

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FROM NGOs' PERSPECTIVE IN
TSHWANE**

BY

SONNIKA NEL

**A MINI DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

MSW SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINOLOGY

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANTIES

SUPERVISOR: PROF. Dr A. LOMBARD

AUGUST 2019

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

DECLARATION

Full name: Sonnika Nel

Student Number: 17220034

Degree: MSW Social Policy and Development

Title of mini dissertation: The role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs' perspective in Tshwane

I declare that this mini dissertation is my own original work. Where secondary material was used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of university policy and the implications in this regard.



Signature

7 September 2019

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue the journey of this research study and the self-growth it brought. I would like to acknowledge the following people who supported me throughout this process:

- God, for giving me the passion to bring about change and the perseverance to finish this study.
- My supervisor, Prof. A Lombard, for her substantial guidance and mentorship.
- My well-loved husband, Darius, for his continuous support, motivation and sacrifices in giving me the time and funding to undertake this research.
- My dearest daughter, Mieke, for being my greatest cheerleader and understanding why this study is so important to me.
- My colleagues at the Magalies Special School, especially my HOD, Mrs. M Roux, and the principal, Mrs. M Loubser, for their constant interest in my study and their continuous support and patience.

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FROM NGOs' PERSPECTIVE IN TSHWANE

STUDENT: SONNIKA NEL
SUPERVISOR: PROF. Dr A. LOMBARD
DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL WORK AND CRIMINOLOGY
DEGREE: MSW SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

In 2015, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was adopted by state nations across the globe to eradicate poverty in all its forms, combat inequality, preserve the planet, create sustainable economic growth and foster social inclusion (United Nations, 2015:5). Social work is committed to contributing to sustainable development through the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* (2012). When social workers promote sustainable development, both social and environmental justice are equally important and also interrelated.

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice to achieve sustainable communities from Non-governmental organisations' perspective in Tshwane.

The researcher used the qualitative research approach. The study was both explorative and descriptive. The study used an instrumental case study design and the type of research was both basic and applied. The research sample of 10 social workers from the Tshwane area was purposively selected, and data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews.

The findings derived from the study showed that social workers in practice are aware of the interrelatedness between communities and the physical environment, but that the environment is not always consciously integrated in their interventions. Furthermore, social workers can identify the need for green social work. However, although they are unsure of how to practise green social work, some social workers are already promoting sustainability in their communities, albeit without always realising their involvement with environmental justice. The study concluded that there is a growing awareness amongst social workers of the interrelatedness between social justice and environmental justice and that, in promoting social justice, they should incorporate environmental justice. Furthermore, traditional social work roles could be employed to promote environmental justice and sustainable communities by adopting green social work as theoretical framework (Dominelli, 2012).

The study recommends a raised awareness of green social work amongst social workers, interventions with a view to do community-building and present training opportunities for social workers to equip them with the skills to practice green social work through focused interventions. Further research on social work practice is required to shift existing social work practice to integrated social, economic and environmental development that promote sustainable communities.

KEY WORDS

Green social work

Environmental social work

Environmental justice

Sustainable communities

Social justice

Social work and sustainable development

CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
APPENDICES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Theoretical framework	4
1.3 Rationale and problem statement	65
1.4 Goal and objectives of the study	7
1.4.1 Research goal	7
1.4.2 Research objectives	7
1.5 Research methodology	8
1.6 Division of the research report	9
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Sustainable communities and the physical environment.....	11
2.3 Sustainable communities and social justice	14
2.4 Interrelated social and environmental justice.....	15
2.5 Theoretical framework of the study	17

2.6 Role of social work in promoting environmental justice	19
2.6.1 Social work and sustainable communities.....	20
2.6.2 Social work and environmental justice.....	21
2.6.3 Challenges faced by social workers when promoting environmental justice.....	22
2.6.4 Shift in social work focus to people and environment	23
2.6.5 Social work interventions and social work skills	25
2.6.5.1 Social work amidst natural disasters.....	27
2.6.5.2 Social work and sustainable communities	29
2.6.5.3 Social work and building community capacity.....	30
2.6.5.4 Social work, pollution and urbanisation	32
2.6.5.5 Social work, social capital and social entrepreneurship	33
2.6.5.6 Social work and conflict resolution	33
2.6.5.7 Social work and structural changes for environmental justice	34
2.7 Summary	35
CHAPTER THREE	36
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS ...	36
3.1 Introduction	36
3.2 Research approach.....	36
3.3 Types of research	38
3.4. Research design.....	38
3.5 Research methods.....	39

3.5.1 Study population and sampling	39
3.5.2 Data-collection methods	43
3.6 Data analysis	45
3.7 Trustworthiness of data	46
3.7.1 Credibility	47
3.7.2 Transferability	47
3.7.3 Auditability	48
3.7.4 Confirmability	<u>4948</u>
3.8 Pilot study.....	50
3.9 Ethical considerations	51
3.9.1 Informed consent	51
3.9.2 Confidentiality	52
3.9.3 Voluntary participation.....	53
3.9.4 Actions and competence of researcher	53
3.9.5 Avoiding harm and undertaking debriefing.....	54
3.9.6 Dissemination of findings.....	55
3.10 Limitations of the study.....	55
3.11 Research findings	56
3.11.1 Demographic details of participants	56
3.12 Key themes and sub-themes	57
3.13 Summary	96

CHAPTER FOUR.....	97
KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	97
4.1 Introduction	97
4.2 Goals and objectives.....	97
4.3 Key findings and conclusions	100
4.4. Recommendations	103
4.4.1 Increased awareness of green social work amongst social workers	103
4.4.2 Focused interventions for community-building	104
4.4.3 Training opportunities in green social work for social workers in the physical environment	104
4.4.4 Clarifying roles and responsibilities of social workers to promote sustainable communities.....	105
4.4.5 Further research	105
REFERENCES	106

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission letter Funanani

Appendix B: Permission letter CMR Derdepoort

Appendix C: Permission letter Echo Youth Development

Appendix D: Permission letter Kungwini Welfare Organisation

Appendix E: Permission letter Eleos

Appendix F: Permission letter Louis Botha Children's Home

Appendix G: Interview schedule

Appendix H: Informed consent form

Appendix I: Ethical clearance letter

LIST OF TABLES

Demographic details of participants

Themes and sub-themes

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In 2015, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [hereafter 2030 Agenda] was adopted by state nations across the globe to eradicate poverty in all its forms, combat inequality, preserve the planet, create sustainable economic growth and foster social inclusion (United Nations [UN], 2015:5). Social work is committed to contributing to sustainable development through the *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development* [Global Agenda] (2012). The key dimensions of sustainable development are social, economic and environmental development (UN, 2015). In sustainable development, both people and the planet are equally important. Climate change and the rapid depletion of natural resources are affecting the lives of people in general, while the natural resource depletion and the adverse impact of environmental degradation and pollution undermine the ability of communities to develop and grow (International Association of Schools of Social Work [hereafter IASSW], 2016). Environmental disasters exacerbate existing socio-economic and cultural inequalities (Dominelli, 2014a:344), which in turn emphasise the link between social instability and the physical and human environment.

The four themes of the Global Agenda are interlinked, but theme three in particular refers to promoting environmental and community sustainability, which also has been the international focus of social work for the period 2017 to 2018. This specific commitment includes building community capacity to respond to environmental challenges and human and natural disasters (Global Agenda, 2012). This also calls upon social workers to align their activities and programmes with development initiatives that integrate the environment with human dimensions (IASSW, 2016).

In the framework of sustainable development, social work concerns itself with broadening the notion of the environment to include the natural world, thus shifting largely from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric focus (Gray, Coates & Hetherington, 2013:298). Social workers are compelled to act on environmental injustices because of their ethical mandate to address social injustice (Erickson, 2012:184). Social work engages in the environmental discourse with regard to issues that contribute to human dilemmas, but nevertheless, despite having much to offer the debate, lags behind in claiming the territory of the natural world (Besthorn, 2013:33; Dominelli, 2014a:339). This study intended to contribute to this debate by looking at environmental issues for sustainable communities through the lens of environmental justice which incorporates social justice from non-governmental organisations' [NGO] perspective. The study's emphasis on the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice intended to contribute to social work practice and policy that promote environmental justice and sustainable communities. As indicated earlier, the focus is aligned with the third theme of the Global Agenda (2012), promoting community-building and environmental sustainability.

The concepts relevant to the study are as follows:

- Social work and green social work

The global definition of the social work profession emphasises social justice, human rights, indigenous knowledge and participation and provides the broader framework for developmental and green social work:

Social work is a practise-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IASSW, 2014).

Social work in South Africa is underpinned by a developmental approach (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, 1997). The study embraces a developmental and green perspective for social work practice. Developmental social work “affirms the social work profession’s commitment to the eradication of poverty, recognises the link between welfare and economic development, and construes welfare as an investment in human capital rather than a drain on limited government resources” (Gray, Agillias, Mupedziswa & Mugumbate, 2017:2). Green social work transcends a narrow focus on poverty eradication to include social workers’ working in close collaboration with the local people in their communities to develop empowering and sustainable relationships between them and their environments within a framework of human rights as well as social and environmental justice (Dominelli, 2012:196).

- Environmental justice

Environmental justice is important for ensuring that the human right to live in a clean, safe and healthy environment is enjoyed by all people as the world’s poorest, most vulnerable and oppressed people often live in the most degraded environments and have no control over resources (Hawkins, 2010:68). For the purpose of this study, the interrelatedness between environmental justice and community sustainability is based on the view of Schlosberg (2007:57) that “environmental justice is not simply an individual experience’, but also ‘embedded in one’s community”.

- Sustainable communities

Sustainable communities require that people act as stewards of their natural environment. According to Rainey, Robinson, Allen and Christy (2003:709) “... stewardship implies that current and future activities do not degrade local resources such that the community becomes

less productive and/or less attractive over time.” In this study sustainable communities are regarded as healthy and inclusive societies that have access to water and sanitation, renewable energy for all, inclusive and safe housing and food security (IASSW, 2016). Furthermore, sustainable communities promote social, economic and environmental justice by focusing on interventions that eradicate poverty and combat inequality while preserving the planet (UN, 2015:5). In addition, the study regards community participation as a vital tool for sustainable communities (Schlosberg, 2007:57; 64).

- Research site

The study was conducted at NGOs in the Tshwane area. The Tshwane area consists of seven regions and has 76 municipal wards which extend 60 km from east to west and 70 km from north to south (City of Tshwane, 2018). There are 911 536 households with an unemployment rate of 24% (City of Tshwane, 2015). The following NGOs were approached to participate in the study: Funanani, CMR Derdepoort, Echo Youth Development, Kungwini Welfare Organisation, Eleos, and Louis Botha Children’s Home. See Chapter Three, section 3.5.1 for an overview of these NGOs.

1.2 Theoretical framework

A change to ecological justice is important in the discourse of environmental social work and social work’s role in environmental and community sustainability as it embraces environmental and social justice in responding to environmental issues. However, adopting an ecological justice perspective does not automatically translate into using the ecological approach as theoretical framework for environmental social work. Dominelli (2012:8) argues that the “deep ecological” approach still privileges people by focusing largely on the interaction between

people and social and physical environments in which “people react to their physical environment as opposed to integrating the physical, social, economic, political and cultural environments. Integrated environments are required for holistic social work practice that intends to change existing “inegalitarian social relationships, power relations and resource distribution systems” (Dominelli, 2012:8).

Therefore, the study adopted green social work (Dominelli, 2012) as a theoretical framework. Dominelli (2012:8) defines green social work as that part of practice “that intervenes to protect the environment and enhance people’s well-being by integrating the interdependencies between people and their socio-cultural, economic and physical environments, and among peoples within an egalitarian framework that addresses prevailing structural inequalities and unequal distribution of power and resources”. To give effect to human rights, social and environmental justice and social inclusion require a more equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the earth among all, and new paradigms in production and consumption (Dominelli, 2012:198). In this, Dominelli sees a role for social workers in advocating change and doing research that shows the suffering of the poor and marginalised, and promoting robust resilience in communities through capacity-building and developing partnerships (Dominelli, 2012:198).

In this study the role of social workers was explored in relation to how they were engaged in promoting environmental justice by integrating the environment into social and economic development interventions or activities. This included their role in advocating using the services by users, building communities’ capacity, and working in partnerships for sustainable development outcomes.

1.3 Rationale and problem statement

The 2030 Agenda (2015), with its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, emphasises that both people and the planet are important for human development that leaves nobody behind (UN, 2015). To this end, the call for the integration of environmental preservation and human well-being involves a growing movement that envisages sustainable development (Erickson, 2012:187). Theme three of the Global Agenda (2012), promoting environmental and community sustainability, underpins the rationale of this study. The commitments of the Global Agenda (2012) are aligned with the 2030 Agenda (2015), which positions social work well for contributing to sustainable development. Sustainable development includes social, economic and environmental dimensions (UN, 2015) and implies a social work focus on humans and the planet.

Social work's longstanding focus on people-in-environment emphasises the interaction between people and their social environment (Besthorn, 2013; Dominelli, 2014a; Erickson, 2012). Within the context of sustainable development, the discourse on environmental social work has gradually shifted to include environmental justice and the natural environment. This implies an ecological focus, where social work looks at environmental issues through both environmental and social justice lenses. Poor and marginalised societies, that are the key focus of social work, are very severely affected by environmental degradation and climate change (International Federation for Social Work [IFSW], 2015). In view of their ethical mandate to address social injustice, social workers are compelled to act in addressing environmental injustices (Erickson, 2012:184). To contribute to sustainable communities, social work should integrate issues of the natural environment with human development in existing social work practice models (Erickson, 2012:184), and develop integrated social and economic models that take the natural environment into consideration (Dominelli, 2012). This study intended to

explore the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice that contributed to achieving sustainable communities.

The research question of the study was:

What is the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs' perspective in Tshwane?

The research sub-questions were as follows:

- What are social workers' understanding of environmental justice?
- What activities and interventions are social workers engaged in that address environmental justice issues?
- How do social workers contribute to sustainable communities?
- What strategies do social workers propose in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities?

1.4 Goal and objectives of the study

1.4.1 Research goal

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs' perspective in Tshwane.

1.4.2 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- To conceptualise environmental justice and community sustainability in social work within the context of green social work;

- To explore social workers' understanding of environmental justice;
- To explore and describe the activities and interventions that social workers engage with in addressing environmental justice issues;
- To explore and describe social workers' contribution to sustainable communities;
- To make recommendations on the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities.

1.5 Research methodology

A synopsis of the research methodology is furnished here, followed by an in depth discussion in Chapter Three.

The researcher wanted to gather data from social workers to understand how they perceived the environment's impact on their service users, how they contributed to sustainable communities and what social work roles they could fulfil to promote environmental justice. Therefore, a qualitative approach and interpretivism as research paradigm were used to enable the researcher to gain in-depth information from the participants (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:91; Rubin & Babbie, 2013:55). The study had both explorative and descriptive goals (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96).

The research was both basic and applied in order to contribute knowledge on the roles of social workers in promoting environmental justice in practice to achieve sustainable communities (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94). An instrumental case study was utilised as research design (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:141; Rule & John, 2011:8) to explore specific cases of social workers' experiences in their practice settings.

The population selected for the study was social workers employed by NGOs in Tshwane. Purposive, non-probability sampling (Babbie, 2011:179) was used to sample 10 social workers from six NGOs, namely Funanani, CMR Derdepoort, Echo Youth Development, Kungwini Welfare Organisation, Eleos, and Louis Botha Children's Home. The method of data collection was individual interviews, and a semi-structured interview schedule was used as research instrument. Thematic analysis was applied to reduce and process the data into themes and key findings (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011:397). The trustworthiness of the data was obtained by integrating four strategies: credibility, transferability, auditability and confirmability (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:191). The ethical considerations relevant to the study are discussed Chapter Three.

1.6 Division of the research report

Chapter One focuses on the introduction, rationale and problem statement of the study, the goal and objectives of the study and a brief orientation of the theoretical framework and research methodology. Chapter Two presents the literature review on environmental justice, sustainable communities and the role of social work in promoting them. It also contains a discussion of green social work as theoretical framework for the study. In Chapter Three the research approach, type of research and research methodology will be discussed, as well as the research design, population and sample, data collection methods and analyses, trustworthiness of the data. The ethical considerations relevant to the study, and the limitations of the study are discussed in Chapter Three. Furthermore, the chapter presents the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter Four highlights the key findings of the study, and presents the conclusions and the recommendations from the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Sustainable development is a widely used term, especially in the discourse about development and addressing poverty. In this chapter, the researcher explores the relevance of sustainable development for social work, the importance of environmental justice in sustainability and the roles that social workers fulfil to promote both social and environmental sustainability.

Besthorn (2012:254) warns that “shallow justice” is when social workers focus only on human rights and social justice, which alone would not make communities sustainable. He suggests that environmental justice should support the protection of vulnerable communities and social justice through equitably distributing natural resources for the benefit of the people (Besthorn, 2013:37). He proposes the adoption of the “deep ecology” concept, in accordance with which people are regarded as embedded in the natural world, inseparable from the environment (Besthorn, 2012:252). Gray and Coates (2012:242) define deep ecology as an ideology of interdependence and ecological sustainability, which replaces an isolated ideology of economic growth. Zapf (2010:35) is more specific about this interdependence, which he describes as a “mutual dependence” between humans and nature instead of humans dominating nature for economic gain.

If social workers do not take environmental justice into account and focus on the interrelatedness between humans and nature, they risk not fully assisting service users or promoting the social justice that is embedded in environmental conditions (Heinsch, 2011:315; Schlosberg, 2013:37,40). Social workers could have a positive impact on environmental justice by using green social work (Dominelli, 2012) as theoretical framework to guide their interventions and practice.

Social work in South Africa aims to promote social development through the adoption of a developmental social welfare policy, as outlined in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997). Dominelli (2014b:144-145) proposes tasks and roles that social workers should consider when seeking environmental justice in the process of promoting social justice, such as supporting both humanitarian and environmental rights, empowering service users to protect the environment, promoting partnerships and participation, and macro-level advocating in favour of environmental justice. All these tasks are part of developmental social work, as explained by Patel (2015:82), and therefore green social work fits in well with developmental social work. A study on drought mitigation by Chiwara and Lombard (2018:300) in Namibia emphasises the significance of green social work as theoretical framework to promote social, economic and environmental justice.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the effect of the physical environment on the sustainability of communities. The next focus is on how social justice influence the sustainability of communities. Thereafter the interrelatedness between social and environmental justice are presented. Green social work as a theoretical framework for the study is then explained, followed by literature relevant to the role of social work in promoting environmental justice. The chapter concludes with a summary.

