions to challenges in Grahamstown. There were various themes that emerged from the data collected on the projects. This was achieved by focusing on five pre-schools that are involved in both the projects and students that volunteer through the two projects at the five pre-schools. RUCE applies the ABCD approach through community engagement projects. However, the first question that this study wanted to answer was, why does RUCE use the ABCD approach? As Ms Hornby explains:

“I think the big difference is that it shifts away from the deficit welfare approach of the past , were the assumption was made that you work with people who have nothing , so when you work with people whose assets you do recognise , your starting point is different , you are working with people who have , what it needs to start and to run a program, so you’re thinking about the position of those people is a very different one , you see somebody whole and capable and that’s your starting point... restoring their ability to act, in the space they find themselves in which the resources they have, so many people have resources, but they don’t recognise them so they don’t act on them so, here you see the very close link between assets and agency. If you’ve got assets, you can act on them on things, if you perceive yourself not to have assets you don’t act because you think you have nothing so it’s that sort of shift and then of course the whole thing of, If somebody makes an investment in something, they

³⁰ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

throw themselves into it. They own it, they will drive it and not the person who is coming to the community, so the person who comes into the community role changes to facilitation”³¹

There are various important points that came out of the statement above. The ABCD approach shifts away from the deficit welfare approach by focusing on restoring agency in the community. This creates a shift in perceptions because community partners are empowered to see things differently and to help each other through the trading of skills and available resources. Restoring the ability to act moves people from thinking that someone is going to come to their community to help them, but rather encourages community members to be drivers of their own change. If people invest their time and effort into something they started they are more likely to be involved in the change process. When people enter the community they do not take the role as leaders but they take the role of facilitators because the community members own the projects and initiatives (Kretzmann & McKnight, 2005). This is particularly important because no one knows more about the community except the inhabitants of that community. Based on the data collected, building relationships is the first step to implementing the ABCD approach.

6.4.1 Building Relationships through Community Engagement

The first question that was explored was why and how does RUCE use the Asset-Based Community development approach? Based on the response from the Director of RUCE, the main focus was moving away from the needs-based deficit way of looking at communities to a more asset-based positive way of looking at communities. According to Ms Hornby:

“Well because of our particular history in South Africa, what apartheid served to do was to suppress the voice of people and to strip them of their agency to do things for themselves , uhm so when development work started in this country it was very much about doing things for people, it then progressed a little bit to asking people what they needed but still doing it for them, and now it’s taken the next step which is recognising that everybody has assets and everybody has capabilities and things they can contribute”³²

³¹ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

³² Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

The first aspect that stands out from the above statement from the director of RUCE is the impact of apartheid and the needs-based approach. The impact of the needs-based approach created communities that focus on what they lack and not what they have. According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 10), the needs-based approach created vulnerable citizens that became even more vulnerable when they have to deal with another crises because they traded their self-reliance and social capital that grew naturally for millennia within Sub-Saharan African communities, and their inter-dependence on family and community members for dependence on outside NGO support and foreign aid. Thus, community members do not see the assets and growth potential in their own communities. The asset-based approach aimed to change that legacy of dependency by focusing on assets that already exists in the community. In order to identify the assets that exist, it is important to establish relationships with community members. RUCE focuses on building relationships because it is vital to know the environment and the people in the environment before establishing interventions. The main reason is to avoid creating dependency by encouraging community member to take the driving seat in the community initiatives. RUCE focuses a lot on building relationships and partnerships with community members. As Ms Hornby explains:

“It talks to the kind of community engagement we are looking for, which is relationship orientated... and the key thing in all of this is to build relationships and in building relationships we can start to find each other and better understand and not see it in a deficit way but actually something that really adds value to our society.”³³

RUCE applies the ABCD approach because its foundation is based on building relationships and partnerships in the community. According Mathie and Cunningham (2002) and Russel and Smeaton (2015) the ABCD approach is focused on social relations that build networks within the community and with outside resources by working with organisations towards change. RUCE focuses on building and maintaining relationships with ECD practitioners to identify what skills exists and how they can work with ECD practitioners to improve on what already exists at the pre-schools. To build this network of relationships and identification of existing assets, asset mapping is the main tool that RUCE uses in the community.

³³ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

6.4.1.1 Asset mapping

In addition to building relationships, RUCCE focuses on identifying assets and building connections in communities. This is achieved through asset mapping. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, asset mapping is the process where community members make a map of resources and skills of individuals, associations and organisations (Foot and Hopkins, 2010: 20). RUCCE identified the skills that the ECD practitioners have and what they want to improve. With this information they were able to connect the ECD practitioners with the relevant resources and services. In addition, RUCCE is able to work with ECD practitioners to create interventions and projects that would work on improving and increasing the assets that they already have. In order for this process to be effective, RUCCE had to build strong relationships with ECD practitioners and community members. By working together, they then identified assets in the community and connected people with resources and services. As Ms Hornby explains:

“So that an important art of community development, is that, you connect people to available resources, government NGO’s and other”³⁴

Through the asset mapping process, webs of relationships are created. According to Foot and Hopkins (2010:7), these asset webs promote community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment. Thus, RUCCE plays the role of the connector. According to McKnight (2013: 13) the role of a connector is important because community means people in relationships and associations mean people in powerful relationships. Therefore, the roles of connectors are important because the gifts of individuals become powerful when they are connected to someone else. Thus, individuals become powerful when they are connected to the gifts of other individuals and associations becomes even more powerful when they are connected to other associations. This process of asset mapping and building relationships is achieved through community engagement.

³⁴ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

6.4.1.2 Community Engagement and Community Development

RUCE views community engagement as a relationship and learning based process where students, researchers and people who want to work in communities not only give but be willing to learn. According to Ms Hornby:

*“RUCE defines community engagement as obviously projects and programs that respond to community needs but RUCE goes a lot deeper than that because the approach is very much a social justice one. We don’t do it because the mandate says we must do it or because it’s the right thing to do or goodness help us if we need to give back. And so because those are not the reasons why we do CE for us this is a very very unequal society , and the gaps are getting bigger as we have seen over the years, so what is necessary is for us as citizens to respond to that , its unsustainable to allow the gap to continue and its unjust to allow the gap to continue , so every human being should really be looking at the space in which they work and in which they live, an decide how they as human beings respond to the injustices that are around us every day”*³⁵

RUCE views community engagement as a process where people do not go into a community with the perception that they will be helping the people there, or that they will be making the situation better for them, or that they will donate without having a relationship or engagement with people in that community. It is a collaborative process that involves building partnerships. The way that RUCE views community engagement impacts the way they view community development. Ms Hornby further states that:

*“Shifting a group of people from a position of poor health and wellbeing to an improved position... agency is one of the key things that will change in that process, we understand it as a human development process... that community development is also the linking of people to networks”*³⁶

Swanepoel and De Beer (2006) argued that community development has various definitions and how you define it determines the outcome of the projects and intervention. They however highlighted characteristics of community development as addressing human needs, learning

³⁵Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

³⁶ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

process, collective action, objective oriented, as action at grassroots level, leads to community building, creates awareness and leads to further development (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1989: 2-3). The statement from the director of RUCE embodies the above mentioned characteristics of community development. As mentioned before, various organisations and communities view development differently and in this particular case, RUCE views development from a human development perspective. According to the Human Development report (2010) published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), human development is defined as “the expansion of people’s freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups”. This definition of human development is further substantiated through the way that RUCE applies the ABCD approach. ABCD approach focuses on changing perceptions through empowerment. RUCE applies this approach in practice by providing training for volunteers and community partners before they embark on their relationship building journey. Based on the data collected, the main theme that emerged from community engagement training was empowerment. Students and community partners felt empowered and motivated to start relationships and practically apply this approach in everything that they build together.

6.4.2 Empowerment through ABCD training.

The main aim of the various ECD programmes and projects is to create an environment that fosters growth and empowerment. The aim of empowerment is to restore agency in communities. RUCE creates an environment that is conducive to empowerment by providing ABCD training to ECD practitioners and student volunteers. According to Ms Hornby:

“Empowerment is not something you can do for someone else...but what you can do is you can help create the environment in which they can empower themselves...so empowerment for us is really connecting with those assets and networks that you have and restoring, you taking charge of your life and then restoring of agency, that for us is empowerment, when you can act on your own will, that for us is empowerment”³⁷

³⁷ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

RUCE provides training for community engagement representatives from the various residences and Oppidan. Oppidan refers to students that do not live on campus and they are represented by the Oppidan committee. All the community engagement representatives go through training to learn how community engagement at Rhodes University operates and how they should approach the projects they are involved in. Based on the observation at the Siyakhana@Makana project and the Student Volunteer Program training, a few things were evident. In both training sessions, students were given the chance to meet community partners (ECD practitioners) that they will be working with throughout the year.

The student volunteer program training focused on educating students, and community partners about the Asset-Based Community Development approach and how they can implement the approach. Training focused on reflecting on current socio-economic issues in South Africa. While the students and community partners were arriving at the venue for training, there was a slide on the screen that had a quote that captured the theme of the training. The quote was from an activist named Lilla Watson and she states that, “If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together”. With the quote in mind, Ms Horny began the training session by encouraging students and community partners to value and identify their assets, build relationships and work together.

In 2016 the focus was on the South African education system and children falling through the cracks of the system. Students reflected on a short documentary titled ‘*some are more equal than others*’. This documentary highlighted how highly unequal society is in South Africa with reference to the education system and economic status. After highlighting some of the challenges in the South African education system, student volunteers and community partners were encouraged to talk about possible ways to address the challenges. Training focused on shifting perception, shifting roles and capacity building

6.4.2.1 Shifting perceptions, roles and capacity building

The second part of training focused on educating students and community partners about the ABCD approach. This includes not only outlining the guiding principles of the approach but how to practically apply the approach at the pre-schools and other community sites. The presenter of the ABCD workshop provided scenarios that challenged perceptions of communities. This was done by presenting a scenario known as the tales of two communities. The workshop presenter divided the large group of students, ECD practitioners and community

partners into two groups, each group consisted of students, ECD practitioners and community partners. The first group was community A and the second group was community B. Based on the scenario, community A is a community where people are unemployed and have nothing to do. They have no formal schooling and skills. Adults are unemployed and children have no recreational facilities and pre-schools. Community B is a community where people are vibrant and full of life. People are friendly and have a sense of togetherness. They have taught each other skills such as baking, gardening, sewing and running small businesses to make money. The community is surrounded by mountains and children play in the fields. Some of the parents in the community opened their homes to provide day care services for children. After reading the scenarios, he then proceeded to ask group A which represents community A, how they feel about their community as explained in the scenario.