2.2 Sustainable communities and the physical environment

Environmental challenges are caused by climate change, amongst other things. It threatens human health and well-being and affects vulnerable communities disproportionately (Kemp & Palinkas, 2015:3). Greene and Greene (2009:1017) predict that natural disasters will occur more frequently because of climate change and the growing world population. The effect of climate change and the concomitant natural disasters on the well-being and physical and social

functioning of people could escalate detrimentally. Climate change could have a substantial influence on farming, the relocation of people and their livelihoods (Hazell & Hess, 2010:402). When communities' food security and housing options are at risk, their survival and social well-being are jeopardised. Taylor (2013:98) explains how the health of oceans has a direct impact on communities' livelihoods and well-being. Erickson (2012:185) points out that environmental degradation is partly a result of climate change and that human activities like pollution enhance this degradation process. Environmental degradation is a global concern that affects all people.

The impact of disasters causes the greatest damage to poor and excluded communities (Dominelli, 2012:129). Poor children are particularly vulnerable to environmental risk (Rogge, 2000:46). People who are indigent often live in fragile homes that are more exposed to natural and extreme weather conditions, and the older poor people suffer more from hot or cold conditions (Mulligan, 2015:58). Erickson (2012:185) highlights that environmental elements such as water provide vulnerable communities with security. When this type of natural resource comes under pressure, the survival of these communities is threatened. Dominelli (2014a:342) explains that disasters promote social inequalities such as unemployment and increased levels of domestic violence. The social injustices that arise from these inequalities become more prominent during times of disasters or recurring environmental degradation due to systems that prolong inequality. Teixeira and Krings (2015:514) use the term "environmental racism" to refer to communities with a high concentration of racial minorities that are more exposed to pollution and health hazards due to environmental degradation.

Dominelli (2014a:339) describes environmental injustice as the failure of people to preserve natural resources in the process of meeting human needs. Erickson (2012:184) emphasises societies' desire to better their quality of life, which lies at the core of environmental degradation. Industrial development has caused severe damage to the environment and

contributes to climate change (Alston & Besthorn, 2012:63). Furthermore, environmental degradation is also caused by the human population, its growth and consumption (Rogge, 2000:47). The damage humans do to the natural environment is starting to take its toll on natural resources that are pivotal for human survival. Sustainable development means empowering people, overcoming poverty, reducing unhealthy communities, improving education and working in partnerships to enhance livelihoods and environmental justice when observed in the environmental context (Dominelli, 2012:150). It implies that people will not be able to use natural resources indefinitely without taking the damage to the environment into account. Rainey et al. (2003:709) highlight that policies and activities that develop economic vitality and social equity should also promote environmental stewardship. As regards Dominelli (2012:89), sustainable and more environmentally friendly forms of socio-economic development is important to protect the earth's resources. However, Dominelli (2012:150) cautions that without sustainable methods for development the future of generations to come, and the earth's health will be dreary. The Brundtland Report, officially known as *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1997 by the World Commission on Environment and Development focuses on the topic of sustainability (Brundtland, 1987).

The Brundtland Report outlines sustainability as a process that addresses the peoples' needs and at the same time endorses the ability of coming generations to fulfil their own needs (Brundtland, 1987). The significance of this definition is that the social needs of people are linked to the natural environment and its resources through economic development (Vallance, Perkins & Dixon, 2011:343). Agenda 2030 (UN, 2015) presents economic, social and environmental development as components of sustainability. In addition to social, environmental and economic sustainability, Midili, Dincer and Ay (2006:3625) also regard energy and resource sustainability as aspects that lead to sustainability. The Brundtland Report further emphasises the pressure that economic growth puts on the environment in the effort to

combat poverty and social injustice (Green, 2012:91). In the long term this will not promote sustainable communities.

2.3 Sustainable communities and social justice

Sustainable living accounts for the sensible use of resources by communities. Therefore social workers could play a vital role to mobilise communities in doing so. Social work has always focused on communities that have been exposed to social hazards and unequal opportunities, and mostly been treated with a lack of human dignity. Social justice is intertwined with protecting human rights (Alston & Besthorn, 2012:65). In principle it is social justice that implies the advocacy role of social workers in promoting social change (Haynes, 2012:269). Social work values are in line with restoring justice to people by promoting respect for their basic needs and creating a sense of social responsibility, a deep commitment to advocating individual freedom, and empowering communities to enhance self-determination (Hoefler, 2012:33-34). Social work roles are guided by these values and are used to improve the living conditions of individuals and communities through challenging the uneven distribution of wealth and power to restore social justice.

Inequalities in wealth and power are increasing owing to globalisation (Wilson, 2011:18). Patel (2015:2) defines globalisation as “fundamental, large-scale, rapid and complex social changes in contemporary societies that have far-reaching consequences for people”. One of these consequences is poverty. It affects many people globally, which foregrounds the role of social work, both internationally and locally. The global tendency of inequality also has an impact on communities at national and local levels, as pointed out by the National Planning Committee of South Africa, which acknowledged both poverty and inequalities as prominent challenges in South Africa (NDP, 2012). Schoeman (2001:327) captures it well by saying that South-

Africa is characterised by a “skewed distribution of wealth” that leaves social workers with the enormous task of challenging structures to achieve the redistribution of resources with a view to restoring social justice. Social workers therefore cannot address poverty without challenging the structures that caused the unequal distribution of resources in the first place.

Environmental justice, just like social justice, is also embedded in human rights (Dominelli (2012:169). Hawkins (2010:74) posits that environmental justice is a human right. Miller, Hayward and Shaw (2012:271) emphasise the relevance of human rights in relation to the effects of the environment on social justice for communities. Social disruption and human rights abuses are caused by pressure on the environment and depletion of natural resources (Alston & Besthorn, 2012:65). The responsible use of natural resources would not only protect a community’s human rights in terms of social justice, but also contribute to sustainable living.

2.4 Interrelated social and environmental justice

When poverty is addressed as a cause of social injustice, it cannot be ignored that poverty, as an ongoing disaster, is both a symptom and a cause of environmental degradation (Dominelli, 2012:3). Social injustice is very often an outcome of natural disasters, unhealthy environments and food insecurity, which in turn result from environmental degradation (Dominelli, 2012:3). Environmental injustice can be both a cause and a result of social injustice when communities degrade the environment to eke out a livelihood for survival and to escape the harsh realities of social injustice.

Social justice relating to a community’s sustainability is directly influenced by the environment. Climate change and environmental degradation both affect the poor, women and marginalised ethnic groups in very significant ways (Nesmith & Smyth, 2015:485).

Environmental degradation furthermore increases the risk of vulnerable groups that are already socially and economically excluded. Dominelli (2013:294) affirms that existing social exclusion, social injustice and marginalisation intensify during disaster situations and as a consequence of environmental degradation. Furthermore, climate change has the tendency of worsening the situation concerning peoples' risk and vulnerability (Green, 2012:167). For example, people living in communities that are affected by prolonged disasters are expected to battle mental and physical health problems (Stain, Kelly, Carr, Lewin, Fitzgerald & Fragar, 2011:1594). Climate change can also result in a decline in food security and malnourishment. Any change in climatic conditions could moreover also affect the quality of food due to the temperature and decreased growth period (Kang, Khan & Ma, 2009:1671). When people are malnourished, it impacts especially on women and children in that they are at greater risk of health problems and lower levels of education and development (Green, 2012:186). The widespread impact of environmental degradation therefore means that communities are impacted directly, placing the basic functioning of its people at risk, which would of necessity have a negative impact on social justice.

When people seek social justice without taking the environment into account, it could contribute to environmental injustice. Hawkins (2010:74) defines environmental justice as “the right of current and future generations to a clean, healthy and safe environment”. Peeters (2012:291) emphasises that environmental justice implies equal right of access to ecological resources.

Urbanisation is an example of the impact of ways of living that causes environmental injustice in a community. Increasing numbers of people are migrating from rural to urban areas (Patel, 2015:13), which puts extra strain on natural resources in these densely populated areas. Dominelli (2012:46) lists poverty, unemployment and social exclusion as some of the consequences of urbanisation and warns that the natural environment is very badly affected in

cities (Dominelli, 2012:49). Cities create a very small space that needs to be shared by both people and other living things, which causes constant competition (Dominelli, 2012:49). Green spaces in cities are becoming fewer due to the transport and life needs of the people (Dominelli, 2012:52) and so the environment is compromised for the sake of alleged social justice. Only the basic and immediate needs, such as food and water, are met when environmental justice is not promoted alongside social justice. The depletion of natural resources results in social disruption and human rights abuses (Alston & Besthorn, 2012:65).

Social workers should understand their specific roles and how they could employ traditional social work roles when they engage with environmental issues and promote sustainable communities. Literature to guide social workers in this task is limited. In this regard, Dominelli (2012:80) points out the gap in prescribed, clear roles and interventions for social workers to promote environmental justice. Hawkins (2010:69) affirms that sustainability, human rights and environmental justice are not yet integrated with the general social work knowledge base and skills set. Therefore, a theoretical framework that provides guidelines on roles and interventions about integrating the physical environment with social work was adopted as the study's theoretical framework.

2.5 Theoretical framework of the study

Dominelli (2012:8) introduces green social work, which guards the environment and promotes communities' welfare by challenging structural inequalities at the same time as viewing the environment as not only fulfilling human needs, but also as being interrelated with the people. It acknowledges the interrelatedness between social and environmental justice. Green social work strives to achieve interrelatedness through:

Questioning production and consumption patterns that exploit people and the earth's largesse; tackling structural inequalities, including the unequal distribution of power and resources; eliminating poverty and various 'isms'; promoting global interdependencies, solidarity and egalitarian social relations; utilizing limited natural resources such as land, air, water, energy sources and minerals for the benefit of all rather than the privileged few; and protecting the earth's flora and fauna (Dominelli, 2012:25)

Dominelli (2012:131) furthermore claims that this framework fits social work practice well due to its inclusive, egalitarian and caring nature and that "green social work places people at the heart of its theory and practice" (2012:132). Green social work provides social workers with a broader context of their service users' environment by acknowledging the natural environment and also promoting the environmental justice of the earth.

From the environmental justice point of departure, green social work as a lens to link social work and the physical environment is supported by other authors. Alston (2015:359) elaborates on Dominelli's concept of green social work, emphasising that it integrates environmental challenges with inequalities and skewed power relations. Drolet, Wu, Taylor and Dennehy (2015:531) describe green social work as being holistic for understanding the interrelatedness of people and the environment, and that this framework is useful when social workers need to examine environmental issues. Phillip and Reisch (2015:477) recommend green social work as a conceptual framework to explain the dimensions of global environment crises and how they impact on the social work profession. They propose that green social work should be integrated with other social work approaches, namely anti-oppressive and radical social work, to identify and address structural inequalities that have an impact on communities. In this study, green social work was used as theoretical framework to explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice and sustainability.

2.6 Role of social work in promoting environmental justice

Lombard (2015:484) states that the Global Agenda (2012) echoes the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda Goals (UN, 2015), when she highlights that both documents strive for sustainable development by focusing on social and economic development as well as sustainable development, which means integrated social, economic and environmental development. The five aspects of sustainable development, as captured in the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015:3), are eradicating the poverty of the people, preventing degradation of the planet, promoting prosperous lives for all, ensuring peaceful communities without violence and conflict, and establishing global partnerships to attain these goals.

The Global Agenda (2012) consists of four pillars and the aim of the third pillar, namely promoting environmental and community sustainability, is to guide social work in aligning social services to combat poverty without degrading the natural environment in doing so. Social work is hereby committed to finding ways to limit the negative impact of service users on natural resources and rather to help them to preserve the resources for current and future use. Poverty eradication and addressing social injustices are at the core of social work. However, it should never be done in a way that puts the natural environment at risk of degradation. Social workers should therefore instead make a serious effort to attend to environmental degradation and injustice, as prioritised by both Agenda 2030 (UN, 2015) and the Global Agenda (2012).

Environmental degradation is a global occurrence and its effect on social work service users should also be treated as a global dilemma. The biggest global occurrence of environmental degradation is “deforestation”, “desertification”, “drop in water tables” and “coral bleaching” (Mulligan, 2015:115). Alston (2015:361) argues that social workers should apply their skills to make a contribution to resolving the global environmental issues and by doing so improve

social equality. However, for sustainable development, social workers should pay attention to peoples' livelihoods, hence economic inclusion.

In the following section social work as it relates to sustainable communities and environmental justice will be discussed, followed by the challenges faced by social workers when promoting environmental justice. The section concludes with a focus on social work interventions and skills.

2.6.1 Social work and sustainable communities

In the context of sustainable development, Alston and Besthorn (2012:60) point out the relevance of the Brundtland Report (see section 2.2) to social workers, which involves working towards achieving social equity, establishing economic security and protecting the environment. Therefore, social workers should promote integrated social, economic and environmental sustainability. They must manage resources to promote social justice, but at the same time preserve the resources for future use (Gray & Coates, 2012:242).

Social and environmental justice require sustainable social work interventions. Therefore, it is important to clarify social workers' understanding of environmental justice and the specific roles that they should play to promote sustainable communities. Environmental aspects have not traditionally been part of social workers' training; hence many social workers are not specifically trained to practice in this field (Hawkins, 2010:69). What social workers focused on was the person-in-environment, which excluded the integration of the natural environment with society (Erikson, 2012:184). The person-in-environment focus only takes the social environment into consideration when addressing social justice, which means ignoring the interaction between the service users and the environment and how this influences sustainability.

Social workers have a definite responsibility to keep environmental justice in mind when they facilitate empowerment of their service users to improve their quality of life and strengthen livelihood structures (Lombard, 2014:51). Kaiser, Himmelheber, Miller and Hayward (2015:553) recommend that environmental justice issues, especially in terms of food justice, should be incorporated into social work education to widen their scope of practice. Social workers might have the ability to identify environmental injustices but did not necessarily possess the theoretical knowledge or specific skills to promote environmental justice. However, McKinnon (2008:264) argues that social workers could use their role as experts in social systems to promote sustainability. Dylan (2013:81) and Lombard (2014:266) affirm the important role of social work in transitioning to a sustainable future. In order to work towards sustainable communities, social workers should recognise the importance of the environment and their role in promoting environmental justice.

2.6.2 Social work and environmental justice

Hawkins (2010:68) notes that social workers should include environmental justice in their scope of practice to give their service users the right to a hygienic environment. The magnitude of the impact of climate change and environmental degradation poses such a great threat to humans that social workers cannot work towards human rights and social justice without taking the environment into account (Bowles, Boettes, Jones & McKinnon, 2016:12). Kemp and Palinkas (2015:4) urge social workers to deal with environmental change in a more assertive, comprehensive and innovative manner. Erickson (2012:188) cautions that if social workers chose to ignore the role of environmental degradation in promoting social justice their roles would ultimately become more demanding and complex.

Gray and Coates (2012:239) explain that social workers are concerned with finding resources for their service users and even more so for marginalised people, who are hardest hit by environmental degradation. Hawkins (2010:68) also elaborates on the point that the poorest

and most marginalised people in the world live in degraded environments and emphasises that they have little control over the distribution and protection of resources. People are therefore affected at personal and structural levels. It is therefore the role of social workers to address environmental issues at the micro level, and also to challenge and influence policies and structures at the macro level to eradicate inequalities and advocate the equal distribution of resources. The micro- and macro-level focuses resonate with developmental social work (Patel, 2015:98).

Social workers who embark on the aforementioned venture should be knowledgeable and able to balance social and environmental justice. Social workers who are working in already challenging conditions should have very clear guidelines on their role in rendering services that integrate social and economic development while protecting the environment. To this end, there is an urgent need for social workers to consider any ignorance on their part of environmental issues and natural disasters, food insecurity, housing, environmental refugees and public health (Melekis & Woodhouse, 2015:577) in order to act upon the challenges that environmental and social injustice pose. However, social workers face challenges in practice at many levels, as outlined in the next section.

2.6.3 Challenges faced by social workers when promoting environmental justice

Social workers' work-related challenges include, among others, difficult working conditions and inadequate training and skills (Mwansa, 2011:368). Furthermore, NGOs are challenged in respect of understaffed offices, inadequate funding, and unequal partnerships with the government (September, 2007:96). Dominelli (2012:72) mentions the particular challenges social workers encounter when they promote environmental justice by demanding accountability from companies and are then put under pressure by their employers. Dominelli (2012:6) also highlights that the greatest challenge for social workers who would like to

“green” their practice is to enhance the lives of vulnerable and marginalised service users and preserve the earth’s resources while doing so. Resources available to social workers’ service users are already under severe pressure and it takes a great deal of extra effort to manage these resources in a way that promotes sustainable living in communities. However, resources are not the only challenge social workers face as they also have to contend with role confusion. Mutie (2014:98) affirms that roles of social workers in organisations that aim to promote environmental justice are not clearly framed. Clear guidelines and job descriptions would assist social workers to becoming prepared and empowered with the required knowledge and skills to promote environmental justice.

2.6.4 Shift in social work focus to people and environment

Social work does not as yet include the environment, the physical environment and ecological systems, as part of its field’s literature (McKinnon, 2008:256). Peeters (2012:288) affirms that ecological concerns are not yet an important aspect of the profession. This could be due to social workers’ ignorance of the natural environment or even the mindset that social workers are not responsible for promoting environmental justice. However, McKinnon (2008:261-263) lists the impact of the environment on peoples’ lives as farming and livelihoods, the occurrence of crime, intensity of war, movement of refugees, communities’ health, expansion of poverty and human development, and that therefore social workers have no choice but to integrate the physical environment into their practice if they aspire to address social injustice.

Ramsay and Boddy (2017:78) advise social workers to be mindful of environmental degradation when dealing with needs relating to housing, health and child protection. Although these are common social work issues, social workers could not merely apply existing social work interventions to resolve them. However, social workers would have to make a deliberate adjustment to their approach in applying these skills for the short-term benefit of their service users and seeking environmentally friendly alternatives that serve the purposes of both social

and environmental upliftment. Traditionally social workers are concerned with promoting social justice and human rights and this makes them effective partners in promoting environmental justice (Teixeira & Krings, 2015:515) by advocating structures and policies that protect the environment. By doing this, social workers ultimately also protect their service users' resources.

Besthorn (2013:40) says that social workers have much to offer when it comes to active involvement in promoting environmental justice. However, he also highlights that social workers would have to make considerable mental switches really to fulfil the role of environmental justice activists and that they should reconsider their conceptualisation of justice. Coates and Gray (2012:233) found a healthy interest among social workers globally to promote environmental justice, but how this would work in practice is still underemphasised. In a study by Crawford, Augustine, Earle, Kuyini-Abubakar, Luxford and Babacan (2015:595), they concluded that eco-social work is still mostly conceptual. In Mutie's (2014:98) research, he found that many social workers did not see themselves as playing a role in the water supply of the community and preferred to keep to traditional social work roles. Furthermore, despite their acquired developmental skills, the organisations that the social workers work for did not recognise their competence to promote environmental justice (Mutie, 2014:98). Therefore, it seems that some social workers have the intent to promote environmental justice but lack the proper skills to put their intent into action in practice. There is a growing need for social workers to integrate the natural environment with their practice and improving their understanding of the environment's impact on their type of interaction with service users (Alston & Besthorn, 2012:58). It is unfortunate that little research has been done on social workers who incorporate environmental justice into their practice (Bowles et al., 2016:4). Heinsch (2011:310) states that possibilities for social workers to incorporate nature or the environment into their practice are underutilised due to a lack of nature-based approaches.

Through a study of the literature on the positive effect of using natural resources for therapeutic intent, Heinsch (2011:311) found that contact with the natural environment produced emotional and cognitive benefits. Furthermore, Heinsch (2011:312) noted that children's resilience improves when they have contact with nature, and especially pets. There are many possibilities for social workers to integrate nature into their practice and by doing so improving the quality of life of their service users, and making them aware of the interrelatedness between humans and the environment. Social workers should start by looking into existing social work roles to assist them with this mental adjustment.

Traditional generalist social work roles include the roles of counsellor, educator, broker, coordinator, mobiliser, mediator, negotiator, facilitator and advocate (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110). These existing social work roles and skills are useful for social workers to promote environmental justice (Ramsay & Boddy, 2017:72; Schmitz, Matyók, Sloan & James, 2012:278). Social workers are familiar with these roles but should redirect them specifically to confront structures that degrade the environment and promote inequality. Hsu and Agoramoorthy (2015:27) list general social work skills and roles that could be utilised when social workers assist communities with environmental issues, namely: conducting interviews, doing research, writing proposals, acting as advisors, empowering communities and resolving conflict. Androff (2016:43) advises that social workers must own their known role as advocates of the change they had identified. Social workers could be proponents of environmental justice by recognising the link between environmental degradation and human consumption.

2.6.5 Social work interventions and social work skills

There are various ways to promote and attain environmental justice. Schlosberg (2007) in Dominelli (2012:98) proposes four principles of environmental justice: equitable environmental risk and benefit, participation of communities in environmental decisions,

acknowledgement of local tradition and knowledge, and recognising the ability of communities to make proper decisions for themselves.

Besthorn (2014:17) advises social workers to be curious and explore different views and possibilities when assessing the relationship between the environment and the community. This author further recommends that social workers contemplate precisely what their role is with regard to environmental concerns, and that social workers should practice in association with their colleagues, other professionals and the people of the community to be in the best position to promote environmental justice (Besthorn, 2014:19,20). The recommendations by Besthorn include urging social workers to look at their current service delivery in a critical manner, gain new knowledge and build new, meaningful relationships to establish more sustainable service delivery. Relationships is a key component of partnerships in developmental social work (Patel, 2015:93).

Bowles et al. (2016:10) suggest that the focus of social workers on environmental justice can be strengthened by integrating ethics regarding such practices with international codes of ethics for social workers. Social work ethics that promote environmental justice will ensure a deeper connection between social work and the physical environment, rather than a superficial attempt merely to add a programme or two. This suggested inclusion was indeed realised in July 2018, when the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles was adopted by both the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW, 2018) and the International Federation for Social Workers (IFSW, 2018) during their respective annual meetings in Dublin. The global statement (IASSW, 2018) includes ethics to encourage social workers to advocate the equitable distribution of resources, promote environmental rights, and also recognise the importance of communities living in a healthy environment. After reviewing literature on the topic, Molyneux (2010:67) concluded that social workers should be more motivated to integrate the environment into practice because the well-being of service users is linked to the

well-being of the physical environment. In doing so, Molyneux (2010:67) urges social workers to be mindful that the lack of knowledge of practical eco-social work might have an impact on their motivation. Peeters (2012:292) agrees that an in-depth learning process is necessary for social workers to incorporate the natural environment in their current human-centred focus so that they may experience a true paradigm shift and become convinced that sustainable development is a social work concern. Social workers should therefore educate themselves to be more knowledgeable on the topics of sustainability and environmental justice. The section that follows focuses on specific social work roles and interventions to promote environmental justice by using green social work as a theoretical framework.

2.6.5.1 Social work amidst natural disasters

Climate change leads to more intense weather patterns and will cause more natural disasters in future (Alston, 2015:356). Natural disasters have an impact on people which emphasises a role for social workers in response. Dominelli (2012:122) explains the roles social workers could play in supporting communities struck by disaster: educating communities in the functioning of nature, being part of prevention, risk assessment, and addressing the consequences. Green social work underlines the importance of interdisciplinary partnerships (Coates & Gray, 2012: 231; Dominelli, 2012:193; Kemp & Palinkas, 2015:18) and recommends, for example, that social workers should liaise with physical scientists when dealing with disasters (Dominelli, 2012:76).

Social workers can aim to minimise the tension and conflict caused by gender inequalities which are often intensified by disasters (Dominelli, 2014a:341). Furthermore, social workers can take on an advocacy role in the aftermath of disasters (Dominelli, 2015:668). Kemp and Palinkas (2015:9) recommend disaster readiness and response, population displacement, community-level organising and policy change advocacy as roles for social workers before, during and after disasters.

Green (2012:202) affirms earlier discussions (see sections 2.2 & 2.4) that disasters hit the poor more severely, mostly due to inequality. It is precisely for this reason that green social work provides an effective theoretical framework for intervention, because green social work challenges inequality at a structural level to bring about sustainable change. Vulnerable and oppressed communities suffer due to the violation of their basic human rights, social injustices and lack of opportunities (Banerjee, 2005:9). The vulnerability of a community is determined by its exposure to hazards, its resistance to them and its resilience (Dominelli, 2012:67). Resilience implies strength and adaptability (Mulligan, 2015:6), therefore meaning the ability of a community to recover after a disaster by utilising its strengths. Building resilience can provide a safety cushion for communities and is described by Dominelli (2012:66) as minimising the vulnerability of a community. Rodin (2014:44) explains that the systems of nature and humans are interrelated, and that the resilience of these systems can affect one another. This implies that an environmental system with protected resources will result in a sustainable community that is more inclined to withstand challenges. In addition, the resilience of individuals depends on the resilience of the community (Ungar, 2011:1742). Alston and Besthorn (2012:66) add that building resilience in communities builds social sustainability. Individuals will therefore be in a better position to deal with challenges and be better able to protect social justice when the community they live in is resilient. Building resilience through green social work implies that social workers have a responsibility towards the earth's resources (Dominelli, 2012:68). The author presents a list of activities that social workers should embark on to develop resilience, such as raising awareness, influencing policy, lobbying for preventative measures in a community, mobilising communities to deal with disaster, doing research on better alternatives, training people to treat each other with dignity, establishing a duty of care towards nature, creating sustainable models of development, and developing curricula for social work students to practice green social work (Dominelli, 2012:201).

2.6.5.2 Social work and sustainable communities

Schnegg and Bollig (2016:66) steered research on community-based water administration in Namibia amidst a drought and reported on the importance of all communities to use water wisely and not to jeopardise sustainability in terms of water as a resource. The study shows that it is possible to address the need for water and the resource whilst protecting it and ensuring its sustainable use. Social workers should encourage communities to use resources such as water in a sustainable manner. Peeters (2012:293) argues that society needs to change its views of sufficient living and management of resources and that social work should be part of this social change. People need to be more responsible in their consumption patterns, to use only what they really need, even when more is available. Some communities are victims of the production and consumption of the rich and social workers could influence this impact on communities through advocacy and policy change. In the Third Report of the Global Agenda (2012), Lombard and Twikirize (2018:65) refer to a case study in South Africa of a social worker who utilised advocacy practice to minimise the impact of mining industries on the community. Social workers should be able to point out over-consumption of resources to service users and educate them to take responsibility for managing their resources for sustainable living. Gray and Coates (2012:242) affirm that social workers' role in sustainable development implies managing resources to promote social justice while at the same time preserving resources for communities' future use. Miller et al. (2012:274) present principles that could serve as guidelines for social workers to preserve natural resources, for example to advocate on behalf of the natural environment, undertake policy analysis, render broker services to increase access to resources, to educate communities, organise the community and develop relationships.

Social workers should employ the role of educator in training communities and providing guidance in the decision-making process relating to finding more environmentally friendly

alternatives for socio-economic development (Dominelli, 2012:89). This could be done by using local situations to make communities aware of environmental degradation at the global level (Dominelli, 2012:96). Communities should be aware that their managing of resources has an impact on their own functioning as well as the earth's general health. Social workers could educate communities on their patterns of consumption, production and reproduction and how these factors affected the sustainability of their community (Dominelli, 2014a:344). Communities who understand the global impact of environmental degradation and its impact on their development would probably be more willing to change their current consumption patterns. Social workers should keep in mind that information on ways to protect natural resources is not common knowledge and that the social work sphere has a responsibility to educate their service users in this. People should especially understand the way that humans have an impact on the environment.

Schmitz et al. (2012:279) state that an environmentally sustainable future is best promoted by interdisciplinary models and propose that social workers can fulfil very specific roles in these models to promote community sustainability. However, social workers should work with communities to build their capacity. Partnerships are therefore an inevitable part of green social work, a point which relates to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) that promotes partnerships as a way to show appreciation for both humans and the planet. Dominelli (2014b:139) stresses in particular the importance of partnerships between the private and the public sectors, especially during times of disaster. Strong local, regional and international partnerships promote effective practice when dealing with disasters in the short and the long term (Mathbor, 2007:358).

2.6.5.3 Social work and building community capacity

Mulligan (2015:58) explains that adaptive capacity creates the link between the environment and social challenges, for example, the link between climate change and poverty, and

recommends that communities' adaptive capacity should be increased to make them more resilient to environmental challenges. In a case study, Dominelli (2012:96) illustrates the importance of social workers in developing community capacity and social capital through assuming coordinating and monitoring roles. Social workers could mobilise and encourage communities to engage in community development (Dominelli, 2012:133) and provide guidance about how to do their own research into their water, energy and waste management to inspire them to consider alternatives (Dominelli, 2012:170). Alston and Besthorn (2012:66) explain that community-building focuses on the strengths of communities as they work towards sustainability and Teixeira and Krings (2015: 517) add that community-building is one of the key roles of social workers. Gray and Coates (2015:508) advise social workers to act as facilitators of active citizenship and advocacy so that communities could become more involved in promoting sustainable livelihoods. Androff (2016:16) explains that the participation of people is their human right and that this will give the community the opportunity to voice their needs and identify their strengths. People living in poor communities are in the best position to identify their main challenges as well as the strengths of the community to deal with them (Mulligan, 2015:57). Shokane and Nel (2017:118) prioritise the participation of community members affected by natural disasters during interventions and note that although disasters could increase the vulnerability of communities, they still possess skill and capacity to rebuild their lives. A study by Masoga and Shokane (2019) explored the influence of communities' indigenous knowledge to promote environmental sustainability. The participants of the study shared their concerns about the lack of recognition for the indigenous knowledge of the communities when addressing climate change, especially by government. The authors highlighted that communities should participate and share their knowledge in addressing environmental challenges (Masoga & Shokane, 2019:6,8). Social workers can

facilitate participation by using their organising skills to put the communities in which they work in a more powerful position when decisions are made (Nesmith & Smyth, 2015:497).

2.6.5.4 Social work, pollution and urbanisation

Pollution is human-made and jeopardises both social and environmental justice. In addition to the influence of climate change, much of the degradation of the environment is due to industrial pollution that poses a serious threat to communities' environments and their people. In such cases social workers have a role to play in supporting people to deal with trauma at the micro level through psychosocial support and by linking them with medical services, and through lobbying at the macro level ensure that industries accept accountability for the pollution that they cause (Dominelli, 2012:71). Educating communities on the potential dangers of pollution, advocating for environmental rights and assisting communities in research to build stronger cases could therefore be added to the roles of social workers (Dominelli, 2012:73). This role is specifically relevant in urban areas.

Urbanisation is human behaviour that has a negative impact on the environment in the quest for humans to survive. Dominelli (2012:49,51) describes the role of a social worker in cities as addressing accommodation challenges, transport and infrastructure issues at the macro level and supporting service users at the micro level by linking them with services. Social workers could lobby for more human and ecologically healthy options in urban communities and work towards achieving a more sustainable way of living (Dominelli, 2012:56,62). Furthermore, social workers should engage communities in cities to lobby for ecologically sound alternatives to improve their quality of life, such as developing social capital and social entrepreneurship opportunities (Dominelli, 2012:56).

2.6.5.5 Social work, social capital and social entrepreneurship

Aldrich (2011:606) avers that social capital is a critical asset of a community in their ability to recuperate from a disaster. Social capital can either be eroded during disasters (Alston & Kent, 2009:101), or enhance positive environmental behaviour in a community (Miller & Buys, 2008:255). Social workers should promote policies that build social capital within communities and apply interventions that develop social capital. Social workers should, in dealing with disaster, incorporate social capital development in disaster prevention strategies and recovery processes. Social capital networks are a significant instrument to encourage social entrepreneurship to enable communities to improve their economic steadiness (Habib-Mintz, 2009:15).

Lombard (2008:122) explains that the poverty cycle excludes poor people from economic activities. She recommends that social workers follow entrepreneurial routes to attain social development goals (Lombard, 2003:230). Dominelli (2012:3 & 196) recognises poverty as a disaster and claims that green social work could be used to lessen poverty. Developmental social work enables social workers to get involved in the process of enhancing their service users' economic stability. Martin and Osberg (2007:35) describe social entrepreneurship as a method of recognising a discriminating condition causing social difficulties in a community, developing a vision to create fairness and producing a more sustainable community. Lombard and Strydom (2011:329) connect social entrepreneurship with developmental social work as an approach to reduce poverty and contest the shortage of resources. Inadequate resources could result in conflict.

2.6.5.6 Social work and conflict resolution

Limited natural resources are threatened by environmental degradation and can result in conflict with regard to access to and distribution of these resources. For example, water is an essential need for communities to survive, but communities' access to water is often threatened

by conflict (Erickson, 2012:185). Schmitz et al. (2012:282) explain that peace work as a social worker role is creating positive relationships to promote both social and environmental justice. Dominelli (2012:154) acknowledges social work's key contribution to resolving conflict, especially in terms of struggles for limited resources and at the same time she emphasises that green social work recommends the role of mediator to resolve this kind of conflict. Dominelli (2012:170) further advises social workers to help with finding peaceful ways of conflict resolution and assisting communities in the fair distribution of resources to prevent conflict and violence from erupting. In addition, Mwansa (2011:370) states that social workers should compose a team of professionals to deal with peoples' anger and conflict, as violence due to conflict has caused vulnerable people untold misery. When social workers in practice promote peace, they contribute to goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015), which is to create peaceful communities.

2.6.5.7 Social work and structural changes for environmental justice

Green social work advocates the establishment of more just policies and proposes lobbying and advocating (Dominelli, 2012:89,170) as social work roles to bring about policy changes that promote both sustainable development and environmental justice. Policy informs the way in which communities and governments deal with the development of sustainability and protection of natural resources. Gray and Coates (2015:508) see this as an opportunity for social workers to advocate in favour of environmental policies that are more just and serve equality. Cahill (2012:95) also predicts that the emerging environmental issues will impact on social policy, especially in terms of environmental taxation, sustainability and quality of life. Green (2012:92) affirms that environment-friendly policies will especially benefit the poor because their livelihoods are directly connected to the natural environment.

Although issues like poverty, social inequality and water and food security are exacerbated by climatic events (Alston, 2015:356), social workers should closely assess existing social

inequalities caused by policies and structures and cannot accept blindly that environmental degradation causes all social injustices. Peeters (2012:294) alerts that social conditions should be addressed at a structural level for purposes of sustainability. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities that occur frequently in a community are most often the result of structure and policy flaws (Rodin, 2014:50) and therefore social workers should advocate the introduction of more sustainable policies and structures in communities.

2.7 Summary

Promoting environmental justice should not be separate programmes and interventions implemented by social workers on the sideline but should be fully integrated with holistic social work practice. Sewpaul (2014:13) believes that the profession is granted legitimacy when social workers are concerned with injustices and human rights. A rights-based approach underpins developmental social work (Patel, 2015:82). Because the environment has an impact on human rights and social justice (Androff, 2016:28), social justice cannot be addressed by social workers in isolation of environmental justice.

Green social work identifies roles, interventions and strategies to promote human well-being through sustainable processes that would also protect environmental justice. Social workers who are committed to incorporating green social work into their practice should actively aspire to becoming well-informed on important environmental issues. A green social work practice framework will enable social workers to render services that will promote environmental and community sustainability.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, EMPIRICAL STUDY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher first presents the research approach, type of research, research design, the population and sampling technique, data-collection method, the process of data analysis, the trustworthiness of the data and the pilot study. The ethical considerations are next discussed, and the limitations of the study outlined. The researcher then presents and discusses the empirical findings of the study. The chapter is concluded with a summary.

The empirical study was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

What is the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities?

- What are social workers' understanding of environmental justice?
- What activities and interventions are social workers engaged in that address environmental justice issues?
- How do social workers contribute to sustainable communities?
- What strategies do social workers propose in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities?

3.2 Research approach

The study used a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to collect data that represent the in-depth views of participants (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:91). For the purpose of this study, the researcher intended to gain in-depth information

on how social workers viewed their role in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities.