Respondents from group A, representing community A in the scenario were very negative about their community. The respondents felt helpless, depressed, defeated and they didn't like their community. Respondents from group B, representing community B in the scenario felt happy, vibrant and they loved their community. They gave positive responses about their community based on the scenario. The workshop presenter then revealed that community A and community B is the same community that is perceived in two ways. The presenter pointed out that this is one community that is seen in two contradicting ways because it all depends on whether community members focus on the good or the bad aspects of the community. This allowed students and community partners to think about their perceptions and challenge them. This is known as the 'glass is half full or half empty notion'. It is the same glass but how you perceive it determines your actions and feelings.

Community A respondents felt helpless because that is how they perceive their community. Community B respondents were happy and enthusiastic because they chose to view their community in a positive light. They created an environment where they learn from each other, provide services that didn't exist such as the day care centres and continue to learn and grow as a team. This is what empowerment means to RUCE, creating that environment of learning and challenging negative perceptions of communities. This section of training focused on shifting perceptions. According to Russel and Smeaton (2015: 4), every struggling community is like half a glass of water that can be perceived as being half-full or half empty. The ABCD approach focuses on the optimistic half-full view rather than the pessimistic half-empty view, as this enhances citizen driven development.

The process of shifting perceptions of communities as being places that do not have assets and places that have existing assets and capabilities can be achieved. Thus, in order to establish the ABCD approach in a community, the old pessimistic way of thinking needs to be replaced by the new optimistic way of thinking. According to Bergdall (2003:3) this takes place as follows: 1) people live out of images, 2) images control behaviour, 3) images are created by messages, 4) images can change, and 5) when images change, behaviour changes. Through ABCD training, RUCE aims to change images that ECD practitioners and student volunteers have about Grahamstown township pre-schools. The aim of training is to change the way that student volunteers and ECD practitioners view Grahamstown township pre-schools.

“I think the big difference is that it shifts away from the deficit welfare approach of the past , where the assumption was made that you work with people who have nothing , so when you work with people whose assets you do recognise , your starting point is different..., the second thing is you don’t only focus on their problems and their challenges , which can weaken somebody in the conversation , you focus on generally what they have and not what they have not got so you know that’s a big plus and then now I think that the most powerful of all is restoring their agency...many people have resources, but they don’t recognise them so they don’t act on them. Here you see the very close link between assets and agency. If you’ve got assets, you can act on them, on things, if you perceive yourself not to have assets you don’t act because you think you have nothing so it’s that sort of shift”³⁸

RUCE focuses on positive images and messages that aim to change behaviour and actions. Thus, training aims to show ECD practitioners and student volunteers, positive images and messages about Grahamstown township pre-schools. This is done with the aim of changing their starting point. By focusing on what communities do not have, creates a frustrating start but by focusing on what they already have, and how they can add to the assets creates an optimistic start.

Another training session that I observed was the Siyakhana@Makana project. Training also focused on the role of ECD practitioners, student volunteers and capacity building. This was evident at the Siyakhana@Makana project training session. There was a more practical component to teaching about the ABCD approach which was specifically applicable to ECD

³⁸ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

sites. This activity aimed to show student volunteers and ECD practitioners how to use waste material to decorate the classrooms, create games and toys. Prior to the activity, student volunteers and ECD practitioners were taught about the importance of communication. In this section of training, student volunteers and ECD practitioners were taught how to build relationships with each other. Student volunteers were taught how to respect the spaces they are in and to learn from the ECD practitioners. ECD practitioners were taught how to articulate their ideas and how to take the lead in initiatives and projects. Thus, student volunteers play the role of facilitators and ECD practitioners play the role of leaders and drivers of initiatives. The impact of this training session was evident in the practical component of the training session.

Student volunteers and ECD practitioners were divided into 6 groups. Each group consisted of student volunteers and ECD practitioners. The activity involved creating 6 teams. Each team received a bag full of waste material and objects. The aim of the activity was to create something usable out of waste material. The teams had a brainstorming session and in the brainstorming session of the groups that were observed, it was evident that they were applying what they were taught in the first session. The student volunteers began by asking the ECD practitioners what they do at the pre-school, how they do activities and that showed that the students wanted to know more about ECD before sharing their ideas. They allowed the ECD practitioners to share their thoughts and skills with them and they shared their ideas. It was a reciprocal interaction where both sides were learning and listening to each other. Thus the session on how to build relationships and communicate with one another had an impact on the way that ECD practitioners and student volunteers interacted in the practical activity.

After 20 minutes the teams returned and they presented the craft they created out of waste material. There were groups that created an obstacle course, games, puzzles, charts, and ways to make story telling fun. It was a fun activity for the participants and the main aim was to encourage ECD practitioners and student volunteers to be creative with available resources. A group took tins and turned that in to music instruments and their presentation was based on encouraging imagination and creativity in children. This activity gave a more practical way of applying the ABCD approach in everyday activities at the pre-schools. It also showed the participants how to communicate with each other and build mutually beneficial relationships.

The activity also focused on capacity building. Participants were more focused on communication, learning from each other and the fun aspect of the activity. However, this

activity mainly focused on capacity building. A capacity focused paradigm recognises gifts, skills and talents of community members (McKnight, 2013). By taking waste material and creatively turning that material into toys, games and classroom decorations, helped student volunteers and ECD practitioners to identify their own assets. Through interviews with ECD practitioners about the training session it was clear that they discovered and learned so much about themselves. Ms Gongqa, an ECD practitioner at Boy-Boy Mginywa pre-school sheared her experience of the training session.

“I learn at the training that I know something and I can share with the children and the students. I was afraid to talk to the students but when I saw that they wanted to learn from me it gave me the courage to talk. Also, I learn a lot about the recycle material that we can use to the pre-school and how to be creative and work together”³⁹

The above response from Ms Gongqa indicates how the activity impacted the ECD practitioners. Based on their responses it was clear that when the students asked them to share what they do with the children every day as a way of brainstorming using existing practices at the pre-schools, ECD practitioners felt empowered. They found it easier to talk to the students and share their ideas because the student volunteers were willing to learn from them. They recognised that their knowledge and skills were assets that they already have and can build on. After ECD practitioners and student volunteers received training, they began their journey of building relationships and working together. This brings forth another theme that emerged which was participation. The ABCD approach focuses on building networks through asset mapping and building relationships in the communities. Through the RUCE division this involves students volunteering in different projects.

6.4.3 Participation in ECD Community Engagement projects.

As mention earlier in this chapter, RUCE has two projects that are implemented to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The ECD Residence Programme was established in the beginning of 2016. Before this project was implemented, pre-schools were included in the student volunteer program. There are various volunteer placement categories which include care, arts and alternative education, mentoring programs (primary and high school learners), Early childhood, literacy and homework, high school tutoring (Rhodes University 2014: 35-

³⁹ Interview with Ms Florence Gongqa, ECD Practitioner at Boy-Boy Mginywa pre-school, 26 September 2016, Grahamstown.

46). As part of the Vice chancellors Initiative the pre-school category was taken out of the student volunteer program and placed in the VC's initiative as a way of ensuring that relationships develop and are sustained. The Siyakhana@Makana project was established in 2014. The project is for students who aim to build relationships with community based organisations while gaining a better understanding of the community development process and project management. This section will focus on analysing the ECD Residence Programme followed by the Siyakhana@Makana project.

6.4.3.1 Participation in the ECD Residence Programme

Considering that the project was in its first year, there were various challenges and achievements. The first challenge that emerged from the data in terms of participation was commitment. The ECD practitioners had a problem with the commitment of student volunteers in the ECD Residence Programme. The ECD practitioners met with the community engagement representatives from the residences at the beginning of the year to set the plan for the year and the students from the residences went to visit the pre-school. However throughout the year less and less students went to volunteer. When the residence student volunteers were asked how often they went to the pre-school a few contradictions between what the RUC division wants to achieve through this project and what is actually happening appeared. Based on respondents that were involved in the study, only two of pre-schools had regular interaction and relationships with residence students. The volunteers from the other three pre-schools were inconsistent. One student volunteer felt discouraged because in the beginning of the year there were a group of students from her residence, going to the pre-school and half way through the year, she was the only student going to volunteer. So she stopped going to the preschool because the community engagement representative of her residence was not actively involved.

“Not much I went when we went to give them toys and stuff and I told the teacher to let us know if they want us to fundraise for more things for them” ⁴⁰

“Once in a while because of tuts and lectures, so I come when I am free” ⁴¹

⁴⁰ Interview with Ayesha, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 16 August 2016, Rhodes University.

⁴¹ Interview with Busi, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 23 August 2016, Rhodes University.

“This is probably the second time this semester because of assignments and I don’t get that much time to do it so I try to fundraise to get some toys and things for the kids from my res”⁴²

Based on the above responses from the ECD residence volunteers, the relationship building aspect did not take place because of the inconsistencies and lack of communication between residence students and ECD practitioners. Another important point that needs to be highlighted is that the above students are not the CE representatives but students who stay at the respective residences. Each residence elects a CE representative that will organise and co-ordinate volunteer sessions throughout the year for the residence. When speaking further with the respondents they mentioned that they started off in large groups with the CE representative leading them. As the year progressed the leaders stopped going to the pre-schools and the other volunteers in the residence also stopped going to the pre-schools. This was also reiterated by the ECD practitioners from the three pre-schools where the above respondents volunteered.

In previous years the ECD category was included in the Student Volunteer Program (SVP). As mentioned in chapter five, ECD volunteers in the Student Volunteer Program would assist pre-school learners to get ready for primary school by assisting teachers with vital learning areas for basic early childhood education. However in 2016 the ECD category was removed from SVP and formed the ECD Residence Programme. This program is part of the Vice Chancellors education project (Refer to appendix D for diagram and description of the Vice Chancellors education initiative). This was done by pairing residence and halls with pre-schools so that they can work on goals, build sustainable relationships with the hall that continues for many years. Based on the three pre-schools in the study and the residence volunteers that rarely go to the pre-school the opposite of what was expected is taking place.