The research employed interpretivism as a research paradigm which focused on the understanding of social workers' experiences in practice and, in the case of this study, the meaning that they give to the role of social work in promoting environmental justice (Rubin & Babbie, 2013:55). As characterised by interpretivism, the researcher conducted the interviews with prior knowledge of the literature regarding the topic which, in turn influenced the type of questions that were asked (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a:62).

The purpose of the study was both explorative and descriptive. Fouché and De Vos (2011:96) state that exploratory and descriptive research could be used together effectively, where the descriptive purpose helped to answer the sub-question of the research on how social work could contribute to environmental justice to achieve sustainable communities. Babbie (2011:67) explains that exploratory research provides a better understanding of a phenomenon. The researcher gained insight into a specific phenomenon and answered the “what” question (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). Therefore, the researcher explored the experiences and meanings that social workers attributed to their roles as promoters of environmental justice (Creswell, 2014:185). A descriptive focus, on the other hand, refers to the researcher who obtained specific details about a situation, and therefore the focus was on the “how” and “why” questions (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96). The descriptive goal of the study aimed to answer why it was necessary for social workers to be involved in environmental justice practice. Furthermore, to describe how they engage, or could engage, in environmental issues, and how they contributed, or could contribute, to sustainable communities.

3.3 Types of research

Basic and applied research complement each other in that basic research strives to formulate new theory or refine existing theory and in doing so extends the knowledge base, whereas applied research aims to bring about change to a practical problem (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94). This research was both basic and applied. The research was basic in that the researcher aimed to contribute to knowledge by recommending new roles for social workers in promoting environmental and green social work. Specific roles were identified during the study that links traditional social work roles with implementing green social work interventions. With regard to the applied component of the research, social workers could apply these recommended roles to promote environmental justice, and in this way contribute to more sustainable communities.

3.4. Research design

Leedy and Ormrod (2013:141) explain that a case study as a research design could be suitable for learning more about a situation which is not clearly described or understood and that the case study chosen by the researcher should consist of specific qualities to inform practice for similar situations. Creswell (2013:98) affirms that a case study entails the research of cases with specific characteristics and within certain boundaries, and adds that current, real-life cases should be studied for the researcher to gather accurate data. In this study participants were purposefully selected to explore their understanding of environmental justice, to explore and describe activities and interventions of social workers when they addressed environmental issues, and to determine their contribution to sustainable communities. Through the exploration of social workers' current views and practice in terms of environmental justice, the researcher

aimed to propose specific roles that social workers could integrate to promote sustainable communities.

The specifically selected case study was an instrumental case study. Rule and John (2011:8) explain that instrumental, also referred to as exploratory, case studies attempt to explain specific cases, test existing knowledge and generate new information. Fouché and Schurink (2011:321) state that this type of case study can be very useful to inform policy development through the generation of new theory and knowledge. Therefore, recommendations on specific roles for social workers to promote environmental justice could be used to influence the development of policies for more sustainable social work practice.

Leedy and Ormond (2013:141) warn that case studies could not necessarily be generalised to all practice settings. The advantage of conducting a case study was nevertheless that an in-depth understanding of the case was acquired (Creswell, 2013:98), which gave the researcher rich information. In addition, Nieuwenhuis (2016b:75) states that case study research is essential in assisting the researcher to understand the dynamics of a specific situation.

3.5 Research methods

The research methods were guided by both the research approach and design.

3.5.1 Study population and sampling

Strydom (2011a:223) explains the study population as the totality of cases with which the research problem is concerned. The total number of social workers practicing at NGOs in Tshwane was considered for this study and could therefore be identified as the population for

this research. However, it was impossible to include all the social workers practising at NGOs in this area in the study, therefore a sample of NGOs was identified for this purpose.

Non-probability sampling was used as a sampling approach since the total size of the population was not known to the researcher, hence there was no random selection of participants (Maree & Pietersen, 2016:197). Babbie (2011:179) proposes purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling, when participants who are useful for the study and representative of the population are selected.

The following criteria were used in purposively selecting the participants who were willing to participate in the study:

- Social workers with at least one year social work practice experience;
- Social workers who will be willing to conduct the interview in English;
- Social workers who engage in community activities and interventions that promote social and/or economic development;
- Social workers who are engaged in, and/or interested in environmental issues, activities and interventions in relation to social work.

The sample consisted of 10 social workers from six NGOs in the Tshwane area. The researcher approached the directors of the following NGOs to explore whether they were currently involved or interested in any social work practices that promoted environmental justice and sustainable communities:

- **Funanani** is a community-based NGO focusing on the development of children and their families. They have satellite offices in Soshanguve and Mamelodi in the Tshwane area. They have three full-time social workers. The social work supervisor indicated that all three social workers were engaged with developmental social work and were willing to participate in the research study. The researcher conducted interviews with all three these social workers.
- **CMR Derdepoort** is an NGO based in Derdepoort, Tshwane, and is committed to implementing social service programmes to transform the needs of individuals and families, utilising partnerships in the community to be able to fulfil these needs. These programmes include the eradication of poverty, and addressing nutrition, early childhood development, job creation and skills development. This NGO has two full-time social workers. The social work supervisor indicated that she would be available for the interview as she had the most experience at the organisation.
- **Echo Youth Development** is an NGO situated in Tshwane, with satellite houses in Johannesburg, Centurion and Cape Town. This organisation provides a support system for vulnerable youth in the form of housing in the community, youth programmes and counselling services at schools (Echo Youth Development, 2018). They have one full-time social worker and therefore the researcher conducted the interview with her.
- **Kungwini Welfare Organisation** is an NGO in Zwavelpoort in Tshwane that provides a variety of services to the Pretoria East community. The NGO manages the Paul Jungnickel Home for the Disabled, the Kungwini Children's Home, the Kungwini Early Learning Centres, community development projects, and social work services.

(Kungwini Welfare Organisation, 2018). This organisation has four full-time social workers. The supervisor indicated that two of the organisations' social workers as well as she herself would be available and these three interviews were conducted at the organisation's Zwavelpoort office in Tshwane. The staff of this office work on different projects run by of the NGO and the data collected covered a broader area of social work services than the services usually rendered by an NGO.

- **Eleos** is an NGO situated in Pretoria West and they have several community-building projects to empower the community. They aim to achieve sustainable development through early childhood development projects and social entrepreneurship (Eleos, 2018). Only one of their two full-time social workers were interviewed for the study.
- The **Louis Botha Children's Home** is a child and youth care centre which is home to more or less 100 children. They focus on children's development in partnerships with the community. They are situated in Queenswood, Tshwane, but accommodate children from all over the country (Louis Botha Children's Home, 2018). They have three full-time social workers. After discussion with the social work manager, it seemed that two of the social workers had an interest in the field of the research study, but by the time that the interviews were held, one of these social workers had resigned and only one interview took place at this NGO.

Flick (2007:80) indicates that the sample cases should be able to reflect and verbalise their experiences and be available for the duration of the interview. All the above-mentioned participants were able to communicate their experiences and understanding of the topic. The

participants had provided ample time for the interviews in their planning and the researcher was therefore not rushed to finish.

All the participants met the specified requirements and showed a general interest in the topic, namely social workers' role in promoting environmental justice.

Permission letters for conducting the research through interviews were obtained from the respective NGOs' directors (see Appendices A - F). The directors guided the researcher in obtaining access to possible participants in the sample framework. The interviews were conducted at a convenient and private place agreed with each participant individually.

3.5.2 Data-collection methods

For this study, the researcher used one-on-one interviews as data-collection method, and a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix G) was employed as a data-collection tool. Predetermined, open-ended questions were therefore asked, and the researcher had to be attentive to the participant's responses, and then probe and lend clarity to elicit further information (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:93). Preliminary contact with the participants was established to introduce the study and make logistical arrangements for the interviews. The researcher confirmed that the participants were willing to spend enough time (more or less 60 minutes) for the researcher to conduct the interviews (Flick, 2007:78; Greeff, 2011:353). The time frame was sufficient for each interview and no extra time needed to be negotiated with the participants. Data saturation was reached by interviewing the 10 participants as no new themes had emerged by the time that the final interview was conducted (Creswell & Poth, 2017:203).

It could be a challenge for a researcher simultaneously to make notes of all the information and be attentive to the participant. Therefore, the researcher, with the consent of the participants, used voice recording equipment for the purpose of accurate transcription during data analysis (Flick, 2007:82). Recording the interviews was very helpful as the researcher could focus on the participant and the interviewing process.

The literature study was used to compose relevant and focused questions. The participants received the interview questions before the interview to help them to contextualise the relevant information that they would be given during the actual interview (Greeff, 2011:352). The interview schedule did not have predetermined themes, but included questions that focused on aspects such as:

- The influence of service users on the environment and the impact of the environment on the functioning of service users;
- Social workers' activities and interventions in environmental justice;
- Social workers' role in social and economic activities and interventions, and
- Social workers' role in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities.

The benefits of using interviews as a data collection method were that the researcher obtained rich, descriptive data; had the opportunity to view social reality through the participant's lens; and that it allowed the researcher to use open questions that could be probed and explored (Greeff, 2011:342; Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:93). However, a few disadvantages of interviewing include having to maintain control of a distracted participant (who is not focusing on the topic), the need to establish good rapport, and having an unsuccessful interview due to the failure to maintain balance and flexibility at the same time (Greeff, 2011:349; Nieuwenhuis, 2016b:93). Fortunately, the researcher did not experience any of these challenges throughout the

interviewing process. The researcher made every effort to be flexible enough to allow the participants to share their stories, but at the same time obtain the information that was required to enable comparison between different case studies.

3.6 Data analysis

Analysing data, according to Wagner, Kawilich and Garner (2012:229), refers to the process of making sense of data through various ways. It can take the form of reducing and displaying data, and then drawing conclusions or undertaking verifications. This method corresponds with the notion of Schurink et al. (2011:397), who state that qualitative data analysis is about reducing the volume of raw data and identifying significant patterns.

In this study, the researcher employed the six steps of thematic analysis suggested by Creswell (2014:197-220) and Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015:230-245). In line with the case study research design, the researcher presented a short description of each case, followed by the analysis of data relating to that theme.

In step one, the researcher organised and prepared the data for analysis. The researcher used an external transcriber to transcribe all the interviews by typing the exact words used by the participants that were captured in the audio recordings. The researcher read all the transcriptions while listening to the audio recordings to ensure that they were accurate.

Step two involved reading, and rereading of transcripts, listening to the audio recording again and looking at all the data in a systematic way. This was done with the aim to check general ideas presented by the participants, the tone of their ideas and the depth of the information. The researcher then started recording general thoughts about data in the margins of the transcriptions.

In step four, the researcher coded all the data by writing a word representing a category in the margins of the transcripts. Coding consisted of identifying patterns in the data to group together similar data segments.

Step four also included using the coding process to generate a description of participants with the aim to search for themes. The researcher in addition used the coding to generate themes for the study. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study were presented as headings and sub-headings, which had as result the major findings of the study. The themes and sub-themes displayed the multiple perspectives of the participants about their role in promoting environmental justice for achieving sustainable communities. Quotes were used from the transcripts to support the themes and sub-themes.

Step five involved writing and presenting themes through conveying descriptive information obtained from the participants. Themes and sub-themes and any other information such as the biographic data of participants were presented in tables.

In step six the researcher conducted data evaluation and interpreted the findings. The researcher checked the usefulness of the data in addressing the research questions that were being explored and how they linked up with the role of social work in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities. Finally, the data was packaged into text to narrate the findings. The findings were subsequently submitted to the University of Pretoria in the form of this research report.

3.7 Trustworthiness of data

It is important for a researcher to ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of a qualitative study. According to Lietz and Zayas (2010:191), a trustworthy study represents an accurate portrayal of the views of the research participants and not that of the researcher. A study conducted in the absence of trustworthiness and accuracy can merely be viewed as a good, emotional story

(Carey & Asbury, 2012: 21). Due to its impact on resource allocation and policy change, these authors indicate that research must be credible and have rigour. A research study should therefore interpret the phenomena that were reported by the participants.

For this study, the researcher evaluated the study by considering the four concepts that worked together to achieve trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, auditability and confirmability (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:191).

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Krefting (1991:215), “true value or credibility is obtained from the discovery of human experience as it is lived and perceived by informants”. The study must have true value or credibility so that the researcher is able to establish with confidence that the study has indeed faithfully recorded the phenomenon under study (Shelton, 2004:64). Furthermore, Lietz and Zayas (2010:191) also refer to credibility as the degree to which the researcher will ensure that the findings are reported in such a way that the participants may be able to identify their contributions to the study. In other words, true value is established when the information gathered by the researcher accurately reflects the perceptions and views of the participants rather than those of the researcher. The researcher achieved this in this study by ensuring that during transcription every piece of data was presented as it was to ensure that the data was credible and reflected all the views as reported by the participants.

3.7.2 Transferability

According to Lietz and Zayas (2010:195), “transferability and fittingness is achieved when the findings of the research have applicability to another setting, theory, to practice or future research”. Trustworthy research should therefore be transferable to another similar context or setting. To establish transferability, the research details are described in depth to allow the reader to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the study might be

transferable to other settings, times, situations or people (Amankwaa, 2016:20). Detailed information provided how the research had unfolded, with a clear outline of the step-by-step processes followed during the research to allow for transferability. Amankwaa (2016:20) views this as the researcher telling the reader a story or painting a clear picture.

An inability to provide enough information about the procedure, data-collection techniques, sampling procedures and all the other relevant information means that transferability would be impossible. Since the aim of the study was to explore the role of social work in promoting environmental justice, the findings could be transferred to other research settings with similar research goals, which would also be beneficial in the social work field and inspire future research on this particular topic. The findings could guide social workers at NGOs with developing new strategies that would address environmental justice issues to ensure the sustainable development of communities as a way of combating poverty in society.

3.7.3 Auditability

Another important criterion for evaluating the trustworthiness of the research is to ensure that the study is auditable. Lietz and Zayas (2010:195) define auditability as the degree to which the research procedure is documented so that another person may be able to follow and critique the research process that had been followed. The researcher ensured auditability by recording every step throughout the research process. In addition, the researcher created a file which included detailed accounts of each research meeting; from sending out informed consent forms to the point when the participants signed the informed consent forms. All the relevant documentation, audio files, transcriptions and coding documents were included in the aforementioned file. The researcher consulted with two colleagues who were experienced in qualitative methodology and who had previously conducted similar studies, and shared their research decisions and procedures in order to ensure that the researcher was still on the right track.

3.7.4 Confirmability

According to Shelton (2004:72), confirmability or neutrality is defined as “the qualitative researcher’s comparable concern to objectivity in research”. Confirmability eliminates the chances of researcher bias influencing the research findings, and allows the participants to express their own views, perceptions and understanding of the phenomenon at hand. Confirmability can be achieved by applying one or more methods of triangulation to the research (Shelton, 2004:72).

Triangulation refers to “the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators on one study of a single contrast and can be employed both in qualitative and quantitative studies” (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012:154). In simple terms, triangulation assists with strengthening research findings. In this study the researcher used triangulation by interviewing participants from six different organisations and obtaining their different views as all the organisations served different types of service users in different settings.

According to Weyers, Strydom and Huisamen (2008:208), the triangulation of data refers to the comparison of evidence produced by different data-collection techniques so that any similarities or incongruence can be observed. Finding strong similarities meant the data had been validated. Triangulation thus refers to the collection of data through different methods instead of relying on a single method of data collection. In order to reach saturation, it is important to spend enough time with the participants to obtain additional data through the process of prolonged engagement (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006:453). The researcher spent more or less 60 minutes per participant in order to allow sufficient time for the interview and to obtain optimal data from each participant.

In addition, it is important to use opportunities for scrutiny of the research by peers, colleagues and other academics at any presentations that are made during the research (Shelton, 2004:67). The fresh perspective of other people, according to Shelton (2004), may challenge the assumptions of the researcher, whose attachment to the study frequently inhibits his or her ability to view it with detachment.

Through the process of reflexivity, the researcher was thoroughly aware of possible researcher bias which might have been caused by personal experiences, background knowledge, perceptions and interest in the research (Shelton, 2004:68). This meant that the researcher remained aware of her personal influence throughout the research process, which implies reflexivity. Reflexivity is the researcher's ability to acknowledge any bias while conducting the research (Lietz & Zayas, 2010:192). Researchers need to be mindful of themselves in their role as researcher by reflecting on and doing introspection about the data-collection and data-analysis processes. According to Krefting (1991:6), this can be done by capturing feelings and emotions on paper throughout the research process as this helps to highlight any researcher bias.

3.8 Pilot study

Strydom and Delport (2011:394) explain the significance of a pilot study with a few participants before conducting the main study. The aim of a pilot study is to ensure that the selected research methodology is appropriate and, most importantly, to determine whether the semi-structured interview schedule would produce responses that would answer the questions posed in the main study. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:184), a pilot study is "a small study conducted prior to the main research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate". Yin (2014:96) points out

that the purpose of a pilot study is to refine the data-collection method and lend clarity to the research design. The pilot study highlights the viability of the research and brings possible shortcomings to the attention of the researcher (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:73). This is of particular interest as it allows the researcher to make adjustments to the research instrument in order to make it more effective in gathering the required data (Bless et al., 2006:184). The interview schedule was piloted with the first two participants of the main study and the findings were included in the main study. According to Ismail, Kinchin and Edwards (2018:6), in qualitative studies data corruption is a lesser concern, and as a result researchers can use some or all their pilot data as part of the main study. During the pilot interviews the participants' responses answered the research questions and no changes had to be made either to the data-collection method or the research instrument.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations, according to Flick (2009:54), are formulated to regulate the relations of the researcher to the people, who in the case of this research were participants in the study, which concerned the field of environmental justice. Major and Savin-Baden (2010:53-54) explain that the relationship between the researcher and the participants is constantly negotiated to deconstruct power, achieve and maintain trust, promote equality and ensure reciprocity. Therefore, it was important for the researcher during this study to take into consideration the following ethical aspects:

3.9.1 Informed consent

Before the collection of data, Flick (2009:59) cautions, it is important that the researcher should be competent enough to explain the goal of the research study to the potential participants. He adds that the information should be adequately explained to ensure that the participants could

decide whether to participate in the study voluntarily or not. For example, the researcher should not use language that would convey a different interpretation from that of the objective of the research study. In this study the researcher contacted the director or supervisor before the interview dates to explain the study and they in turn explained it to the social workers at their organisations. This enabled the potential participants to make informed decisions on whether they wanted to participate or not.