Firstly, analysing the residence student volunteers statements it is clear that they have a more charity approach rather than a relationship based approach. The focus is on fundraising for resources but relationships are not built in the process. Apart from the lack of leadership from the CE representatives at the residences, which affected the commitment of other student volunteers, another feature emerged. All the student volunteers have not received any form of training before starting their volunteer journeys at the pre-schools. As mentioned in the empowerment section, training is provided for the student volunteer program (SVP), Siyakhana@Makana program and training is offered in the beginning of the year to all the

⁴²Interview with Wadzanai, ECD Residence Programme, 18 August 2016, Rhodes University.

residence elected house committee CE representatives. So in other words only one person who is the leader in a residence receives training and part of her/his role is to co-ordinate the various community engagement projects that the residence is involved in. The CE residence representative has to lead the whole residence in community engagement projects so as to share the skills and knowledge he/she received from training. Thus, by training the leader in the residence, the aim is for the leader to filter those skills and knowledge to all the student volunteers in the residence.

Based on the responses from the residence student volunteers, it is clear that they became discouraged because they had no leader and they felt like they did not have the adequate skills to volunteer at the pre-schools. That caused lack of commitment. This further caused another problem which is the charity approach. Based on the way RUCCE functions, charity is encouraged as long as there is a relationship that accompanies that. In other words, if students build a relationship with the pre-school and they fundraise for the pre-school that is acceptable, but if students go to the pre-school and they decide to get what the pre-school needs with no form of relationship then that contradicts the ABCD approach. It contradicts in that it is focusing on the supplying the need of the pre-school and that is related to the needs- based approach, which is the very approach that RUCCE opposes. The bigger question then becomes why do these students think this way? Why do students want to supply the needs of the pre-school without establishing a relationship? The main finding was that all three of these students have not received any form of training. The residence leaders received training and that did not filter through to the other residence volunteer because of the lack of commitment from the leaders. This also emphasises how important and how much impact training has on student volunteers and ECD partners.

Thus, training had a positive impact on the ECD practitioners because they were able to identify that things are different to what they have learned from training. They are used to building relationships with students, working together and learning from them. When students were not consistent and they focused on giving resources rather than building relationships, the ECD practitioners noticed that and that was one of the challenges they highlighted. In other words, it is counterproductive not only because of the change of programs but because of the perspective that the student volunteers bring into the sites that is contrary to what the ECD practitioners, practice on a daily basis. Training focused on having a positive starting point where you work with the resources that you have and you build from there and if student are going to the sites and viewing the sites from a deficit point of view, where they feel they need

to help the pre-school with just resources, it creates contradictions and potential conflict between ECD practitioners and student volunteers. The impact of training, leadership, communication, teamwork and commitment is visible in two of the pre-school in the study.

When ECD practitioner at the two pre-schools were asked about the ECD Residence programme, they had positive responses. They highlighted the mutually beneficial relationship that they have with student volunteers which was achieved through regular communication and team work. One student volunteer respondent highlighted the impact that social media had on building and maintaining relationships at the pre-schools

“ I don't think we had major challenges so say like we had a hard time figuring out how we are all going to volunteer together and we came up with a system that made sure we are all on the same page, the WhatsApp group helped a lot and we were able to break the work into manageable pieces and assign people to different activities , the creative people were involved in the talent show , the not so creative people were involved in the administration part of it so we worked with what we are good at”⁴³

There are different features that emerged from the respondent's statement. She is an ECD residence program volunteer and CE representative for her residence. To insure that the program at the pre-school runs smoothly, they created a WhatsApp group to keep the communication line open and organise student volunteers. So the two leaders created a WhatsApp group that included all the residence volunteers and ECD practioners from the pre-school. They used technology, a well-known cell phone application to improve communication. This improved co-ordination and communication between the student volunteers and ECD practioners. Secondly the leaders were involved and committed in the process. This is one of the reasons there were a large number of involved and committed student volunteers from the residence. To help co-ordinate and manage the groups of volunteers, the leaders created a schedule where students would indicate the days they would be available to volunteer in the mornings. That helped them keep track of the volunteers and ensure commitment. In other words if a student is available on Monday mornings they volunteer every Monday morning unless there is a test or anything that came up then they can choose to go on another day for that particular week.

⁴³ Interview with Xolly, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 20 August 2016, Rhodes University.

According to Xolly the WhatsApp group also helped the student volunteers to plan their lessons according to the themes at the pre-school. The volunteers' main focus was on helping the ECD practioners to improve their English speaking skills. They chose a creative way of going about achieving this goal. They focused on using art as a way of teaching. In other words they dramatized the stories they read to the children, they taught the children songs, and they created plays. Art was their way of incorporating play and teaching. Another feature of the ABCD approach emerged from Xolly's statement when she said they assigned roles based on skills. The ABCD approach recognises that everyone has skills and it is important to share those skills with others. The student volunteers and ECD practioners share their skills and learn from each other because they recognised that they have something to offer. This resulted in a relationship where both parties learn from each other, built strong relationships, and achieved their goals through team work.

When Xolly and Lesego (ECD Residence volunteers and CE representatives) were asked what they learned from the experience, they found it much easier to answer the question when compared to the other volunteers at the other three pre-schools. Most of the respondents from the other pre-schools found it difficult to answer the question. This is particularly due to their inconsistent visits to the pre-schools which resulted in them not building relationships and not learning from the experience. Reflection is achieved through engagement and the responded could only reflect on one or two events and found it difficult to link those events to their personal growth and development. However, the volunteers at two of the five pre-schools in this study were able to link what they learned to their own personal development. As Lesogo explains:

"I learned that team work is important, I learned that we need each other, if we work as a team we get much done as opposed to pulling in different directions...I learned a lot about myself in the process" ⁴⁴

Lesego is studying towards her journalism degree. Through the volunteering sessions she indicated that she learned a lot about herself. She was given the task of organising and writing a play for the children. She highlighted that it was through this process that she challenged her fear of speaking in front of people. She mentioned that the teachers would encourage her to read to the children and it was through this process that she realised that she enjoyed presenting

⁴⁴ Interview with Lesego, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 20 August 2016, Rhodes University.

and co-ordinating events. She further improved her skills by reading to the children regularly and finally being the program director at the end of the year talent show that was attended by parents and volunteers at the pre-school. Thus, the volunteering experience had an impact on her professional and personal development and this was achieved by teaching and allowing herself to learn from the experience. This is one of the features that came out of building relationships through the ABCD approach.

6.4.3.2 Participation: Siyakhana@Makana project

As mentioned there are two ECD projects that function concurrently at the pre-school. The one is based on building lasting relationships with residences (ECD residence Programme) and the other project is the Siyakhana@Makana project. This project takes a project management approach. The project is open to societies on campus, sports clubs and students who want to learn about project management. The Siyakhana@Makana volunteer teams must comprise of five people that have defined roles such as fundraiser, leader etc. These roles are developed after choosing a pre-school they want to work with and the goals they want to achieve. The ECD practitioners identify three goals that they would like to work on throughout the year. Examples of projects worked on in 2016 include improving outdoor activities, providing school readiness session and coaching sports activities. This project seemed to be more successful in four of the pre-schools in this study when compared to the residence program.

Based on the responses from the Siyakhana@Makana volunteers they had more support because the project took eighteen weeks to complete. As seen in appendix C, there are guidelines that help ECD practitioners and Siyakhana@Makana volunteers. The volunteers have more structure and guidance throughout the process. Based on the responses from the Siyakhana@Makana volunteers, they built relationships with ECD practitioners and created an environment that was conducive to learning and growing. The student volunteers and ECD practitioners achieved the goals they set out to achieve by focusing on team work.

*“I think building relationships and working together to achieve a common goal, so basically we managed to do so much together and it was a beautiful experience because we travelled the journey together and we managed to do a lot in just one year”*⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Interview with Melanie, Siyakhana@Makana Project student volunteer, 26 August 2016, Rhodes University.

“Allowing yourself to learn from the people you are working with, it means working together towards improving the conditions in the community”⁴⁶

“We achieved the goals because we had team work, good communication and a good relationship”⁴⁷

“I learned that team work is more effective”⁴⁸

Based on the above statements from the Siyakhana@Makana volunteers, it is evident that for this project to work, it is important to establish and maintain a relationship throughout the process. As seen from the diagram in appendix C, the project has more structure for the volunteers and ECD practioners to follow. There are nine steps that the volunteers and ECD practioners have to follow which include: establishing relationships, partnership, community mapping, goal identification, joint project planning, and joint project planning focusing on risk analysis, presentation of plan to the panel, project implementation and project evaluation. Thought-out the various steps, teamwork is important because the plan that the volunteers and ECD practioners come up with, must be a joint effort. A strong feature of the ABCD approach that appears in this project is in week three where the teams have to draw up a community map. This process is called asset mapping. This takes place by identifying assets in the community and building networks and relationships with people within the community.

This creates an environment conducive to sharing skills and knowledge. By identifying the assets that are available the teams can then look at how they can use those assets to achieve the goals they set. Focusing on what the community has, creates a positive starting point because they do not focus on the negative or what they do not have but rather what is available, and work their way up from there. Based on the responses from the Siyakhana@Makana student volunteers and ECD practioners, the process was mutually beneficial. They achieved the goals they set out to achieve, created and maintained relationships through team work and good communication. The above projects were implanted using the ABCD approach. After analysing the level of participation in the projects, the question of sustainability emerged. The next section will focus on how the projects, through the ABCD approach ensure sustainability.

⁴⁶ Interview with Zintle, Siyakhana@Makana Project student volunteer, 26 August 2016, Rhodes University.

⁴⁷ Sihle Grahamstown 2016

⁴⁸ Interview with Abdul, Siyakhana@Makana Project student volunteer, 24 August 2016, Rhodes University.

6.4.4 Sustainability of ECD projects

“The sustainability issue is why we moved to the residence partnership because we know that our students are transient, after so many years and so our hope is that they don’t only build relationships with one person but with the whole res and it’s just the leadership that changes...we never drive programs, we only facilitate in the spaces. We are very sensitive to not doing things for people that can do it themselves”⁴⁹

RUCE aims to achieve sustainable community engagement through building relationships and creating spaces where people are empowered to drive their own projects and improve their own community. Ms Hornby believes that people are more likely to grow and be involved in something that they helped to build. The division does not drive the projects but merely bring in their greatest resources (which are students) to facilitate the projects. This is achieved through the process of teaching and learning that takes place through the relationships they build with each other.

The main aim of building relationships and networks is because it helps to create an environment where people can teach and learn from each other. When the Siyakhana@Makana and ECD residence student volunteers were asked if they thought that the ECD practitioners would be able to continue with what they taught them, they were all positive that they would. This is particularly because the ECD practitioners were eager to learn and were involved in all activities

“They show us how to do the charts, they show us the way to sing the songs and we do it with the children because they give us a song book and we learn the songs at home every day and we teach the children everyday”⁵⁰

“The students they came to paint the pre-school and we paint with them and they did the fun day and show us the face painting and games and a lot of stuff for the kids”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division

⁵⁰ Interview with Ms Bukiwe Gqeke, ECD Practitioner at Nompumelelo pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

⁵¹ Interview with Ms Nokuzola Nojoko, ECD Practitioner at Tyhilulwazi pre-school, 28 September 2016, Grahamstown.

“The students they are creative and we learn from them and they learn from us. All the posters in the class we do with them, some the games and activities outside there, we learn from them”⁵²

The ECD practitioners had similar responses because they all aimed at learning from the student volunteers. In addition to the above responses, Ms Mtwalo asked the student volunteers to create a song book so they would continue teaching the children the new activities and songs even when the student volunteers were not at the pre-school. Ms Mtwalo (ECD Practitioner) wanted help with improving English speaking skills at her pre-school and the Siyakhana@Makana student volunteer's assisted with that. They provided a book full of songs and activities to help the children and the ECD practitioners to improve in the language.

The ECD practitioners took it upon themselves to stay longer after all the children have left the pre-school to learn the song. They practiced at home and they would teach the children every morning. When the volunteers return the following week they find that the children are now singing along with them because they had already learned the songs. This process of active involvement leads to sustainability and growth as the ECD practitioners learn and continue using that knowledge to improve their pre-schools, as opposed to students doing things for the teachers and leaving the pre-school with the knowledge they came with. They teach the ECD practitioners so that they can continue using the new acquired skills and knowledge to better the quality of teaching at the pre-schools.

The process of teaching and learning has an impact on both sides. The teachers learn something and they teach the students as well. Student volunteers at the pre-schools received Xhosa lessons from the teachers so they can be able to communicate with the children. As mentioned before, students also learn a lot about themselves through this process. Some student worked on improving their weaknesses such as being impatient, unorganised or shy. They managed to build their personal and professional growth through their involvement in the ECD volunteer projects.

6.4.4.1 Impact of Asset Mapping: Community networks and initiatives.

Another important aspect that came from the data that is related to sustainability is the ECD practitioners ability to identify a challenge and find ways to address it. When the ECD

⁵² Interview with Ms Lungelwa Kotela, ECD Practitioner at Noncedo pre-school, 27 September 2016, Grahamstown.

practitioners were asked why the pre-schools were established they responded by mentioning two main reasons, to provide a good ECD foundation for children in the township, and to create a safe place. All the ECD practitioners kept on mentioning '*safe place*' this is particularly due to the challenges they face in the communities they operate in, which is characterised by violence and substance abuse. They wanted to create a safe place for children to come and learn.

In addition they started their own initiatives at the pre-schools. Two of the pre-schools in this study have an aftercare that they decided was important because many of the children's mothers work until late. One pre-school took it further by providing a safe space for children going to the different primary schools in the area, to come to the pre-school to do their homework. They supply juice and bread to motivate the children to come and they help the children with homework. The primary school children in the aftercare range from 6 to 11 years. The pre-school has its own schedule of working with the children, they help the children with homework, and they play in the pre-school yard and leave when their parents come to pick them up. In addition to the aftercare the pre-schools have vegetable gardens that help them prepare healthy food for the children. They have sports clubs, traditional dance clubs and support from community members.

The ECD practitioners came up with these initiatives with the help of student volunteers and community members. They receive support from the local clinic, churches, construction workers, primary school teachers, senior citizens and the youth in the communities. They have young boys helping them in the vegetable gardens, the clinic providing talks on health related topics and construction workers in the communities offered their services to paint and fix one of the pre-schools that had a leak in the roof. This is an important feature of the ABCD approach, which is known as Asset mapping. This is a process where the community identifies assets that are available in the community. They build relationships with each other and help one another by trading skills and resources. The ECD practitioners mentioned that after receiving training and support through the RUCCE projects they were able to approach community members to come together to improve ECD in their communities.

“We work together in the community and also the projects they help us ECD practitioners to build strong relationships because now we know each other, we help each other and it is nice like this because we are a family”⁵³

“I am not going to wait for anyone the outsider to come inside because I’m just doing it because it’s all about the passion”⁵⁴

The responses from Ms Gongqa and Ms Mtwalo clearly show the shift in perceptions and roles. Ms Gongqa’s response indicates the shift in roles. The ECD practitioners do not rely on student volunteers or RUCE. They built strong relationships with each other and they support each other to improve their pre-schools. All the ECD practitioners in this study work together on events such as sports competitions, beach day outings, spring day and Christmas parties. They work together and built a strong network of support through asset mapping and ECD projects from RUCE. Ms Mtwalo’s response indicates sustainability through the shift of perceptions. Her statement shows the impact that Asset-Based Community Development training had on ECD practitioners. Training focused on helping the ECD practitioners view their communities differently.

Training helped ECD practitioners to view their communities as having resources and assets that can help them. They took it upon themselves to apply and start their own initiatives. When asked how they keep the initiatives going they replied that it was through team work and support from community members. The ECD practitioners also have a relationship with each other and have meetings where they share ideas and practices. They also have sports events and art and craft events together. They learn a lot from each other through meetings and events, and this creates growth and sustainability of initiatives and projects.

6.4.5 Collaboration and relationship between CSD and RUCE

The Asset-Based Community Development approach is a relationship driven approach that aims to build and strengthen relationships in the community. This is achieved through building associations. According to Kretzmann & McKnight, (1993: 109) associations are groups of citizens working together. The two organisations in this study work with ECD practitioners

⁵³ Interview with Ms Florence Gongqa, ECD Practitioner at Boy-Boy Mginywa pre-school, 26 September 2016, Grahamstown.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.

and student volunteers to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. They focus on building partnerships, teamwork and connecting the community through asset mapping.

The organisations share the same building. However, there is little interaction in projects and initiatives between the two organisations. As Dr Harrison explains:

“I think we have a generally reasonable relationship because RUCE sort of almost evolved from us we have a history, a long history together so because the director was previously a director here there is quite close ties. I think a way RUCE has had to overcome the sort of three-year period when CSD was almost like the black sheep of the family. They had to step in and do some of the stuff that CSD should have been doing but we actually couldn't do because we were cleaning up our house. Now that CSD has rediscovered their voice and our functioning at the correct level, I think we are starting to redefine our boundaries and saying ok, this is how we now need to work and I think it's quite an important transition because, we have to work together and we should work together. I think that if we do work together we are a very powerful force, if we work in silos we are sort of ultimately undermining each other and that is not a successful way to go forward”⁵⁵

Based on the response from Dr Harrison, there were various challenges that CSD faced that resulted in the shift of responsibilities to RUCE. Based on literature reviewed on the history of CSD and RUCE in chapter five, community engagement activities were managed by CSD. When the University established the Community Engagement division there were various shifts that occurred at CSD. Firstly, Ms Daina Hornby was the director of CSD and when the community engagement division was established, she became the director of RUCE. CSD received a new director, Dr Harrison, and she was new to the organisation and was tasked to resolve challenges that the organisation faced. This shifting of roles and responsibilities affected the relationship between CSD and RUCE.

The lack of collaboration between the organisations is evident in the training of ECD volunteers. RUCE trains ECD volunteers and the training session is focused on educating volunteers about the ABCD approach, leadership styles and providing information about the various pre-schools. However, volunteers do not receive training on ECD in terms of teaching,

⁵⁵ Interview with Dr Giulietta Harrison, Director of the Centre of Social Development, 6 January 2017, Rhodes University: Centre of Social Development offices

how to engage with children and how to provide valuable assistance at the pre-schools. When the student volunteers were asked what they think should be included in training they highlighted the need for practical ECD training. As Lesego and Xolly explain:

*“What would help is if maybe we have an introduction into teaching maybe or a short training session on how to work with kids, like when I came here for the first time, I was so nervous because I didn’t really know what to expect and how to play with the kids. The teachers were helpful and I learned from them but I think if I had been taught that before it would really help me calm down and be more relaxed in the first session”*⁵⁶

*“I think the one thing they should maybe add is more practical training on how to work with children. I think that would help volunteers especially when you go to the pre-school for the first time because at least you know something, instead of being that awkward person who stands and looks at the children with no idea as how to engage and help in the classroom. Yhhh I think that needs to be added”*⁵⁷

Based on the above responses from student volunteers, there is a need for ECD training. The volunteers highlighted that they were nervous the first time they went to the pre-schools because they did not know how they were going to contribute. The training they received focused on building relationships with ECD practitioners but did not provide training on how to engage with the children at the pre-school. The volunteers learned from the ECD practitioners over time and were able to read to the children, engage and offer assistance in the classroom. However, based on responses from student volunteers, ECD training would be valuable in terms of learning new skills and reducing uncertainty and anxiety on the first day of volunteering.

In terms of collaborations, the two organisations do not seem to work together on projects. Twelve student volunteers were interviewed in this study only two student volunteers knew about CSD. The two student volunteers that knew about CSD volunteered at the Toy Library which is a CSD project. Although they volunteered at the Toy Library they had little knowledge about the organisation. However, the director of RUCE aims to solve this problem by

⁵⁶ ⁵⁶ Interview with Lesego, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 20 August 2016, Rhodes University.

⁵⁷ Interview with Xolly, ECD Residence Programme student volunteer, 20 August 2016, Rhodes University.

collaborating on projects and having a closer relationship with CSD in the future. As Ms Hornby explains:

“We have started working with them now as part of the Vice Chancellor’s education project. And so we are building up, we are working with them to set up a centre of excellence through Tylulwazi ... so we are working with them on that and we are also looking at how in the ECD space, they can help us, so like they might be able to train, some of the students, so we have had that discussion and next year we will probably get them into training the students who work in the ECD sites”⁵⁸

Based on the above response from Ms Hornby, there are strategies set in place to build a stronger relationship with CSD and collaborate with the organisations on projects. According to Bergdall (2003:1), the role of the outsiders is to empower community members to take the lead in the change process. The outsiders also known as catalysts, play the facilitation role by not doing things for the community but rather doing things with the community. However, there are limitations to this approach because it focuses on building the community without enough emphasis on how organisations (outsiders) can work together in the process.