Babbie (2013:32) states that participation in a research study disrupts the participants' regular activities. Therefore, it is important that the participation is voluntary, with participants fully comprehending what the research aims to achieve, and how it would benefit them. Apart from explaining in person to the potential participants what the research study entails, Babbie (2013:34) also points out that the consent form, which outlines the goal and some of the objectives of the research study, must be signed by the participants. Before each interview the researcher explained the study to the participant in detail, including how the research process would be conducted, and answered any questions the participants had.

The informed consent form (see Appendix H) explained the use of the audio recorder and indicated the researcher's assurance that the information would be treated as confidential. Furthermore, the informed consent form indicated that the findings might be published, and that the data would be stored in the secure archive at the University of Pretoria for 15 years. The consent form was comprehensively explained to each participant before they signed it.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

As indicated in sub-section 3.9, the social work community is relatively small and many social workers in the Tshwane urban area know one another. As Braun and Clarke (2013:64) allude,

it is impossible to guarantee anonymity, but data gathered should be reported with confidentiality in mind.

Israel and Hay (2009) in Creswell (2009:120) emphasise that it is the obligation of the researcher to protect their research participants, develop a trust relationship with them, promote the integrity of the research, and guard against misconduct and impropriety that could reflect on the university or identify the organisations where the social workers were employed. As indicated in the previous section (3.8.1), the researcher emphasised in the informed consent letter that the information would be shared strictly between the researcher and the supervisor. The names of the participants were not mentioned in the recording of the data, the researcher referred to pseudo names, participant numbers in this case, e.g. “participant 1”. In addition to this the researcher stored the data on a private computer that was password-protected.

3.9.3 Voluntary participation

All the participants knew exactly what the interview entailed and that it was voluntary to take part in the proposed research (Strydom, 2011b:116). The participants knew from the informed consent form that they did not have to answer a question if they did not wish to do so. Furthermore, they knew they could also withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

3.9.4 Actions and competence of researcher

The researcher acted in a professional manner at all times by being on time for the interviews, well-organised, and respectful of different cultural opinions (Strydom, 2011b:123). Researchers, according Strydom (2011b:123), are also obliged to have adequate skills in order

to undertake a research study, and constantly be aware of his/her ethical responsibility. This included being constantly aware of the social work code of ethics.

The researcher completed a research methodology module as part of the programme. Furthermore, the researcher is experienced in conducting professional interviews and the study was undertaken under the supervision of an experienced research supervisor.

3.9.5 Avoiding harm and undertaking debriefing

Practical experience has shown that not all social work practice settings are rendering services according to a social development framework or promote environmental justice in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). This could be due to numerous factors. Participants might therefore possibly have been confronted with questions that could trigger feelings of incompetence (Strydom, 2011b:115). This in turn could cause emotional harm and for this reason it was important for the researcher to identify participants who could possibly be vulnerable during the investigation in order that they may be excused from the study before it took place (Strydom, 2011b:115). It was therefore an obligation of the researcher to inform the participants beforehand that the research topic was not personal but intended to explore the topic as little was known in this field of study in South Africa and that the study could contribute to social workers actively promoting environmental justice. This aspect was also included in the informed consent form.

After the researcher had collected data from the participants, Strydom (2011b:122) emphasises, it is important for the researcher to undergo a reflective process with each participant to assist them with working through their experiences. If any participant had any questions regarding the study or the literature, the researcher would have listened to the concerns, and strongly

encouraged them to contact their director or supervisor to help to clear up any uncertainties (Strydom, 2011b:122). None of the participants in this study indicated any discomfort regarding the interview or the topic. The researcher answered additional questions on the topic of environmental justice that arose to the best of her ability. The researcher moreover referred some of the more inquisitive participants to relevant literature sources where they could gain more knowledge on the topic.

3.9.6 Dissemination of findings

Bless et al. (2006:146) indicate that the participants would want to use the research findings to inform their own practice and policies. The researcher was committed to reporting all findings in an honest way and give full recognition to social work colleagues for their contributions to the research study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:108).

Creswell (2003) and Wallima (2006) in Strydom (2011b:126) state that the information must be formulated and conveyed clearly and not cause any misinterpretation of meaning by participants and other readers. The research findings were disseminated by the submission of this research report to the University of Pretoria. Findings were also prepared as an academic article for submission to a scientific journal with a view to publication. Bless et al. (2006:146) observe that publication credit will be given to all the persons who contributed to the research study, either in the form of authorship or acknowledgement.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Although the data was collected from participants practicing at different organisations, the experiences were still those of individuals, only those social workers practicing at NGOs and

only in the Tshwane area. Therefore, it could not be assumed that the experiences of these participants represented those of social workers in Tshwane.

Some of the participants were well known to the researcher since the social work community in the Tshwane area is relatively small and the researcher shared previous interventions with some of the participants. Familiarity might possibly have hindered the objectivity of the study, but the researcher took extreme caution to conduct each interview in the same manner and with the necessary professionalism. Furthermore, all the data that accrued from the participants were recorded, transcribed and analysed in a consistent manner to ensure objectivity. All the participants' names were removed from the transcripts. The researcher is of the view that knowing some of the participants did not negatively affect the data collected during the study.

3.11 Research findings

This section provides the demographic details of the participants and presents and discusses the key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study.

3.11.1 Demographic details of participants

The table that follows below provides the demographical information of the participants. To protect the identity of the participants, the researcher referred to participant P1 to P10 in reporting on the findings.

Participants	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age group	36-40	41-46	30-35	53+	41-46	24-29	47-52	41-46	41-46	24-29
Highest tertiary qualification	BSosSci	BA(SW)	BA(SW)	BA(SW)	BA(SW)	BA(SW)	BA(SW) & MBA	MSW	MSW	BA(SW)
Years practising as social worker	11+	11+	11+	11+	11+	1-3	11+	11+	11+	4-6
Geographical area of practise	Urban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-urban	Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-urban	Semi-urban

Nine participants were female, and one was male, which was in alignment with the profile of the social work profession. Four of the participants were in the 41 to 46 age group, two participants were in the 30 to 40 age group, two participants indicated their age group as 24 to 29 years and one participant was older than 53 years. The age group of the participants correlated with their years of social work experience. Most of the participants had eleven or more years' experience in social work, except for two participants who both had one year or more of social work practice experience. Two participants have master's degrees in social work. Five participants worked in urban and semi-urban practice settings respectively.

3.12 Key themes and sub-themes

In this section the findings that emerged from the study are presented as key themes and sub-themes. The researcher substantiated the findings with quotes from the participants and compared and verified the findings with literature.

Table 3.1: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the findings

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Factors contributing to environmental degradation	1.1 Depleting natural resources 1.2 Littering 1.3 Lack of clean water and sanitation
2. Influence of environmental degradation	2.1 Unsafe living conditions 2.2 Increased vulnerability of vulnerable groups 2.3 Access to food and health implications
3. Factors that influence sustainable communities	3.1 Understanding of and attitude towards the environment 3.2 Community participation 3.3 Partnerships for sustainability
4. Factors influencing social workers' involvement in environmental justice	4.1 Understanding of green social work 4.2 Challenges in practice 4.3 Lack of training
5. Projects and social work roles in promoting community sustainability and environmental justice	5.1 Projects focused on sustainability 5.2 Social work roles that promote environmental justice 5.2.1 Educator 5.2.2 Advocate 5.2.3 Coordinator

Theme 1: Factors contributing to environmental degradation

Participants indicated that they addressed social injustices by working directly with the people in the communities. Most participants were of the opinion that the people that they worked with negatively influence the environment in which they live. They indicated the reasons as either being ignorant, deliberate neglect or a result of trying to meet their basic needs. The participants shared various examples of negative impacts on the environment caused by

communities and voiced their concern about this behaviour. One participant summed it up very aptly when referring to the impact of people on the earth:

P2: *“We hurt, and we waste.”*

Participants indicated that people’s behaviour contribute to the deterioration of the natural environment in different ways. These include depleting natural resources, littering, and the lack of clean water and sanitation, which are discussed next as sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1.1: Depleting natural resources

The findings point out that communities are confronted with limited natural resources, which are further depleted as people use them to meet their basic needs. The impact that people have on the environment is related to them putting more and more pressure on the natural resources of the environment, as two participants explained:

P2: *“... there is no running water, there is no electricity and the area where they are staying is currently in a bad shape; there is no grass, no trees, nothing. All the plants have been taken out. So, there is no natural resources for them to use.”*

P10: *“... the [un]availability of resources makes it really hard for one to maintain a balance to say, okay, we have to take care of our environment if the resources and the infrastructures are not in place; then it's hard, it becomes hard to address, you know, the negative impact.”*

Some participants raised their concerns in terms of sustainability of resources for future generations if the depletion of resources continued without any meaningful changes in people’s behaviour. People’s responsibility in this regard was expressed by one participant:

P3: *“... the earth is not an infinite source, so we need take care of it.”*

Participants noted that the communities are often overcrowded, and that the environment could not withstand the pressures of this. Therefore, the natural resources are depleted much more quickly, and the earth never gets the opportunity to repair itself fully from the impact that people have on it. Furthermore, overcrowded communities are not only having a negative impact on the natural resources of the environment, but also keep communities from finding sustainable ways of protecting these resources. In many of the communities implied by this study there is insufficient space available for people to cultivate vegetable gardens or keep livestock to sustain their food security. The findings were voiced as follows by participants:

P2: *“... there is not really a space for them to create any food gardens or to have any flock, animals, which is not always possible in an urban situation anyways.”*

P7: *“... there is no land available for growing veg[etable] gardens.”*

One of the participants explained that the people in these close-knit communities are not giving anything back to the earth or making any effort to better the environment, even for their own benefit:

P2: *“...nothing [is] given back to the earth, there's no fertilisation, or anything going back into the earth so it's just going to become [a] barren area.”*

A participant added the negative impact that homeless people have on the environment. Homeless people use the parks and natural water sources for bathing and the area is polluted in this way:

P3: *“We have a big brook in ... running through the community, where a lot of the homeless people actually bathe, and live and store everything, and it's their toilets and everything in and above that.”*

Findings indicate that both the plant life and the animals of the communities are affected by people. Some communities chop wood because there is no electricity or other means of energy to heat water and cook food. This has a serious impact on the tree population in the community. Mulligan (2015:115) identifies deforestation as a global occurrence and a major cause of degradation of the natural environment. Furthermore, the lives of animals in a community are endangered. One participant observed how irresponsible community members treat their animals:

P7: “... *injustice to animals; people do not properly take care of the animals.*”

Findings on the challenges of limited resources corroborate with the views of Gray and Coates (2012:239) and Dominelli (2012:6), who state that social workers are concerned with providing resources to service providers. Besthorn (2013:37) and Peeters (2012:291) argue that for social workers to protect vulnerable communities and address social injustices, resources should be distributed equally. However, this will only be possible if current resources are protected. Literature further confirms that when natural resources are not managed responsibly when fulfilling basic needs, it will result in environmental injustices (Dominelli, 2014a:339; Erickson, 2012:184). Natural resources should be protected with all possible means. For communities to be sustainable, Midilli, Dincer and Ay (2006:3625) emphasise that resources should be sustainable.

The findings show that the degrading of the planet and its resources are growing worse, especially due to urbanisation. Dominelli (2012:49,52) explains that urbanisation results in people sharing small spaces and limited resources, and in order for these people to make ends meet, the physical environment is often degraded. Rogge (2000:47) confirms that the human population and growth could cause environmental degradation.

Sub-theme 1.2: Littering

Findings show that littering in communities is by far the greatest cause for concern and threat to the environment, as experienced by the participants. Findings indicated various aspects that underpin the challenge of littering. One of these aspects is overcrowded communities:

P2: “... *they pollute because there are too many people on the piece of land.*”

This finding resonates with sub-theme 1.1, where participants identified highly crowded areas as more prone to environmental degradation.

Another aspect that worsens littering is limited infrastructure. The municipality’s refuse services are not effective in all areas and communities’ complaints about the shortage of services are ignored. Furthermore, people do not always have transport to take their garbage to waste sites or do not have the financial means to use private refuse removal services. The participants explained their communities’ realities as follows:

P9: “... *there is no service delivery in Mamelodi, the area that we live in. So, the area physically doesn’t have services that will collect the garbage.*”

P10: “...*they [municipality] [are] supposed to come and clear it [dump site] up at least twice a week, so at times it doesn't happen like that.*”

The participants reported that littering is influencing the health of the communities that they worked in, and especially highlighted the negative effect of pollution on water resources. The participants explained that their service users are directly affected by the pollution. Littering is therefore not only a danger to the physical environment, but also to the people of a community (see sub-theme 2.2 for a discussion on how people are affected).

The findings indicated that in some communities people are trying to combat littering and in some cases with the NGO's assistance, but in general the communities are not really dealing with littering as a threat to the environment and the scarce natural resources.

Pollution enhances the degradation of the natural environment (Erickson, 2012:185) and is considered as a threat to sustainability. The 2030 Agenda (2012) provides for reducing pollution in order to improve water quality (UN, 2015:22) and to combat pollution by the prevention, reduction, recycling and re-use of waste (UN, 2015:26). Dominelli (2012:118) adds that pollution has negative implications, especially on food production, which in turn has an impact on the health of the people.

Sub-theme 1.3: Lack of clean water and sanitation

Findings indicate that communities are deprived of clean water, which is a basic need. One participant linked water to human dignity:

P3: "... but at least, if we can provide them with somewhere to clean up ... and they can have a fresh glass of water... that there's a little bit of human dignity in that and even bathing themselves. It's dirty water but at least they have that feeling of getting clean."

Water is essential for healthy and well-functioning communities, but unfortunately this precious natural resource is under pressure as people struggle due to the shortage of water:

P1: "... if we don't look after what we have, for example, if there is no rain and there is not enough water to be provided."

P4: "... by the lack of water, they have to walk to a truck, and they must bring water from there so, and everything is always muddy."

P5: “... *I think in our rural communities, I think that this is the people that are worst off because they don't have running waterif the water tanks aren't filled by the municipality, we have to take water from here ... they've got babies that the nappies need to be changed, children's food needs to be prepared.*”

According to the findings, the water and sanitation problems are mainly caused by the poor maintenance of infrastructure:

P6: “... *the river that supplies the surrounding community with water but for some reason their sewage pipes directly going into that river, sewage pipe.*”

P9: “*then there is also the water and sanitation infrastructure ... is not maintained.*”

This implies that although people suffer from water shortages, some communities are not taking responsibility for preserving this precious resource, but unfortunately contribute to its waste. The participants shared examples of water in the communities being wasted and polluted.

P1: “...*a lot of water is wasted.*”

P9: “... *there is clean water, that now gets polluted because of the rubbish...*”

As Erikson (2012:185) states, water provides security to vulnerable communities. Therefore, communities should use water sparingly (Schnegg & Bollig, 2016:66).

The shortage of water creates challenges for people who intend to keep vegetable gardens to promote food security. As mentioned in sub-theme 1.1, overcrowded communities, together with the lack of water, influence the sustainability of communities. Zapf (2010:35) refers to “mutual dependence” when explaining that people cannot just use the earth's resources indefinitely without considering the impact on the environment. However, although people

contribute to environmental degradation, it cannot be seen in isolation of the broader socio-economic and political context that impact their lives and behaviour.

Theme 2: Influence of environmental degradation

The influence of environmental degradation on communities is not always obvious or easily identified and the participants were unable to identify these influences immediately. However, most participants acknowledged that people, and especially vulnerable groups, encounter challenges imposed by the environmental degradation that influence their lives.

P1: *“... I think in general everyone is affected in various degrees.”*

P6: *“... the climate change(s), it's something else because it's ... beyond our control.”*

The participants' experience was that environmental degradation especially influences the safe living, food security and health of people. The participants identified children and poor communities as more vulnerable, amongst others, when they are exposed to environmental challenges. These experiences are discussed in the sub-themes that follow.

Sub-theme 2.1: Unsafe living conditions

Compromising of safe living conditions was identified by some of the participants as the main challenge of people facing environmental degradation. Lack of natural resources and extreme weather conditions were mentioned as being mostly to blame for threatening the safe housing of people.

In the case of a child and youth care centre, the centre depends on sufficient natural resources, especially clean water, to provide the children with good living conditions. If a serious lack of clean water should occur, the children would be denied safe alternative care:

P1: *“...that will literally mean going back to the community, the street, where they came from.”*

Residential facilities aim to provide safe care for vulnerable groups but face great difficulties in maintaining safe living conditions owing to threatening environmental conditions. Likewise, individual households in communities are also affected by flooding.

Two participants explained how severe rainstorms caused great damage to the houses of individuals in the communities, resulting in people being displaced or left without shelter.

P5: “...they are exposed to the elements and this last couple of months, with the storms that we've had, came with a lot of strong winds and it damages [the houses] and ... it's got an influence on them.”

P10: “... their infrastructure(s), the houses they live in ... maybe, on a very rainy day, the water goes in because they live in shacks and then the water just runs down everything. ... there was a hailstorm here in Mamelodi and it really, like, broke people's windows and cars and it really affected people.”

The findings indicated that one of the most basic human needs, a safe house, was exposed when environmental factors caused destruction. The basic functioning of people was further impeded when environmental destruction kept them from their workplaces:

P10: “... we've got some of our employees ... who live in informal settlements, so you find that they can't even come to work ... at times because then they have to try and ... save their things and whatever's lost.”

One participant provided information on how a community's livestock and water were affected by drought:

P6: “... there's ... bit of shortage of rains, you find that it's dry and drought ... so, at home the animals are dying ... now families [are suffering] ... the plants are no longer getting that natural water as they used to. I think it really is negative consequences ...

people who were maybe relying on those cattle, so if they can sell, they can make a living but now, if it just dies like that, there's nothing that can feed those cattle, they're not going to survive and then what will it do to the people? Then there won't be anything to sell ... then there will be struggles. If there was to be drought, as in the case that I have mentioned ... are there funds ... to buy food, to get water, to drill boreholes ...”

One participant added another view of how people are indirectly affected by environmental degradation. In an attempt to protect the natural environment in that community, the mountain area was closed and since then only limited access by the community has been allowed. The participant raised her concern that the people are denied access to the natural environment that could assist them with stress management and improve physical health when they hike in the area, and homeless people lost the relatively safe shelter and running water in the area.

P3: “...so the people that ... slept there were also the homeless people, because there's quite nice shelter and there's a running tap up there which is amazing ... you know you don't have access and that's ... a very good way to destress and get(ting) in touch with nature, so that in a way is also an injustice.”

This participant's view stressed the point made in sub-theme 1.3 that people and the natural world are independent from one another. In this case the destruction that people caused in the mountain area should be rectified by implementing measures to protect the environment, as not doing so has a negative influence on people.

Literature affirms the views of the participants about the challenges people face with the environment. Androff (2016:28) emphasises that environmental factors have a direct impact on social justice and human rights. A basic right like safe living conditions is lost when intense weather conditions destroy houses. Alston and Besthorn (2012:65) explain that social

disruption could occur when natural resources are depleted and are therefore not available to communities. Furthermore, people are not always able to go to work after a storm destroyed infrastructure or, when parts of communities are struck by intense health problems and diseases after such an event. Dominelli (2012:342) affirms that unemployment could be compounded by natural disasters when people do not have access to the roads. McKinnon (2008:261 – 263) includes loss of livelihoods and threatened health on his list of influences of the environment on communities. Hazell and Hess (2010:402) highlight the influence of climate change on farming and the livelihood of people, which influences not only their economic development but also their survival.

Sub-theme 2.2: Increased vulnerability of vulnerable groups

Findings show that certain groups in a community are more vulnerable to the influences of environmental degradation than others. All the participants identified children as being most affected. Two participants' views summed up the impact on children:

P9: *“... children are walking past the rubbish to get to school, children are playing in the rubbish ... classrooms where our children are taught in school [are] literally 10 metres away from the rubbish. I've seen many children play there on the rubbish dump and then they will hurt themselves. ... it's extremely dangerous.”*

P10: *“...mainly it's the health of the children that's getting affected ... so it does impact the children mostly... in the case of heavy rains and so forth, the children you find ... they are also mostly affected because they have to walk long distances towards main roads because the gravel roads are so muddy, cars cannot drive, it's a risk, they get stuck. So, you find that then it's like an inconvenience, either being late for school or something. I mean you want to educate the children in a safe environment, in a*

conducive environment but then it becomes an obstacle because the kids are now, as I said, they become restless, they cannot focus well.”

From these views it was evident that children’s safety, health and education are directly influenced by pollution and extreme weather conditions.

Most participants also recognised that poor people, especially those living in rural areas, suffer severely when confronted with environmental challenges.

P3: *“... it's horrible that there's not enough shelter for homeless people in the Moot but the other problem is they do in a way have sleeping arrangements, but there's no running water ... in terms of looking into the future it will affect the poor because of the water table.”*

P6: *“Those who are in the rural [areas] don't have measures in place to ensure that when we've been hit by a drought, we can at least buy the food, the cattle's food, and also not feed them, we can buy the water, those are the resources that are very scarce in those communities.”*

P10: *“... the poorest of the poor that's being affected mostly.”*

The elderly had also been mentioned by a few of the participants as being more vulnerable to environmental degradation, especially in terms of health and safety.

P5: *“I think even grannies; the old people are also affected [by environmental injustices].”*

P9: *“... the grandmothers that come to our centre. We've got a group of about 34 grandmothers; they literally walk with their walking sticks through the rubbish to get to their houses. Our old people, they are dumping because there's nowhere else to put*

it [refuse]. So, the old people, definitely, but I think our children and old people who are near are the most vulnerable.”

P10: “... grannies who do aerobics three times a week ... most of them ... are ... on some or other medication, so their health is also like at risk and I can say they are also affected because they are one of the vulnerable groups that we recognise. So, they also become affected by that air pollution and in terms of the rain it affects all age groups.”

People with disabilities were also pointed out as being more susceptible to the hardships caused by environmental degradation. Two participants related their concern for people with disabilities in the case where a community experienced a severe lack of water or extreme rainfall:

P6: “... [People with disabilities] really need 24 hours a day’s caring services so, for instance, if you don’t have water, are you going to leave that family member of yours or community member without bathing for all those times? These are people who are incontinent, and they need assistance in almost everything ... its various disabilities, but I think [it] will negatively impact them in their lives and those who have to care for them.”

P10: “... some families have ... disabled people then it makes it hard, especially in the informal settlements, with wheelchairs to then move around because the roads are muddy. It’s, like, then you’re just stuck in shack. ...most disabled people ... sometimes have a low self-esteem and become introverts and they’re just shut in and you usually want to encourage them to be [going out] but if now they cannot be mobile because of the roads being muddy then [they can’t].”

In a facility, in this case for people with disabilities, where the mobility of residents who use walking aids and wheelchairs is already restricted, there is the additional challenge of unsafe surfaces. In the case of extreme flooding, these residents' mobility is even further challenged when water runs into the hallways. The participant explained:

P6: "I remember, to a point whereby this mountain up here ... so it rained heavily. So, after it stopped, I think for a few hours, and then the water came to a point whereby it went inside the residential facility."

The participants had identified groups that are vulnerable to environmental degradation, which resonates with the findings of other studies. Kemp and Palinkas (2015:3) as well as Green (2012:167) support the overall finding of the study that vulnerable groups are affected more severely when there are environmental challenges. Participants were very outspoken about the impact of environmental difficulties on vulnerable children, which correlates with Rogge's (2000:46) observation that poor children suffer even more.

Being poor and vulnerable are thus a double jeopardy when natural disasters strike. The conditions concomitant with environmental degrading have a devastating impact on poor communities that are already living in degraded circumstances (Dominelli 2012:129; Hawkins: 2010:68; Nesmith & Smyth, 2015:485). Dominelli (2012) furthermore asserts that poverty in itself is a disaster that is exacerbated by environmental degradation. Mulligan (2015:58) affirms the vulnerability of poor people and especially older people. With reference to housing, Mulligan (2015:58) emphasises that poor people have houses of a lower quality that could be damaged much more easily by extreme weather (also see sub-theme 2.1). Nesmith and Smyth (2015:485) focus on the vulnerability of women in a community, who could be affected more intensely (Nesmith & Smyth, 2015:485).

Sub-theme 2.3: Access to food and health implications

The participants pointed out the link between environmental degradation and food security and the implications for health. Access to nutritious food is particularly constrained in poor communities that are exposed to environmental degradation. As indicated below, vulnerable groups such as children are especially affected:

P2: *"...they struggle ... to get nutritious food, they get a lot of processed food."*

P6: *"I said initially it [environmental degradation and injustices] affects everyone ... the kids, you know, they will get malnourished. They will get cholera, of which now you are talking about the future."*

The participants further added that the safe preparation of food could be a challenge in communities.

P5: *"... some food, if you leave it overnight and you eat it the next day ... it can really make you ill. If you don't have electricity, you can't have a freezer, so you must buy food that you know will last, or if you buy meat and stuff like that you need to prepare it and you need to consume it immediately."*

P8: *"I've heard of stories where clients said you know they ate bad meat on their way, and they got sick and 'my sister died because of it' or things like that."*

Basic hygiene is important for the health of people and the participants explained how conditions like a lack of water, a high degree of pollution and poor service delivery influence the environment, and in turn, cause a lack of hygiene:

P1: *"... this sewage, I mean, you can smell it's lying there, they [are] living [there], it's unhygienic. It causes illnesses."*

P3: *“So, they bathe in the dirty water [brook] and they’re actually defecating in it. So, you can imagine the sore, and the issues.”*

P4: *“...they get sick, they can't wash properly.”*

P7: *“... like baby nappies and stuff that cause serious conditions that might cause some hazards.”*

This unhygienic situation results in serious health issues, such as E. coli, cholera, asthma and other respiratory diseases, as mentioned by the participants.

P6: *“... you have all of these diseases that can get to them, so in that case they’re also not safe.”*

The aforementioned participant’s submission supports the views of Kang et al. (2009:1671) as well as Alston (2015:356), who indicate that environmental degradation could be responsible for malnourished communities and a lack of proper and safe food, a situation that climate change is compounding. Green (2012:186) adds that a lack of food security causes vulnerable groups to miss out on proper education and development. Hawkins (2010:68) stresses the importance of hygienic living conditions and the important role of social workers in promoting these conditions.

Theme 3: Factors that influence sustainable communities

Sustainable communities provide resources for future generations by acting in a responsible manner and protecting the natural environment and scarce resources. The participants shared their experiences and views on the factors that influence sustainable living. Communities’ understanding of and attitude towards the environment, their levels of participation and the degree in which they utilise partnerships are discussed next as sub-themes.

Sub-theme 3.1: Understanding of and attitude towards the environment

The findings revealed that ignorance and people's mindset play a role in either promoting or obstructing community sustainability.

When it comes to communities' knowledge and awareness of the interdependency between people and the natural environment, most of the participants' experiences indicated that the people are ignorant and not always aware of their influence on the environment or its long-term effect for future generations.

P1: *"... people [don't] realise how soon ... that's [shortage of clean water] coming up, it's a lot closer than what I think people realise. I don't think this is a topic [food security] that everyone realises how bad the situation actually is."*

P3: *"I think people underestimate how uneducated people in general are about environmental issues."*

P7: *"I think ... they are ignorant about it [littering], they are unaware of the long-term negative effects that this kind of pollution has."*

P8: *"... there is not a consciousness ... of protecting the environment at all."*

Participants indicated different ways in which the mindset of people influences the sustainability of their communities. On the one hand, some people have the intention to work towards sustainability by protecting the environment but to do so they need to be motivated continuously. On the other hand, a large percentage of people feel that they have no part to play in protecting the environment and are therefore not acting in a responsible manner to promote community sustainability. Participants voiced their experiences of peoples' mindset as follows:

P1: *"[house parents are] more positive and willing and understanding [to strive towards sustainable living] [in relation to the children]."*

P2: *“I think it's a little bit of a mindset ... because we live in a community where a lot of people get help from government and from organisations like us. There are some people who are motivated by it and some people who just say, ‘well why should I try something? There is [a] group of people who will listen, understand a bit and do something about it; there are others who will listen and do nothing about it and then there's those who don't even listen. I would love for the community to take responsibility for themselves. Unfortunately they have an attitude of ‘someone else must do it’.”*

P5: *“... they are not motivated. If they can get a piece job that pays them more, they are not going to come to the vegetable garden.”*

P8: *“... that [awareness] would be kind of years and years of changing thinking. Rather start with a young [children] today, make that awareness and be willing to not immediately see any results. That change of mind is ... something that may arise with a generation.”*

Some participants mentioned that older people have a greater sense of understanding of the utilisation of the environment in communities for sustainability than the rest of the community. This sentiment was reflected in the following statement:

P8: *“...the older people are willing [to establish vegetable gardens], the younger ones have absolutely no interest.”*

The above-mentioned response reflected a generational element compared to another participant's experience of children's ignorance of environmental issues:

P2: *“I think the children grow up with the situation as it is; they don't know anything different and they think that's how it's supposed to be.”*

Despite reports of communities lacking awareness and a positive mindset with regard to protecting the environment, Mulligan (2015:58) urges that communities' adaptive capacity should be promoted so that they could make the link between environmental degradation and social challenges. Peeters (2012:293) insists that communities should change their attitude about their consumption patterns and responsible use of resources, which supports the views of Melekis and Woodhouse (2015:577) that social workers could assist with this change by dealing with the ignorance of people. Lombard and Viviers (2014:83) highlight the importance of communities' involving children in the promotion of environmental justice and explain that children are already aware that they are capable of minimising climate change and can work actively towards building more sustainable communities. There are social work projects where social workers are already assisting communities to develop their adaptive capacity. One of these projects is documented by Hsu and Agoramoorthy (2015:26), who explain the important role that social workers play in a community in India, where they installed lift irrigation systems to ensure the food security of the community.

Sub-theme 3.2: Community participation

Participants identified people's participation as vital in building a sustainable community. Participants identified community leaders, older people, parents, children, unemployed people and schools as important role players to protect the environment and build sustainable communities.

P2: "... older people, I think we kind of have in our minds that they are just old, we can use them to teach the younger children and get them involved in their communities again."

P2: "... to get the schools involved to get the children involved."

P8: *“I think the leaders in the community should be involved. It should become a community thing.”*

P9: *“For me the parents definitely [could play a role to promote environmental justice], we’ve got a lot of unemployed parents... there is a role that the parents can play and then I also think the local leaders, like our councillors. So, the local leadership in the community, they have got a huge role to play and they’ve got a lot of leverage in terms of the community.”*

P3: *“We try to get the kids involved [talking about alien plants] and explain to them why it's important.”*

P10: *“... they [the community] need to take ownership.”*

The participants emphasised that the ultimate responsibility for sustainable communities rests in ownership. The following statements indicate that participation should culminate in taking ownership:

P10: *“... they [the community] need to take ownership.”*

P5: *“I don't think you must make them dependent on you. Like I said, they must be able to be okay when for some other reason you [social worker] can't do anything[everything].”*

P6: *“... we have our residents who surely will have to be the ones who are active and take part. It's also part of empowering them so that they can take responsibility out of [for] what is been [being done].”*

One participant emphasised the importance of social capital and how it is promoted when community members actively take part in addressing their challenges.

P6: “... *the strong bond and a strong sense of belonging within the community members is what still drives many communities out there. Everyone within the communities is your family member, not per se related in any way; the fact that you guys stay within that area.*”

P10: “... *as I said, it's more about the community coming together and the neighbours helping each other.*”

Mulligan (2015:57) encourages participation by explaining that community members understand their challenges and strengths best and therefore need to be involved actively in bringing about change. Aldrich (2011:606), Habib-Mintz (2009:15), and Miller and Buys (2008:255) point out the strength in social capital when a community makes a deliberate decision to get involved in the challenges that they face and in supporting one another. Dominelli (2012:56) moreover emphasises the role of social workers in encouraging communities to address their challenges by participating in lobbying.

Sub-theme 3.3: Partnerships for sustainability

The participants listed the possible partners of communities to promote sustainable living as government departments, NPOs, the agricultural sector, private businesses, churches, schools and universities. Some participants considered government departments as playing an important role in forming partnerships with NGOs and communities to promote environmental justice. However, participants experienced different challenges with the involvement of government departments in communities:

P1: “... *the government, in my opinion, is not on board with “go green” and ... sustainability.*”

P4: “... *it was supposed to be with [Department of] Agriculture but they didn't really come to the garden in Tshwane.*”

P10: *"...in my previous employment ... I had approached the agricultural, you know, the government [Department of Agriculture] and ... I had actually invited them to educate the community about agriculture, about what can be done there, but the communication just didn't materialise."*

P9: *"I think the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Affairs, those guys are actually the ones that need to come in with other strategies into [the] community and we will join hands with them definitely."*

P5: *"I must say you try to build partnerships with the government departments but it's a challenge. At this stage we've got a partnership with Department of Agriculture and we've got the hydroponics projects here on the premises."*

P6: *"... we got the department involved, we had [the] one for agriculture involved [Department of Agriculture], I think they provided us with seedlings."*

Participants related the importance of meaningful partnerships with a view to tapping into partners' resources and especially their specific skills.

P1: *"I personally believe you need a lot of people to make this work, with a lot of resources, different talents, different skill sets to make it sustainable."*

P9: *"I just think that NGOs are so thinly spread in terms of our own resources and our own system that we can't also do that [recycling]. It's like somebody else need[s] to, that are specialising in that area, that has the skills to [do so] and [thus] the expertise. If we can be the link, but there's a big gap in that area."*

To follow a developmental approach in promoting sustainability, meaningful partnerships are significant to any community (Patel, 2015:93). Various authors (Coates & Gray, 2012: 231; Dominelli, 2012:193; Kemp & Palinkas, 2015:18) concur that social workers do not always

have sufficient resources or skills to support communities with working towards sustainable living, and therefore partnerships with different disciplines are of great value.

Theme 4: Factors influencing social workers' involvement in environmental justice

The participants' overall views were that social workers are not sufficiently involved with environmental justice issues. Findings indicated the level at which social workers understand green social work, different challenges in their practice settings, and lack of training in environmental concerns as factors that influence social workers in engaging with environmental social work. These factors are next discussed as sub-themes.

Sub-theme 4.1: Understanding of green social work

Although most participants do not have a concrete understanding of green social work or the exact role of social workers in the promotion of environmental justice, some are already engaged with projects to protect the environment. A personal interest in protecting the environment plays a role in some participants' commitment to environmental justice.

P1: *"... the children litter a lot within the premises, which I personally have an issue with. I personally feel strong about this topic. I love gardening."*

P3: *"It's a passion for me individually."*

P8: *"...my heart is for the guys on the streets that collect stuff."*

P9: *"I think, for me ... I have [am] very passionate about the topic."*

However, a few of the participants specifically mentioned that social workers have a responsibility to the physical environment. The following quote from a participant summed up this responsibility:

P6: *“I think we have to be at the forefront of this [protecting the environment], especially if it also affects the communities. We need to play a leading role in ensuring that all these environmental injustices ... can be controlled or they can be averted or something like that.”*

Another participant (P1) used the term “integrated model” when explaining that green social work should be made part of social work practice, instead of running environmental projects on the side, disconnected from core social services and social work programmes.

Besides having a personal interest in environmental affairs, most participants conveyed that they believed that social workers have an important role to play in protecting social rights as well as the rights of the environment. The participants felt that acknowledging the rights of both people and the planet was the first step towards engaging in environmental issues.

Participants were of the opinion that most social workers were not really occupied with green social work as part of a developmental approach but rather focused on crisis management. It furthermore appeared that participants did not yet regard green social work as an integrated part of existing social work:

P1: *“I feel that not many in my opinion ... 10% of all the social workers are even remotely thinking of this [environmental injustices].”*

P2: *“I think that’s [green social work] something that’s not very developed in South Africa and it’s something that can definitely be looked at in the future to handle a lot of issues.”*

P3: *“We need to acknowledge that this is not even a reality for most social workers or a priority and not because they’re bad people or not doing their jobs but because it’s overwhelming.”*

P9: *“I think that the environment plays a much bigger role than what we as social worker[s] sometimes want to believe.”*

The majority of the participants attributed the lack of interest and involvement in environmental issues to social workers' mindset about environmental justice. Their mindset is influenced by how they see and approach social work.