Based on the findings, the organisations in this study are focused on improving ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. They use the same approach but do not have a strong relationship with each other. The approach should focus on internal development and the collaboration of outsiders (organisations) in the development process. The ABCD approach is more focused on community members taking the driving seat and outsiders facilitating that process. Not a lot of emphasis is placed on the role of outsiders as a collective. The approach clearly explains the role of the insider and the outsider. However, there needs to be a clear explanation of how organisations can work together using the approach and how organisations can build and maintain strong relationships with other organisations using the approach. In other words, this is a relationship oriented approach so in addition to focusing on building strong relationships with the community there should be a focus on organisations building strong relationships with each other. This would reduce the likelihood of organisations working on improving the same problem but pulling in different directions.

⁵⁸ Interview with Diana Hornby, Director of Rhodes University Community Engagement, 27 October 2016, Rhodes University Community Engagement Division.

6.4.6 Conclusion

This Section provided an analysis of the Centre for Social Development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE). The two organisations apply the Asset-Based Community Development approach in different ways. CSD focuses on community development with a specific focus on capacity building and asset teaching by providing ECD training, parent workshops and resources that can be used to improve the quality of education at the pre-schools. RUCE focuses on capacity building by providing student volunteers to assist at the various pre-schools, providing ABCD training and creating an environment that fosters empowerment and sustainability. There were various challenges that the organisations faced in terms of empowerment and participation. In addition the organisations have a close relationship but do not collaborate on projects. The organisations plan to build a closer relationship and collaborate in the future to reduce challenges they faced on various projects. Despite the various challenges, the ABCD approach has a positive impact on ECD practitioners, student volunteers and children at the pre-schools. This will be further explained in the conclusion chapter. Thus, ECD practitioners view their pre-schools and communities as half-full and not half empty.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The field of this thesis is Development Studies with a specific focus on approaches to community development. This research focused on the application of the Asset-Based Community Development approach in Grahamstown township pre-schools. In order to understand the application of the approach it was important to highlight the problems that exist in the ECD sector in Grahamstown. The focus was on the problems that children and ECD practitioners face in Grahamstown township pre-schools. Highlighting the problems shed more light on the need for projects and interventions. The two cases studies were the Centre for Social development (CSD) and Rhodes University Community Engagement (RUCE). Through qualitative research and the case study method, the study analysed how the approach is applied by the two organisations, how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability of projects and the relationship and collaboration between CSD and RUCE.

This chapter will reflect on the research goals and how they were achieved. The chapter will reflect on key findings on the application of the ABCD approach, challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown, how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability of ECD projects and the collaboration between CSD and RUCE. In addition, this chapter will focus on the limitations and recommendations of this study. The section will indicate how this research contributes to existing research and literature on the Asset-Based Community Development approach.

7.2 Reflection of research goals

This research aimed to provide an analysis of how the Asset-Based Community Development approach is applied to improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The main focus was on analysing projects from the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement. The secondary goals include:

1. Highlighting the challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown;
2. Analysing how the approach contributes towards empowerment, participation and sustainability.
3. Analysing the challenges that CSD and RUCE have faced in applying the asset-based approach and the relationship and collaboration between the two organisations.

The empirical chapter that addressed the main goal of this research was chapter three. The chapter highlighted the ABCD theoretical frameworks, asset mapping, challenges and limitations of the approach and the practical application of the ABCD approach. Chapter six also contributed to the main aim of the study by analysing how RUCE and CSD apply the approach. The empirical chapter that addressed the first subsidiary goal was chapter two. The chapter focused on the conceptualisation of ECD in the South African context. The chapter highlighted the importance of ECD, history and development of ECD in South Africa and challenges in the ECD sector. Chapter six addressed the second subsidiary goal. This was done by analysing how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability of ECD projects.

The analysis further highlighted how the approach shapes the perceptions and understanding of community development, community engagement and personal development. In addition chapter six addressed the third subsidiary goal by analysing the relationship and collaboration between RUCE and CSD. The findings focused on highlighting the problems that exist in the ECD sector in Grahamstown to shed more light and background on the need for ECD interventions by RUCE and CSD. The analysis then proceeded to analyse how the ABCD approach was applied to alleviate problems and improve ECD in Grahamstown township pre-schools. This analysis indicated how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation and sustainability of projects and the relationship and collaboration between CSD and RUCE.

7.3 Problems affecting children and ECD practitioners in Grahamstown townships.

This study began by highlighting problems that affect children and ECD practitioners in Grahamstown township pre-schools. Various social problems affecting children were highlighted by ECD practitioners. These problems include poverty, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, physical abuse, neglect, crime and violence and HIV/AIDS. In addition to problems affecting children, problems affecting ECD practitioners were highlighted. These problems include parents not paying fees, teaching children with learning and physical disabilities and lack of commitment from parents and care takers. Projects were implemented by RUCE and CSD to address the above problems through the application of the Asset-Based Community development approach.

7.4 Findings on the application of the ABCD approach by CSD

CSD applies the ABCD approach through capacity building and asset teaching. The first focus that CSD focused on was identifying the assets that existed in Grahamstown township pre-schools. The second focus was on building relationships with community members, particularly ECD practitioners, parents and care givers. Through relationship building, CSD works with community members and not for them. CSD is focused on capacity building through various projects and programs. The main program that this study focused on was ECD training program. Other programs that were highlighted and discussed were the Toy Library, the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme, Jim Joel Mentoring Program and Eyethu Resource Hub.

The main asset that ECD practitioners have is the passion for teaching and childcare. CSD further developed that asset by providing ECD training that improves skills and qualifications. CSD played the role of the connector by connecting pre-schools to organisations that helped improve ECD facilities by donating resources such as buildings, books and toys. The Toy Library plays a vital role in the community because parents can borrow books and toys for their children, they can attend workshops that teach them how to help their children with academic activities at home, and provide ECD practitioners with workshops on how to teach children with disabilities. Through asset teaching workshops, ECD practitioners are encouraged to be creative and use recyclable material to create toys and make classroom decorations. The application of the ABCD approach through these various projects has a positive impact on ECD practitioners, parents and children. The ECD training program reduces unqualified ECD practitioners, improves the quality of education, improves confidence, enthusiasm, skills and qualifications of ECD practitioners. All the pre-schools in this study have a daily program that they follow, meal plan, colourful buildings, books and well-resourced playground with jungle gyms and toys.

The ABCD approach contributes to empowerment by shaping perceptions and shifting roles. Thus, by applying the ABCD approach CSD aims to empower ECD practitioners to take the lead which in the long term will help them find their voice and independence. CSD aims to achieve this by shaping perceptions and shifting roles. Shaping and changing perceptions was difficult for ECD practitioners. They struggled to identify their skills and were reluctant to learn and receive help due to fear of making mistakes or failing. Through the application of the ABCD approach they began to view themselves as being able and capable of teaching.

According Mathie and Cunningham (2002) and Russel and Smeaton (2015), the Asset-Based Community Development approach creates a positive outlook by focusing on positive aspects of the community such as existing skills, gifts and abilities.

This creates confidence and empowers community members to take the initiative in community development projects. It is evident that empowerment through training improves skills and confidence of ECD practitioners. The ABCD approach contributes to empowerment by shifting roles. The role of external agencies is to facilitate the process and let community members take the leading role which shifts community members from being clients to citizens. This is often referred to as 'leading by stepping back' (Mathie and Cunningham (2010: 483). By encouraging ECD practitioners to create their own initiatives (such as vegetable gardens), shifts roles in the community. ECD practitioners take the driving seat and CSD facilitates these initiatives by helping rather than owning or leading the initiatives. Through the shifting of roles, CSD aims to help ECD practitioners find their voice and independence.

Participation is very important for the implementation of the ABCD approach. The approach contributes to participation by focusing on building relationships and partnerships with ECD practitioners, parents and care givers. Although CSD built those relationships, the organisation faced various challenges in terms of participation from ECD practitioners, parents and student volunteers at the Toy Library. In terms of the ECD training program, the organisation struggled to improve attendance because some ECD practitioners were reluctant while others embraced it. ECD practitioners have various reasons for not attending training sessions. These reasons range from balancing family responsibilities, health issues and balancing working and studying (CSD, 2015). ECD practitioners receiving training are between 24 and 62 with different educational backgrounds. Language and plagiarism are challenges that CSD faces. ECD practitioners fail to understand the content because it is taught in English and this leads to plagiarism.

The Toy library faces various challenges in terms of participation. Parents are encouraged to borrow the resources but only a few parents and caregivers use the facility. Student volunteers at the Toy Library were also a challenge. The organisation had a large number of student volunteers but the number reduced throughout the year due to lack of commitment from student volunteers. The Anglo American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme also faced challenges in terms of participation from parents. The workshops are attended by a few parents in the community and CSD is working on ways to improve participation. Thus, participation has been

a major challenge for CSD. The ABCD approach focuses on building relationships with community member but does not provide guidance on how the organisations can retain commitment and participation from community members. Community members are encouraged to take the driving seat but how are they encouraged to stay in that seat? However, the approach is successful in building relationships and partnerships. The ECD practitioners, student volunteers and parents involved in the various projects gained more knowledge about ECD and improved their skills.

The ABCD approach contributes to sustainability by motivating community members to take the driving seat in initiatives and projects. The approach believes that community members will be committed to something that they helped to build. CSD chose to apply the ABCD approach because of the contribution it has towards sustainability. Dr Harrison (director of CSD) quoted a Chinese proverb that speaks to the importance of learning. “Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere” (CSD, 2014: 8). Thus, learning is sustainable. The ECD practitioners will always have the skills that they received through training. In addition, CSD offers a mentoring program that helps ECD practitioners to transition from training to actually applying what they were taught. This provides support and encourages ECD practitioners to improve their skills and be up to date with the current teaching practices. In addition, CSD provide staff development courses so that the staff can be up to date with the current teaching practices. The centre offers a career path for ECD practitioners. Some of the ECD facilitators at the centre were once ECD practitioners teaching in the township pre-schools. They received training from CSD and improved their skills and qualifications. They aimed to give back by teaching and sharing their knowledge and skills with other ECD practitioners. CSD aims to educate ECD practitioners so they can build centres of excellence in their communities, find their voice and be independent.

7.5 Findings on the application of the ABCD approach by RUCE

Rhodes University has three key pillars which are teaching, research and community engagement. Rhodes University views community engagement from a social justice point of view that is based on building relationships and working together to improve communities. This study focused on projects that are focused on improving the ECD sector in Grahamstown. The study focused on the ECD Residence Programme and the Siyakhana@Makana project. RUCE applies the ABCD approach by building relationships through community engagement

and asset mapping. The ABCD approach shifts away from the deficit welfare approach by focusing on restoring agency in the community.