Furthermore, it emerged that social workers are set in traditional ways of practicing and new approaches like green social work are not always commonly accepted.

P4: *“... that you don't really are known to [green social work] or used to ... can be very big help in your work as social work[er], [you want] to just carry on the old paths, especially the more old school ... that you don't really think about the bigger picture and projects.”*

Some of the participants felt strongly that the old or traditional attitudes needed to change at both personal and professional levels in order for social work to have a significant influence on environmental injustice:

P9: *“So the environment is part of our challenge as well, so we need [to] look after it and we need to have a different mindset from ... what we were taught at university.”*

P3: *“And I think that mind shift needs to change, you know, on an individual level and on [a] professional level.”*

Another factor that participants pointed out as a possible factor contributing to social workers' lack of involvement in green social work and prioritising of environmental issues was that the promotion of environmental justice is not prescribed or regulated by any official body like the SACSSP, the Department of Social Development or an NGO policy.

P1: “... *but I think if it comes from government, especially our Department of Social Development, saying you need to focus on this [promoting environmental justice], I feel that this needs to be part of our business plan. What are you doing for sustain[ability]?”*

P1: “*Social workers ... are registered at a council [SACSSP] so you have to adhere to [the] ethical code, so I think if social workers ... there is minimal norms and standards, you know you have to adhere to that ...*”

P3: “... *maybe more pressure from the government on NGOs.*”

P6: “...*not enough is being done from the national level (up) until the ground [to promote green social work].*”

The lack of a formalised commitment therefore influences the prioritising of environmental issues and contributes to fragmented attempts being made instead of integrating environmental justice with everyday practice. This was presented as one of the challenges that kept social workers from engaging with the physical environment (see sub-theme 4.2 for a discussion on challenges).

Personal interest in environmental factors could benefit social workers when they focus on the relationship between communities and their physical environments. Besthorn (2014:17) states that social workers should be curious about the dynamics of the relationship between communities and their physical environment. He proposes deep ecology as an approach for social workers to understand fully how social and environmental justice are linked with each other (Besthorn, 2012). Deep ecology entails an approach that focuses intensely on the connection between the natural world and people instead of a superficial, egocentric approach that favours people (Besthorn, 2012:250).

The view of most participants that promoting environmental justice was social workers' responsibility, corroborates with Dominelli's (2012:68) view that social workers can use green social work as a theoretical framework to protect natural resources and thereby build the resilience of communities, which could contribute to more sustainable living. Social workers also have a responsibility towards their service users to take the physical environment into consideration in order to promote social justice effectively (Besthorn, 2012: 254; Heinsch, 2001:315; Schlosberg, 2013:37, 40).

The views of the participants that social workers are not yet integrating green social work with their daily practice correlate with those in the literature stating that social workers might have an interest in the physical environment, but not yet as an integrated model of intervention (Crawford et al., 2015:595; Coates & Gray, 2012:233; Peeters, 2012:288).

Erickson (2012:188) warns that if social workers did not change their mindset deliberately to include the environment in their practice, it would complicate their work in promoting social justice for their service users. Most participants admitted that the attitude of social workers probably keep them from engaging with the environment.

The last factor put forward by the participants was the lack of official guidelines and minimum standards for social workers in promoting environmental justice. Bowles et al. (2016:10) propose minimum standards at an international level to help social workers to prioritise environmental justice in their work.

Sub-theme 4.2: Challenges in practice

Participants described high caseloads as the main challenge that social workers face when attempting to incorporate green social work with their social work practice. One of the participants explained that statutory work and crisis management dominate the day of a social

worker and left very little time for implementing other approaches. The following statement aptly captured participants' views of this challenge:

P3: "... *they're [social workers] ... just [trying] to survive, just to get their files done and their notes done. And just to kind of sort out most of the crisis. I would just wonder how they would even have time, time to do that [green social work].*"

The lack of resources was also mentioned as a challenge for social workers. These resources include sufficient funding for projects.

P9: "*We [are] all stretched beyond our capacity, so you see all the problems, you see the challenges but you literally don't have the capacity in terms of time and resources to get to the solution and I think that's frustrating because you've got so much to attend to as a social worker, that you don't get to those things.*"

Two of the participants identified the lack of space for environmental projects as a challenge which inhibited their organisations' ability to establish proper recycling projects. These organisations have limited space on their premises. In these cases, participants indicated that their organisations acknowledged the environmental degradation due to human living and its negative effect on the community. They confirmed that they had identified a possible project to reduce littering, but that they did not have the physical space to run the projects in an effective way as space was extremely limited in the urban areas.

P7: "*But if we want to enlarge the project, we will definitely need more physical space to put our containers.*"

Other studies concur with the findings on difficult working conditions like poor salaries, inadequate office space (Mwansa, 2011:368) and challenges concerning funding as well as high caseloads (September, 2007:96). This challenge is confirmed by Lombard and Kleijn (2006:223), who state that social workers who work from a developmental approach have

difficulties with following it through due to high caseloads, little resources and low salaries and that a deliberate mind shift is necessary to overcome these challenges. Mutie (2014:98) explains that organisations do not always acknowledge the need for social workers to engage with the physical environment and therefore their role definitions and organisational policies and guidelines with regard to environmental involvement are not clear. McKinnon (2008:259) explains that social workers are not always encouraged by their organisations to engage with the natural environment as their roles are seen as purely to promote social justice. This could cause conflict for social workers who have a personal interest in the environment and also a professional commitment to integrating an environmental focus with social work practice.

Sub-theme 4.3: Lack of training

Participants pointed out the lack of training in environmental social work as a factor contributing to the level of involvement of social workers in environmental matters. They saw the lack of training at two levels, the tertiary, or higher education, and continuous professional development.

With regard to a lack of tertiary training on the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice, one participant said:

P3: *“... so obviously it wasn't really part of the curriculum then.”*

The participants voiced the importance of continuous professional training after university and the willingness of social workers to improve their own knowledge on the subject of environmental injustices as follows:

P3: *“I would firstly say, social workers should actually educate themselves about environmental issues.”*

P5: *“I think education for social workers, on how to be green and what is available that we know. I think there's a lot of people that are doing research ... inform us because we can maybe take it to our community.”*

P9: *“I think environmental awareness for a social worker is something that we need to continue to teach students and social workers.”*

P10: *“I think ... there isn't much education about environmental social work, there isn't that awareness or that no one is really conscious of the impact we are making ... it's like to ... just something so distant, far away from us.”*

Hawkins (2010:69) affirms the finding that social workers do not possess the necessary knowledge on sustainability and environmental justice. McKinnon (2008:256) points out that literature on environmental social work is scarce and Dominelli (2012:80) says that this means unclear roles for social workers regarding working in the environment. Molyneux (2010:67) links the lack of motivation to integrate the environment with existing social work practice with a lack of knowledge on this topic. Kaiser et al. (2015:553) recommend that social work education includes the topic of promoting environmental justice in the curriculum. Peeters (2012:292) agrees and reasons that social workers will change their mindset as they become more knowledgeable on the environment. This argument links with the previously discussed sub-theme 4.1 that the mindset of social workers influences their willingness to engage with the environment.

Theme 5: Projects and social work roles in promoting community sustainability and environmental justice

Findings indicated that although some participants' projects do not focus on the environment intentionally, they indirectly influence communities to be more sustainable. Sustainable living in communities is when the physical environment is not compromised in order to fulfil the

needs of people, but rather where it is managed responsibly to ensure that future generations have access to natural resources (Brundtland, 1987). This is a positive contribution towards encouraging social workers to make a conscious shift to ecocentric social work practice, where they can provide communities with hope for a sustainable future. One participant summed up the role of social workers as follows:

P1: *“I feel we have a role to provide hope to people and to be positive because those are the two things [hope and being positive] I feel they lack the most.”*

Social workers’ adoption of a developmental approach in 1997 (RSA, White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997) spearheaded the change to contribute to sustainable development by starting to engage in projects where the physical environment has been incorporated to address poverty and contribute to social change. Developmental social work entails promoting social, economic and environmental development in order to ensure that there is sustainability (Lombard, 2015:484). Chiwara and Lombard (2018:300,304) argue that green social work can enable social workers to influence communities in respect of the socio-economic and environmental aspects, especially by means of forming significant partnerships. Dominelli (2012:89) stresses the importance of socio-economic development that is not only aimed at combatting poverty, but also protects the natural resources of a community. Social workers working in a green social work framework take on specific roles to run projects that promote social justice and also environmental justice.

The following sub-themes focus on specific projects and roles of social workers that provide hope to the communities they work in.

Sub-theme 5.1: Projects focused on sustainability

Most of the study's participants do not consciously and specifically focus on environmental protection and the interrelatedness between the physical environment and the communities in which they worked. Their engagement is mostly unintentionally.

Projects that were mentioned by individual participants included recycling projects, cleaning up the environment, creating new products with waste materials and a project named "aquaponics" where fish-related waste was being used to fertilise vegetables.

P7: *"...that money [received for recycling goods] is paid into our poverty alleviation fund and then we use it to buy food."*

P3: *"... all the brook clean-ups we've done with the churches in the community which is great"*

P5: *"... people that didn't have jobs, they took out the paintings and the old glass [of old paintings] and they painted the frames and did something creative and then it then we sell it, at our Christmas market."*

P4: *"... we have Aquaponics tunnel [on our premises], Aquaponics is where you have fishes in a pond and then the "afval" [waste] is used as compost for the plants."*

The focus on people and the planet is visible in these projects, which are important for sustainable communities. However, vegetable and fruit gardens seem to be the most popular projects for NGOs to enable communities to live more sustainably:

P1: *"The house parents took the initiative where they started vegetable gardens."*

P10: *"We have a vegetable garden which is mostly managed by our staff and volunteers, so the vegetables that we get from the vegetable garden are used for the ECD children."*

P1: “... *try to plant fruit trees like a fruit orchard.*”

P2: “*We have a strawberry project as well.*”

Participants saw in particular the benefits of vegetable gardens in terms of finances, food security (especially for the ECDs) in promoting sustainable living:

P1: “... *it really made a difference to his [houseparent of CYCC] budget. We didn't have to buy vegetables.*”

P2: “... *to, instead of just focusing on providing food, to motivate the people to plant their own.*”

P9: “... *specifically because we have the ECD, so for food and then also what is extra, we give to families.*”

However, participants indicated some financial implications, and environmental challenges such as water, in creating and maintaining vegetable gardens:

P2: “*You have to look at cost; you will need to provide people ... with the physical tools.*”

P4: “... *because it is so dry and because it is (a) difficult to get water there, we previously ... are trying to start a vegetable garden project there. It's not really possible because of that situation.*”

A further challenge in vegetable garden projects is maintenance. Findings indicated that garden projects are more successful when they were situated on the organisation's premises, or when organisations helped the community to establish the gardens at their own homes. Commitment, participation and ownership were identified as ongoing challenges in establishing vegetable gardens, which is also influenced by people's personal interest in such projects.

The experiences of two participants showed these challenges:

P5: “... you always try the communal vegetable garden; that wasn't very successful. I think food gardens at their houses [work better], and maybe doing it in pots, so that it's a bit more sustainable.”

P10: “... before we got to the part of having the vegetable garden only here at the centre, we once tried to initiate that each family has their own vegetable garden at home and seeds were given to the families, but there wasn't a good response and I think it also has to do maybe with having a passion or not having a passion for gardening and it didn't quite work out to make people independent and have their own. So, in that sense, I can say we didn't really make much progress to have everyone have their own gardens at home, but the one here at the centre ... it's, well, the participation and involvement is quite good.”

Little data could be gathered from participants on specific projects promoting environmental justice. Bowles et al. (2016:4) affirm that there is little research that focuses on social workers and environmental projects. Besthorn (2014:15) concurs by stating that social workers primarily focus on people and thus social sustainability, and less on environmental degradation and justice. Dominelli (2012:196) suggests that green social work can be employed to respond to poverty by developing socio-economic models that take the environment into account. Vegetable gardens are in line with the sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of socio-economic development, which Dominelli (2012:89) proposes, to protect natural resources and to combat poverty.

Sub-theme 5.2: Social work roles that promote environmental justice

The participants identified a few key social work roles that could benefit communities and promote community sustainability and environmental justice. A few participants mentioned roles such as marketer, enabler, and mobiliser.

P2: “... you need to play the role of marketer.”

P5: “I also think enable them with resources. If they have to do a proposal [but] they don't have access to a computer, that you're the person that helps them to do that proposal and go assist them that they are able to do it.”

P9: “... we can maybe mobilise resources from the outside.”

However, the roles of educator, advocate and coordinator, which are discussed in the section that follows, were the most prominent roles that emerged from the study.

5.2.1 Educator

The participants explained that the communities they work in are not aware of environmental challenges or of how their way of living is impacting on their communities' sustainability. People do not have the information or skills to reduce their impact on the earth. Two participants summarised the view of most participants, emphasising the role of educator as important for social workers to promote environmental justice.

P1: “... the cliché of knowledge is power ... the more knowledge and information and the more we educate them [service users] more, I feel they are going to know this is how I must do [change behaviour].”

P10: “So the social worker will need to play the role of an educator to just make people realise what is actually happening in terms of the environment.”

The participants especially mentioned the importance of educating children in order to create a better future and to change the overall behaviour of people for sustainable communities.

P2: *“If we want to change the community, we have to change the children.”*

P9: *“We also teach our children to plant, grow their own veggies and not just go and buy the veggies. So in our school we need to, like, really work hard on the children, to not throw their papers down on the floor. You pick up the paper, you go and put it in the dustbin, so for them it’s like an easy way out to just throw it [down].”*

Participants proposed specific topics for education such as recycling and building stronger shelters:

P9: *“... sustainability will lie in educating the people in recycling.”*

P10: *“... a matter of having better plans in place, or maybe even getting them educated about maybe making a stronger shack because we can’t necessarily build houses immediately but maybe to say why your shack fell down completely and this one is still standing. So that’s where you can also use community members themselves to educate one another.”*

Dominelli (2014a:344) urges social workers to make communities aware of the influence of their behaviour on sustainability and recommends the educator role to teach communities about alternatives for socio-economic development (Dominelli, 2012:89). In this regard, the role of educator resonates with green social work (Dominelli, 2012).

5.2.2 Advocate

Some of the participants expressed the need for social workers to act as advocates for both people and the planet in contributing to sustainable communities. They recognised that both

the physical environment and the people need a voice to convey and argue for their respective needs.

P1: *“We are supposed to be the voice of the voiceless, we need to go to serious effort to push this.”*

P6: *“I think we have to advocate for the environment itself because it won’t speak for itself. We have to take the leading role.”*

P9: *“I think there’s a role that we need to play to also be persistent in the message that we convey to the people higher up, to really put pressure.”*

P10: *“I guess also advocating with the government [promoting the community with the government] and the councils to actually make them aware because sometimes they tend to step back, and they turn a blind eye but to just say what their responsibilities are when the community is faced with such situations.”*

There was an overall sense among participants that vulnerable communities are not always equipped or able to argue for their own needs and social workers could use this traditional role to lobby on behalf of their communities. The literature affirms the advocacy role of social workers in order to promote change and freeing communities from poverty (Androff, 2016:43; Haynes, 2012:269; Hoefler, 2012:33-34).

Dominelli (2012:170) recommends advocacy as part of green social work in times of natural disasters and especially to bring about change in policies to benefit vulnerable groups. Participant 10 explained how the community members suffer after heavy rains and she deemed it necessary for social workers to make the authorities aware of their responsibilities towards the community in times of heavy rains and flooding. Policy flaws led to more vulnerable communities and therefore environmentally friendly policies are encouraged to promote environmental justice and sustainable communities (Cahill, 2012:95; Gray & Coates,

2015:508; Green, 2012:92; Rodin, 2014:50). Rainey et al. (2003:709) point out the importance of policies that develop healthy economic communities, but also to take environmental justice into account.

5.2.3 Coordinator

Participants recognised the importance of the coordinator role in bringing various role players together and coordinating their resources and activities to promote environmental justice.

P2: *“We need to coordinate better, we need to have better facilities where, if we do receive food that we can, especially fresh food, and we can distribute it to whoever needs it within the time frame.”*

P4: *“...we should ... engage on behalf of them with the different role players that we do get in contact with.”*

P5: *“I think we are the people that sometimes need to do the networking ... that you can bring people together ... that have the same goal.”*

P9: *“I think we can also play a networking role in terms of bringing role players together..... we can play that networking role in terms of bringing more role players to the party.”*

Gray and Coates (2012:239) agree that social workers could coordinate resources, especially for vulnerable communities who are often most affected by environmental degradation. During the chaos of a disaster, communities could benefit from the coordinating skills of social workers (Kemp & Palinkas, 2015:9). Green social work endorses the importance of social workers as coordinators to develop community capacity (Dominelli, 2012:96).

As the research findings show, which are confirmed by literature, social workers could fulfil roles that would promote environmental justice (Ramsay & Boddy, 2017:72; Schmitz, Matyók

et al., 2012:278). These traditional roles of social work (Kirst-Ashman, 2013:110) should be refined in terms of how to apply them specifically for green social work. Dominelli (2012:201) regards the roles mentioned by the participants as part of the theoretical framework and guidelines of green social work. As Mutie (2014:98) states, green social work roles have not yet been clearly defined.

Miller et al. (2012:274) also propose the roles of educator, advocate and coordinator for social workers to preserve natural resources. They recommend that communities should be educated on the responsible use of resources to preserve them for future generations. Social workers should advocate and coordinate fair distribution of natural resources.

3.13 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology, the ethical considerations taken into account throughout the study and the limitations of the study. The themes presented in the empirical findings included factors contributing to environmental degradation, the effect of environmental degradation, factors that influenced sustainable communities, factors influencing social workers' involvement in environmental justice and projects and social work roles in promoting community sustainability and environmental justice. Chapter Four presents the study's key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. It starts by discussing the ways in which the goal and objectives of the study were met. The next section focuses on the key findings, followed by the conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

4.2 Goals and objectives

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs' perspective in Tshwane. The goal of the study was attained by achieving the following objectives:

Objective 1

- To conceptualise environmental justice and community sustainability in social work within the context of green social work.