RUCE focuses on building relationships and partnerships with community partners. In addition to building relationship, RUCE focuses on identifying assets and building connections in communities. This is achieved through asset mapping. RUCE identified the skills that the ECD practitioners have and what they want to improve. With this information they were able to connect the ECD practitioners with the relevant resources and services. In addition, RUCE is able to work with ECD practitioners to create interventions and projects that would work on improving and increasing the assets that they already have. Through the asset mapping process, webs of relationships are created. According to Foot and Hopkins (2010:7), these asset webs promote community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment. Thus, RUCE plays the role of the connector. According to McKnight (2013: 13) the role of a connector is important because community means people in relationships and associations mean people in powerful relationships. This process of building relationships and asset mapping is achieved through community engagement.

RUCE views community engagement as a relationship and learning based process where students, researchers and people who want to work in communities not only give but be willing to learn. It is a collaborative process that involves building partnerships. Through community engagement, RUCE applies the ABCD approach using their greatest asset (which are students) to help improve ECD in Grahamstown. Through community engagement training the ABCD approach contributes to empowerment.

The ABCD approach contributes to empowerment by shaping perceptions, roles and capacity building. The main aim of the various ECD projects is to create an environment that fosters growth and empowerment. The aim of the ABCD training sessions is to change negative perceptions. The process of changing perceptions of communities as being places that do not have assets and places that have existing assets and capabilities can be achieved. Thus, in order to establish the ABCD approach in a community, the old pessimistic way of thinking needs to be replaced by the new optimistic way of thinking. By focusing on what communities do not have, creates a frustrating start but by focusing on what they already have, and how they can add to the assets creates an optimistic start. This process also helps ECD practitioners and student volunteers to identify their assets and learn from the experience.

The practical component of the ABCD training sessions focused on capacity building. ECD practitioners and student volunteer were taught how to use recyclable material to create games, toys and classroom decorations. A capacity focused paradigm recognises gifts, skills and talents of community members (McKnight, 2013). By taking waste material and creatively turning that material into toys, games and classroom decorations, helped student volunteers and ECD practitioners to identify their own assets and assets that are available in their communities. Thus, ABCD training is focused on the glass half-full and not the glass half-empty perception. ABCD training had an impact on ECD practitioners. Training challenged ECD practitioners and student volunteers to challenge and change their negative perceptions about themselves and their communities. It created a positive starting point by focusing on what is available in the community and not on what is not there. Through asset mapping new relationships were developed between ECD practitioners, student volunteers, CBOs, NGOs and community members. These relationships are dependent on participation and commitment.

ABCD approach contributes to participation by focusing on building strong relationships that are based on reciprocity. However participation was a challenge for RUCE. Student volunteers in the ECD Residence Programme were not as committed as the student volunteers in the Siyakhana@Makana project. This was due to lack of commitment from student leaders, lack of structure in the program and the program was in its first year of operation so RUCE was working on refining and learning from the challenges. However, the students that were committed to the programs, implemented what they were taught at the ABCD training session. They build mutually beneficial relationships with ECD practitioners, used technology (WhatsApp) to improve communication, worked on improving assets that were available at the pre-schools and identified assets that they had and shared those assets with ECD practitioners. Participation in the ECD projects had a positive impact on ECD practitioners and student volunteers. They learned a lot about themselves through the process, learned new skills and developed existing skills and the experience changed their perceptions of impoverished communities. In addition to participation the ABCD approach contributes to sustainability.

The ABCD approach contributes to the achievement of sustainable community engagement by building relationships and creating spaces where people are empowered to drive their own projects and improve their own community. RUCE believes that people are more likely to grow and be involved in something that they helped to build. The division does not drive the projects but merely bring in their greatest resources (which are students) to facilitate the projects. Through the shifting of roles from driver to facilitator, sustainable development can be

achieved. Another important aspect that came from the data that is related to sustainability is the ECD practitioner's ability to identify a challenge and find ways to address it. They started their own projects and initiatives at the pre-schools such as after school care, homework clubs, sports clubs and traditional dance clubs. They receive support from the local clinic, churches, construction workers, primary school teachers, senior citizens and the youth in the community. Thus, ECD practitioners do not rely on RUCE or student volunteers. The community builds networks and partnerships within and they rely on each other to change and improve the challenges they face every day.

Through interaction with student volunteers, ECD practitioners are involved in all activities and they work with volunteers to improve their skills and learn new skills. Through commitment and participation ECD practitioners continue teaching their children the songs and games they learned from student volunteers. The process of asset mapping has a positive and sustainable impact in the community. It recognises assets and builds strong connections within the community. The process motivated ECD practitioners to identify problems in the community and start initiatives that would alleviate those problems. Lastly through the ABCD approach ECD practitioners are achieving independence by working towards improving their skills and taking the driving seat in the change process. This was particularly evident in Ms Mtwalo's Response:

*"I am not going to wait for anyone the outsider to come inside because I'm just doing it because it's all about the passion"*⁵⁹

CSD and RUCE are focused on improving the ECD sector in Grahamstown. In addition the organisations apply the ABCD approach in the projects and initiatives they implement. Although the organisations share the same building at Rhodes University, they do not have a close relationship with each other. Student volunteers would benefit from the training that CSD provides. However, they only receive training from RUCE. Twelve student volunteers were interviewed in this study and only two student volunteers knew about CSD. This clearly indicates the lack of collaboration between the two organisations. Thus the ABCD approach is more focused on community members taking the driving seat and outsiders facilitating that process. Not a lot of emphasis is placed on the role of outsiders as a collective. The approach

⁵⁹ Interview with Ms Lungelwa Mtwalo, ECD Practitioner at Little Flower Day Care Centre, 29 September 2016, Grahamstown.

clearly explains the role of the insider and the outsider. However, there needs to be a clear explanation of how organisations can work together using the approach and how organisations can build and maintain strong relationships with other organisations using the approach. However, CSD and RUCE aim to build a strong relationship and work with each other on projects.

7.6 Limitations and Recommendations

The results of this research clearly shows how the ABCD approach is applied and the impact that it has on ECD practitioners and student volunteers. ECD practitioners highlighted problems that they face at the pre-schools. One of the problems they raised was the lack of commitment from parents. CSD also raised the same problem with regard to attendance of the Anglo American Chairman's Fund Parent Programme. Thus, adding parents to the discussion would be beneficial. However, the primary focus of this research was not on challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown. The research highlighted the challenges to add context and to show why CSD and RUCE implemented ECD projects. I recommend that future research that is done on challenges in the ECD sector should include parents so they can tell their side of the story. This research contributes to existing literature on the ABCD approach and there is a need for more research on the approach. The approach has been applied by many organisations but not a lot of research is done on how the approach can contribute to improving the education sector in South Africa. This research laid the foundation that shows the potential positive impact that the approach has in the ECD sector. Especially with the training of ECD practitioners and the application of the approach in their communities. The challenges that RUCE and CSD faced can also help NGOs and CBOs that would be interested in applying the approach. By discussing the challenges they face, other organisations can learn from their mistakes and improve the application of the approach and collaboration with other organisations. This research is also beneficial to CSD and RUCE because it highlights the gaps that are counterproductive. The organisations can improve their ECD projects because the research thoroughly highlighted contradictions and problems with the projects and this can help the organisations restructure their projects and work together.

7.7 Conclusion

This research aimed to find out how CSD and RUCE apply the Asset-Based Community Development approach. In addition the research aimed to highlight challenges in the ECD sector in Grahamstown, find out how the approach contributes to empowerment, participation

and sustainability. The last subsidiary goal was to highlight the challenges that CSD and RUCE faced in applying the approach and the relationship and collaboration between the two organisations. Through qualitative research and the case study method, the research achieved the above mentioned goals. The ABCD approach focuses on a glass half-full approach and not on a glass half-empty approach. Is the glass half-full or half-empty in Grahamstown township pre-schools? The research found out that ECD practitioner view their pre-schools and communities as half-full. Through the application of the ABCD approach, ECD practitioners became proactive and took the driving seat in the development process. The ECD practitioners built strong relationships with community members and outside organisations. They have improved their skills and qualifications and are on their way to restoring their agency, finding their voice and achieving independence.

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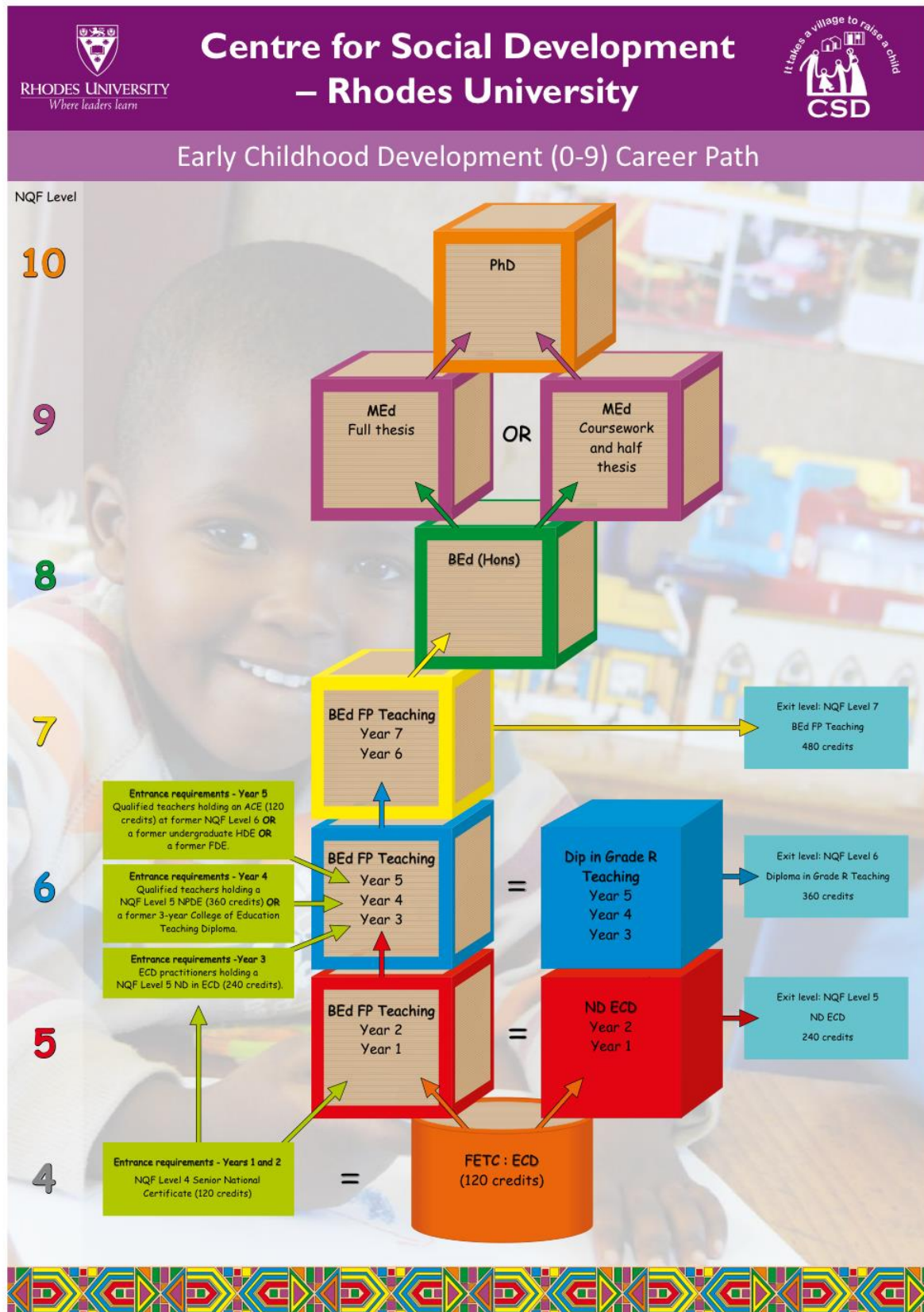
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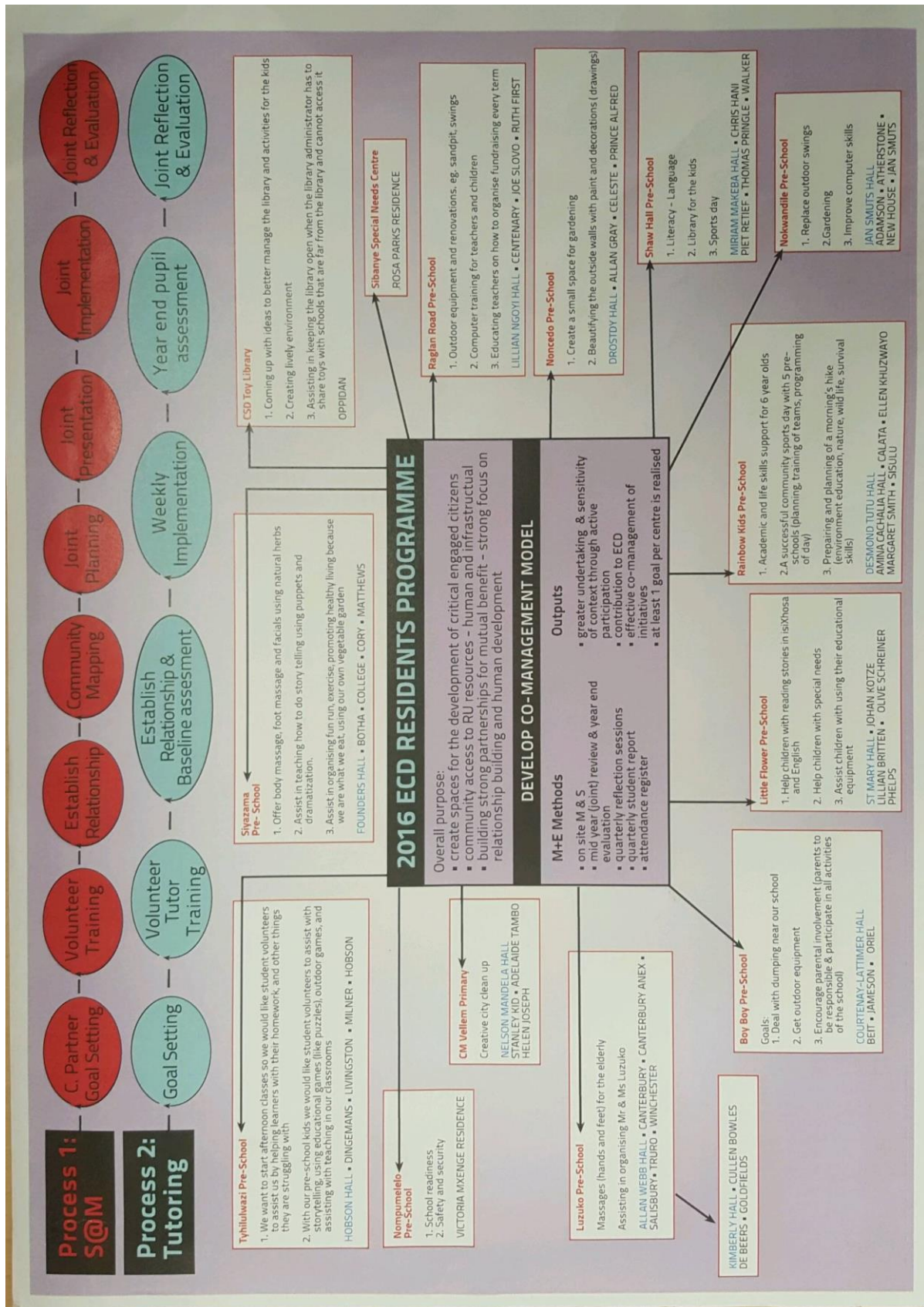
Appendix A

CSD: Early Childhood Development Career Path Diagram



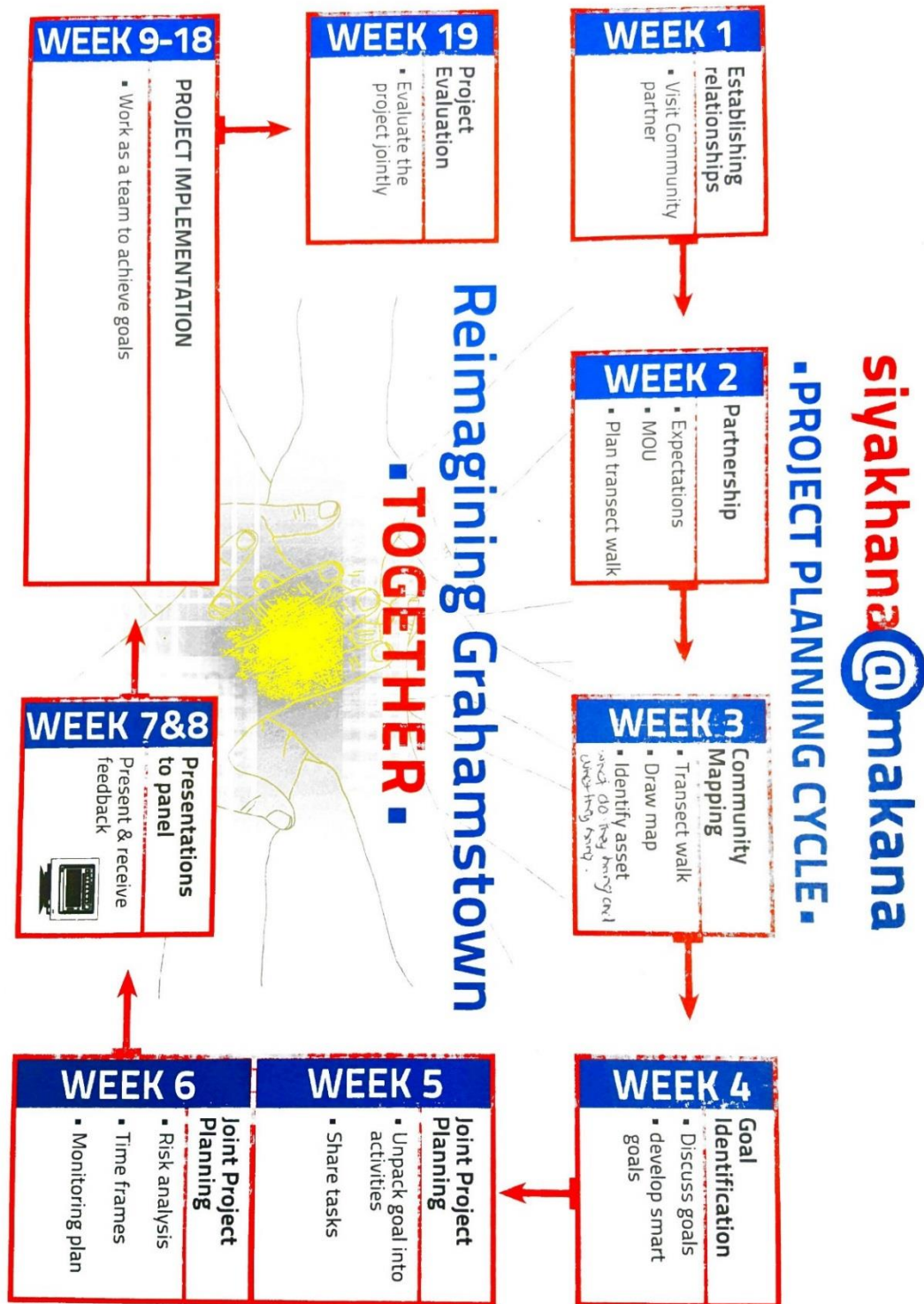
Appendix B

RUCE: Early Childhood Development Projects Diagram



Appendix C

Siyakhana@Makana Project Diagram and Training Program



SIYAKHANA EMAKANA (S@M) TRAINING
for
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES, STUDENT GROUPS & COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

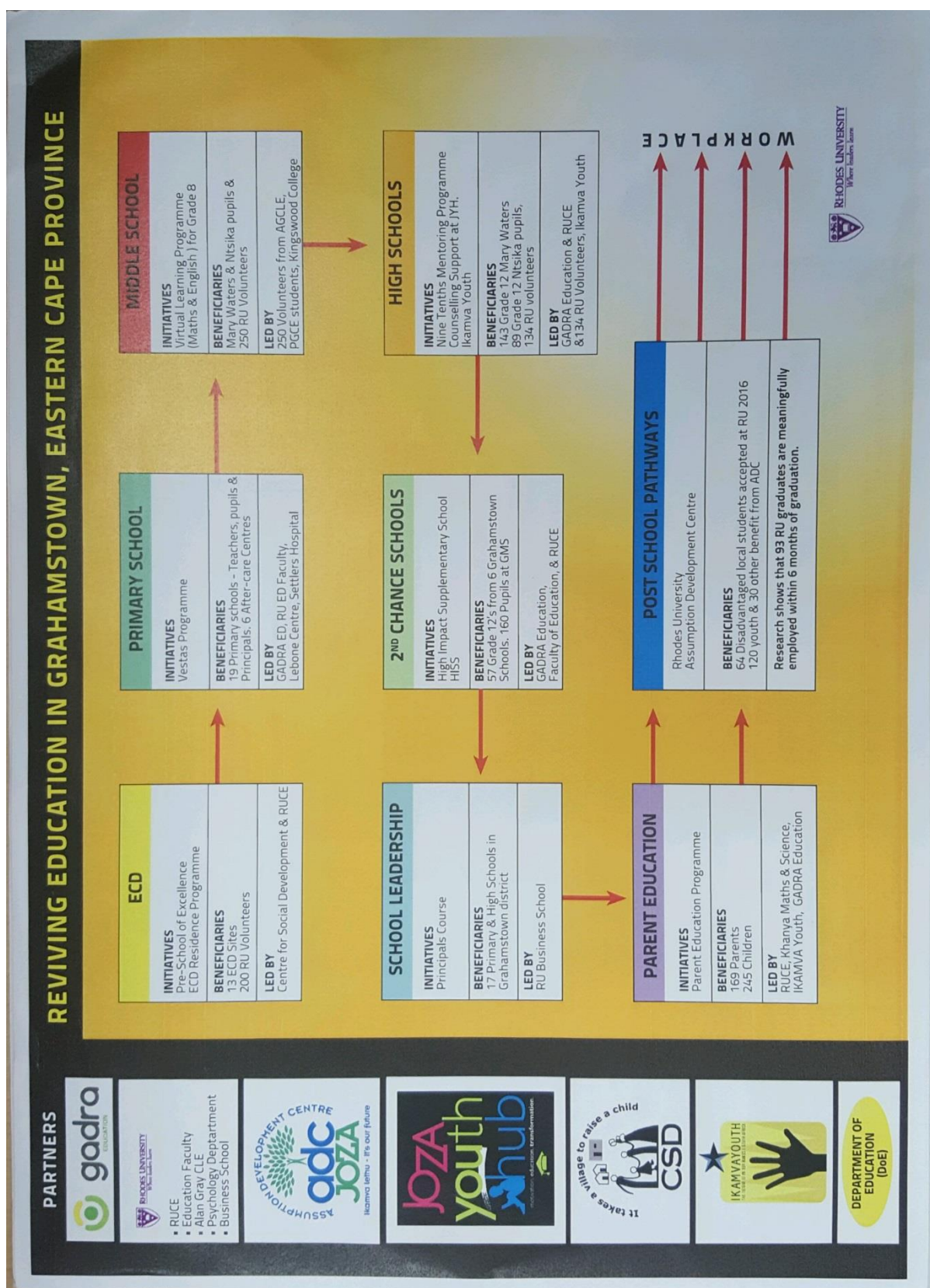
SATURDAY: 12 MARCH		
TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
08:00	Registration	Foyer
09:00	Welcome: DVC Dr Peter Clayton	Eden Grove Blue
09:10	Higher education transformation and the role of student volunteerism/community engagement: DVC Dr Peter Clayton	Eden Grove Blue
09:30	Education Documentary: Some are more equal than others	Eden Grove Blue
10:00	S@M Road map: Di Hornby	Eden Grove Blue
10:15	TEA BREAK	Foyer
10:45	Project management process: Di Hornby	Eden Grove Blue
11:30	Community Partners Fair	Foyer
12:15	Asset Based Development: Anne Loffler	Eden Grove Blue
13:00	LUNCH	
13:45	Creativity and Resource Making: Rat Western	Foyer
14:45	Partner & Student Group introductions Expectations of each partner (Student and Community Partner)	Eden Grove Blue
15:45	Reflection and evaluation of the training	Eden Grove Blue
16:00	Close	

***If you have come here to help me, you're wasting your time.
But if you've come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work
together.***

Lilla Watson Aboriginal elder

Appendix D

The Vice-Chancellor's Education Initiative Diagram



Appendix E

Interview questions for RUCE Director: Ms. Diana Hornby

Introduction

Good day, thank you for speaking with me this morning. This research is titled “An analysis of the Asset-Based Community Development Approach to Early Childhood Development interventions in Grahamstown Township pre-schools. A case study of the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement”. The questions that I will be asking will be in relation to RUCE. There are 17 Questions and the interview will take 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded and please feel free to stop the interview or not answer questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Questions

- 1) Why was the RUCE division established?
- 2) What is your particular Role at RUCE?
- 3) How does RUCE define Community Engagement?
- 4) What challenges do you think exists in the ECD sector?
- 5) What projects has RUCE established to improve ECD in Grahamstown?
- 6) How does the Siyakana@Makana project work at ECD sites?
- 7) Why does the organisation/division use the Asset Based Community Development Approach?
- 8) How is the ABCD approach practically applied?
- 9) What is the advantage of this approach over other approaches?
- 10) What impact do you think the approach has on ECD practitioners?
- 11) What kind of impact do you think volunteering at these ECD sites has on students?
- 12) How does the organisation define Community development?
- 13) How does the division define empowerment?
- 14) How does the Organisation ensure participation in ECD projects by student volunteers and ECD practitioners?
- 15) How does the Organisation ensure Sustainability of ECD projects?
- 16) What challenges has the organisation faced in applying the ABCD approach in ECD projects?
- 17) What kind of relationship does the RUCE office have with the CSD office?

Thank you for your time. A copy of my thesis will be available to you once it is completed.

Appendix F

Interview questions for RUCE Director: DR Giulietta Harrison

Introduction

Good day, thank you for speaking with me this morning. This research is titled “An analysis of the Asset-Based Community Development Approach to Early Childhood Development interventions in Grahamstown Township pre-schools. A case study of the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement”. The questions that I will be asking will be in relation to CSD. There are 14 Questions and the interview will take 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded and please feel free to stop the interview or not answer questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Questions

- 1) Why was CSD established?
- 2) What is your particular role at CSD?
- 3) How does the organisation define community development?
- 4) What challenges exist in the ECD sector in Grahamstown?
- 5) What projects has the organisation established to improve the ECD sector in Grahamstown?
- 6) Why does the organisation apply the Asset-Based Community Development approach?
- 7) How is the ABCD approach practically applied?
- 8) What is the advantage of this approach over other approaches?
- 9) What impact do you think the ABCD approach has on the ECD practitioners?
- 10) How does the organisation define empowerment?
- 11) How does the organisation ensure participation?
- 12) How does the Organisation ensure Sustainability of ECD projects?
- 13) What challenges has the organisation faced in applying the ABCD approach in ECD projects?
- 14) What kind of relationship does the organisation have with RUCE?

Thank you for your time. A copy of my thesis will be available to you once it is completed.

Appendix G

Interview questions for ECD practitioners

Good day, thank you for speaking with me this morning. This research is titled “An analysis of the Asset-Based Community Development Approach to Early Childhood Development interventions in Grahamstown Township pre-schools. A case study of the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement”. The questions that I will be asking will be in relation to RUCE and CSD. There are 32 Questions and the interview will take 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will be recorded and please feel free to stop the interview or not answer questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Questions

- 1) When was the pre-school established?
- 2) Why was the pre-school established?
- 3) Why did you decide to become an ECD practitioner?
- 4) What challenges do the children that you teach face in this community?
- 5) What challenges do you face as an ECD practitioner?
- 6) How long have you been working at the pre-school?
- 7) Can you tell me about the daily program that you teach?
- 8) What projects is the pre-school involved in that is run by CSD?
- 9) What qualification and training have you received from CSD?
- 10) What challenges have you faced in completing the qualification?
- 11) What training would you like to receive from CSD?
- 12) Would you like to study further and if so what would you like to study?
- 13) What kind of relationship does the pre-school have with CSD?
- 14) What would you like the CSD to improve on?
- 15) What RUCE project is the pre-school involved in?
- 16) What does community engagement mean to you?
- 17) How do you feel about having student volunteers at the pre-school?
- 18) What kind of relationship do you have with the student volunteers?
- 19) What do the student volunteers help with?
- 20) What challenges do you face with regards to student volunteers?
- 21) What kind of relationship does the pre-school have with RUCE?

- 22) What have you learned from training?
- 23) How have you practically applied what you learned?
- 24) What have you learned from the experience of working with student volunteers?
- 25) What have student volunteers learned from you?
- 26) What would you like the RUCE to improve on?
- 27) What resources does the pre-school have?
- 28) What resources does the pre-school need?
- 29) How do you aim to achieve the resources that the pre-school needs?
- 30) Does the pre-school receive support from community members?
- 31) What projects has the pre-school initiated to improved ECD?
- 32) Where you able to implement the activities that you learned from student volunteers over the years?

Thank you for your time. A copy of my thesis will be available to you once it is completed.

Appendix H

Interview Questions for Student Volunteers

Introduction

Good day, thank you for speaking with me this morning. This research is titled “An analysis of the Asset-Based Community Development Approach to Early Childhood Development interventions in Grahamstown Township pre-schools. A case study of the Centre for Social Development and Rhodes University Community Engagement”. The questions that I will be asking will be in relation to RUCE and CSD. There are 18 Questions and the interview will take 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will be recorded and please feel free to stop the interview or not answer questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Questions

- 1) Why did you decide to volunteer at a pre-school?
- 2) What do you enjoy the most when you're volunteering?
- 3) What challenges have you faced while volunteering?
- 4) What have you learned from the volunteering experience?
- 5) What does community engagement mean to you?
- 6) Have you attended RUCE training?
- 7) What have you learned from training?
- 8) How have you practically applied what you learned at training?
- 9) What do you think should be included in training?
- 10) How often do you come to the pre-school?
- 11) What kind of relationship do you have with the teachers?
- 12) What resources do you think the centre needs?
- 13) What resources does the centre have that makes it easier for you to volunteer?
- 14) What have the teachers and children learned from you?
- 15) What have you learned from them?
- 16) Do you think the teachers will be able to replicate the activities that you taught them?
- 17) Would you ever volunteer at the site again?
- 18) Do you know about the CSD and if so what do you know about the organisation?

Thank you for your time. A copy of my thesis will be available to you once it is completed.