Evidence of having achieved this objective includes Chapter Two (see sub-sections 2.3 & 2.4), where environmental justice was described as embedded in human rights (Dominelli, 2012:169) and interrelated with social justice (Dominelli, 2012:3). Environmental injustice could be both a cause and a result of social injustice. Sustainability is best described by the Brundtland Report (1987), in sub-section 2.2, as the responsible use of resources to provide for future generations. The theory of green social work as theoretical framework for this study was outlined, in sub-section 2.5, as a framework to enable social workers to integrate the physical

environment with their practice in order to build sustainable communities (Dominelli, 2012). Literature on green social work was also integrated with the relevant empirical findings. In Chapter Three (see theme 4.1) participants indicated that social workers did not have a clear understanding of green social work. However, in theme 5 it was evident that participants are involved in projects and roles that are unintentionally aligned with green social work.

Objective 2

- To explore social workers' understanding of environmental justice.

This objective was attained in Chapter Three, where findings showed that participants' level of understanding of environmental justice plays a role in their awareness of the influence of communities on the physical environment and how it affects achieving sustainable communities. Findings revealed participants' understanding of the interrelatedness of the environment and social justice (see theme 2). Furthermore, participants explained that communities contribute to the depletion of natural resources (sub-theme 1.1), that littering by communities are impacting negatively on the environment (sub-theme 1.2), and that water and sanitation are jeopardised by the behaviour of people (sub-theme 1.3). The participants further identified that environmental degradation in turn influences communities by enhancing unsafe living conditions (sub-theme 2.1), impacting more intensely on vulnerable groups (sub-theme 2.2) and posing a threat to safe food and healthy living (sub-theme 2.3).

Objective 3

- To explore and describe the activities and interventions that social workers engage with in addressing environmental justice issues.

The literature study referred to a case in South Africa where a social worker reduced the impact of mining on a community by acting as advocate for environmentally friendly policies (Lombard & Twikirize, 2018:65). In this study, participants realised that they did engage in environmental matters without intentionally planning to do so. This objective was addressed in Chapter Three, theme 5, where participants identified projects, focusing specifically on the littering challenges in communities. They engage in particular in vegetable gardens, which present them with insight into the link between the environment and people (sub-theme 5.1). The participants could identify how their current roles as educators, advocates and coordinators could be extended to more deliberately promoting environmental justice (see sub-theme 5.2). Furthermore, the participants explained the imperative role the community itself plays in creating a healthy environment and sustainable living. Factors that plays a role are the communities' attitude towards the environment (sub-theme 3.1), the levels of communities' participation (sub-theme 3.2) and significant partnerships (sub-theme 3.3). The participants identified the factors influencing their involvement with the environment as their understanding of green social work (sub-theme 4.1), challenges like being overworked (sub-theme 4.2) and a concern about a lack of training in environmental matters (sub-theme 4.3).

Objective 4

- To explore and describe social workers' contribution to sustainable communities.

This objective was realised in sub-section 2.3 of Chapter Two, where the literature review indicated that when social workers help to protect natural resources, they protect the human rights of a community, and in doing so promote the sustainability of the community. The objective was also achieved in Chapter Three in sub-theme 5.1 where the researcher gave an oversight of the contributions of the participants to enhance sustainability in their communities

in the form of projects. Vegetable gardens as a mean of combatting poverty were the most common project mentioned by participants in this study.

Objective 5

- To make recommendations on the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities.

This objective is addressed in this chapter in section 4.4 below. The objective was informed by the specific roles that the participants identified in Chapter Three, sub-theme 5.2, and in the literature review as outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.6.

4.3 Key findings and conclusions

The key findings of this research and the conclusions drawn from these findings, are presented in this section:

- Findings indicate that participants do not yet fully integrate the physical environment into social work practice. Although they are involved in projects related to the environment, they do not necessarily link it with promoting environmental justice. This is because of their limited understanding of what environmental justice and green social work entail.

It can be concluded that green social work or environmental social work is still in its early days in NGOs in Tshwane and that the knowledge and skill base of social work should be expanded to enable social workers to promote environmental justice for

sustainable communities. It implies more conscious integration of social and environmental justice in social work practice.

- The findings show that social workers could identify the negative influence of communities on the physical environment and the influence of the degrading environment on the communities in turn. They pointed out the issue of littering and how clean water was being compromised by communities' oblivious way of living. Participants indicated that the degraded environment causes unsafe living conditions, food and health risks and confirmed that vulnerable groups, including children, older persons, people with disability and the poor are most susceptible to the influence of the environment on communities. However, participants identified that communities are challenged by their socio-economic contexts to use their natural resources more responsibly and sustainably.

The conclusion is that there is a growing awareness amongst social workers of the interrelatedness between humans and their physical environments, and that they should incorporate environmental justice in promoting social justice. This implies adopting green social work and integrating social, economic and environmental development in micro and macro social work practice.

- Findings reveal that communities' attitude towards the environment, their participation and partnerships have an effect on their levels of sustainable living. Communities are not always aware of or educated about the influence of their own behaviour on the environment. This causes an oblivious way of living and impacts negatively on the participation of a community in protecting the environment and working towards

greater sustainability. The participants pointed out the importance of meaningful partnerships to promote environmental justice. Findings underpinned the role that the social and economic contexts and structural injustices play in communities' response to the environment.

In conclusion, social workers have an important role to play in community-building, to encourage participation and to facilitate meaningful partnerships to promote environmental justice for sustainable communities. Social workers should work with communities to protect the environment and address environmental degradation. Although social workers have a prominent role to play, the achievement of environmental justice and sustainability, not only depend on the intervention of the social worker, but on the willingness and commitment of a community to change their behaviour and systems. This includes fighting the structural injustices that influence their behaviour towards the environment. Social workers should challenge the systems that hinders communities to live sustainably.

- The findings show that the participants utilise different general social worker roles, but in particular those of educator, advocate and coordinator when engaging with the environment in relation to environmental issues. These roles enable participants to eliminate the ignorance of communities about environmental issues, to lobby for more environmentally friendly structures and policies and draw from their skills to coordinate the communities' participation, the involvement of partnerships and the fair distribution of resources.

It can be concluded that general social work roles can be utilised to promote environmental justice and sustainable communities when using the theoretical

framework of green social work. Green social work provides the lens for social workers to apply these roles in a manner that promotes environmental justice and sustainability in communities.

4.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made to guide social workers in their role to promote environmental justice for sustainable communities:

4.4.1 Increased awareness of green social work amongst social workers

The study highlighted a lack of awareness amongst social workers of the concept and dynamics of green social work, although some of their projects and interventions are focused on the environment, it is mostly unintentionally and not from an environmental justice perspective. However, the findings indicated that social workers are aware of the interrelatedness between social and environmental justice and the influence of environmental injustice on the communities in which they worked. By adopting green social work as a practice model, they can promote environmental justice and contribute to sustainable communities.

Awareness of green social work as an integrated approach to social work practice could be created on various platforms, including conferences and continuous professional development (CPD) activities. However, the dialogue should start with social workers themselves as they could analyse their practice interventions and programmes to identify how it integrate the dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environmental development. Understanding where they are in relation to promoting environmental justice and sustainable communities would spark their interest and contribute to further development in the field of green social work. Both the Department of Social Development and the NGO

sector, in collaboration with higher education institutions, could take up the initiative to raise awareness about green social work.

4.4.2 Focused interventions to promote community participation and forge partnerships

There is a relationship between community sustainability and a community's attitude and understanding of the environment, the level of participation and the nature of significant partnerships. In collaboration with communities, social workers could identify relevant stakeholders in government, the NGO and private sectors to partner with them in developing programmes and community-building interventions that integrate social and economic development with an environmental focus. Such initiatives include creating awareness through educating the community in order to change mindsets and ignorance about the interrelatedness of people and the planet, and the responsibility of humans to protect the environment for current and future generations. Furthermore, to challenge the structural injustices that keep communities in poverty and unsustainable living environments.

4.4.3 Training opportunities in green social work

Findings from both the empirical study and the literature review indicated that there is a lack of training of social workers on environmental matters. Training should include clear roles and environment-specific interventions for social workers. In addition to CPD activities accredited by the SACSSP, it is recommended that higher education institutions should adapt the social work curriculum to integrate green social work. The Department of Social Development and NGOs should encourage social workers to take up training opportunities in green social work-related CPD activities and in collaboration with higher education institutions, create fieldwork placements for student social workers, where they could learn about green social work practice.

4.4.4 Expanding roles of social workers to practice green social work

The research findings indicate that general social work roles are relevant for green social work practice. However, the roles of educator, coordinator and advocate are in particular relevant and should be expanded to promote environmental justice and sustainable communities through the lens of green social work. Training opportunities in green social work should include guidelines on how to extend the general roles of social workers into more focused and specialised green social work roles. These roles should be encouraged by the Department of Social Development, NGOs and CBOs as part of social workers' professional development and should be incorporated in the norms and standards of the SACSSP to practice social work. This implies that higher education institutions have to select organisations that are committed to promote green social work and collectively develop field placements for students that will prepare them for green social work practice.

4.4.5 Further research

It is recommended that further research should explore how social workers' current practice interventions could be adapted to green social work practice.

REFERENCES

- Aldrich, D.P. 2011. The power of people: Social capital's role in recovery from the 1995 Kobe earthquake. *National Hazards*, 56(3):595-611. DOI: 10.1007/s11069-010-9577-7
- Alston, M. 2015. Social work, climate change and global cooperation. *International Social Work*, 58(3):355-363. DOI: 10.1177/0020872814556824
- Alston, M. & Besthorn, H. 2012. Environment and Sustainability. In Lyons, K., Hokenstand, T., Pawar, M., Huegler, N & Hall, N. *International Social Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Alston, M. & Kent, J. 2009. Generation X-pendable: The social exclusion of rural and remote young people. *Journal of Sociology*, 45(1):89-107. DOI: 10.1177/1440783308099988
- Amankwaa, L. 2016. Creating protocol for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 23:121-127.
- Androff, D. 2016. *Practicing rights. Human rights-based approaches for social work practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Babbie, E. 2011. *An introduction to social research*. 5th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Babbie, E. 2013. 13th ed. *The practice of social research*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Canada.
- Banerjee, M.M. 2005. Social work, Rawlsian social justice, and social development. *Social Development Issues*, 27(1):7-14.
- Besthorn, F.H. 2012. Deep ecology's contributions to social work: A ten-year retrospective. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21(3):248-257.
- Besthorn, F.H. 2013. Radical equalitarian ecological justice: A social work call to action. In Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. *Environmental Social Work*. London: Routledge.

Besthorn, F.H. 2014. Environmental social work: A future of curiosity, contemplation and connection. In Hessle, S. (Ed). *Environmental change and sustainable social development*. Social Work – Social Development Volume II. Surrey: Ashgate.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C. & Kagee, A. 2006. *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective*. 4th ed. Cape Town: Juta.

Bowles, W., Boetto, H., Jones, P. & McKinnon, J. 2016. Is social work really greening? Exploring the place of sustainability and environment in social work codes of ethics. *International Social Work*, 1-15.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practice guide for beginners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brundtland, G. 1987. *The World Commission on the Environment and Development: Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cahill, M. 2012. Green Perspectives. In Alcock, P; May, M & Wright, S (Eds). *The student's companion to social policy*. 4th ed. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Carey, M.N. & Asbury, J. 2012. *Focus on group research*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Chiwara, P. & Lombard, A. 2018. Mitigating the impact of drought in Namibia: Implications for social work practice, education and policy. In Dominelli, L. (Ed). *The Routledge handbook of green social work*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

City of Tshwane. 2018. Available:

<http://cityoftshwanemunicipality.yellowpages.co.za/residents> (Accessed 2018/06/03).

City of Tshwane. 2015. Urban Investment Partnership Conference. Available: www.treasury.gov/comm_media/presentations/Urban/UIP%20-%20Tshwane.pdf (Accessed 2018/06/03).

Clarke, V., Braun, V. & Hayfield, N. 2015. Thematic analysis. In Smith, J.A. (Ed.) *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Coates, J. & Gray, M. 2012. The environment and social work: An overview and introduction. *International Journal of Social Work*, 21: 230-238.

Crawford, F., Agustine, S.S., Earle, L., Kuyini-Abubakar, A.B., Luxford, Y. & Babacan, H. 2015. Environmental sustainability and social work: A rural Australian evaluation of incorporating eco-social work in field education. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 586-599.

Creswell, J.W. 2009. 3rd ed. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Canada: SAGE Publications Inc.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative & mixed methods approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N., 2017. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Dominelli, L. 2012. *Green social work. From environmental crises to environmental justice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dominelli, L. 2013. Social work education for disaster relief work. In Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. (Eds). 2013. *Environmental social work*. New York: Routledge.

Dominelli, L. 2014a. Promoting environmental justice through green social work practice: A key challenge for practitioners and educators. *International Social Work*, 57(4): 338-345.

Dominelli, L. 2014b. Environmental justice at the heart of social work practice: Greening the profession. In Hessle, S. (Ed.) *Environmental change and sustainable social development*. Social Work – Social Development Volume 11. Surrey: Ashgate Publishers.

Dominelli, L. 2015. The opportunities and challenges of social work interventions in disaster situations. *International Social Work*, 58(5): 659-672.

Drolet, J., Wu, H., Taylor, M. & Dennehy, A. 2015. Social work and sustainable social development: Teaching and learning strategies for “Green social work” curriculum. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 528-543.

Dylan, A. 2013. Environmental sustainability, sustainable development, and social work. In Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. (Eds). 2013. *Environmental Social Work*. New York: Routledge.

Echo Youth Development. 2018. Available: <http://www.echoyouth.co.za/index.php/wie-is-ons> (Accessed: 2018/07/04).

Eleos. 2018. Available: <https://www.eleos.co.za/what-we-do/> (Accessed: 2018/07/04).

Erickson, C.L. 2012. Environmental degradation and preservation. In Healy, L.M & Link, R.J. (Eds). *Handbook of international social work, human rights, development, and the global profession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flick, U. 2007. *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flick, U 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2011. Introduction to the research process. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed.), Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Fouché, C.B. & De Vos, A.S. 2011. Formal formulations. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed.), Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Fouché, C.B. & Schurink, W. 2011. Qualitative research designs. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed.), Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. 2012. Collaboration between IASSW, IFSW and ICSW. [Online] Rev. 10 August 2015. Available: <http://www.globalsocialagenda.org> (Accessed: 2018/07/28).

Gray, M. & Coates, J. 2012. Environmental ethics for social work: Social work's responsibility to the non-human world. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21(3): 239-247.

Gray, M. & Coates, J. 2015. Changing gears: Shifting to an environmental perspective in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 502-512.

Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. 2013. Conclusion. In Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. (Eds). 2013. *Environmental Social Work*. New York: Routledge.

Gray, M. K., Agillias, R. Mupedziswa & Mugumbate, J. 2017. The expansion of developmental social work in Southern and East Africa: Opportunities and challenges for social work field programmes. *International Social Work*, 7 March, DOI: 10.1177/0020872817695399, 1-14

Greeff, M. 2011. Information collection: Interviewing. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed.), Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Green, D. 2012. *From poverty to power. How active citizens and effective states can change the world*. 2nd ed. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing and Oxford: Oxfam International.

Greene, R.R. & Greene, D.G. 2009. Resilience in the face of disasters: Bridging micro- and macro-perspectives. *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment*, 19(8):1010-1024.

Habib-Mintz, N. 2009. To what extent can the informal economy concept adequately explain the dynamism of the non-formal sector in developing countries? *Journal of International Business and Economy*. Available: <http://www.academia.edu/183859/> (Accessed 2013/06/11).

Hawkins, C.A. 2010. Sustainability, human rights, and environmental justice: Critical connections for contemporary social work. *Critical Social Work*, 11(3): 68-81.

Haynes, K.S. 2012. Empowering and transformative practice. In Gray, M., Midgley, J., & Webb, S.A. (Eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Social Work*. London: SAGA Publications Ltd.

Hazell, P.B.R. & Hess, U. 2010. Drought insurance for agricultural development and food security in dryland areas. *Food Security*, 2(4):395-405. DOI: 10.1007/s12571-010-0087-y

Heinsch, M. 2011. Getting down to earth: Finding a place for nature in social work practice. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21: 309-318.

Hoefler, R. 2012. *Advocacy practice for social justice*. Illinois: Lyceum.

Hsu, M.J. & Agoramoorthy, G. 2015. Irrigation-based social work relieves poverty in India's drylands. *International Social Work*, 58(1):23-31.

International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW). 2014. Global definition of the social work profession. Approved by the IASSW General Assembly. July. Melbourne, Australia. [Online] Available: <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/global-definition-of-social-work-review-of-the-global-definition/> (Accessed 2019/11/12)

International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). 2016. Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: IASSW Statement - Theme 3: Promoting environmental and community sustainability. Available: <https://www.iassw-aiets.org/wp->

content/uploads/2015/10/IASSW-Theme-3-Statement-24-August-2016.pdf (Accessed 2017/03/07).

International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW]. 2015. IFSW's Policies 2015. Berne: International Federation of Social Workers.

Ismail, N., Kinchin, G. & Edwards, J. 2018. Pilot study, does it really matter? Learning lessons from conducting a pilot study for a qualitative PhD thesis. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 6(1): 117. Available: <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijssr/article/viewFile/11720/9594> (Accessed 2018/06/14).

Kaiser, M.L., Himmelheber, S., Miller, S. & Hayward, R.A. 2015. Cultivators of change: Food justice in social work education. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 544-557.

Kang, Y., Khan, S. & Ma, X. 2009. Climate change impacts on crop yield, crop water productivity and food security – A review. *Progress in Natural Science*, 19(2009):1665-1674. DOI: 10.1016/j.pnsc.2009.08.0001

Kemp, S.P. & Palinkas, L.A. 2015. Strengthening the social respond to the human impacts of environmental change. *Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative and our Future*, 5: 1-32.

Kirst-Ashman, K. K. 2013. *Introduction to social work and social welfare. Critical thinking perspective*. 4th ed. USA: Thomson Brookes/Cole.

Krefting, L. 1991. Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 3: 214-221.

Kungwini Welfare Organisation. 2018. <http://www.kwo.org.za/> (Accessed: 2018/07/04).

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2013. *Practical research: Planning and design*. 10th ed. New Jersey: Pearson.

Lietz, C.A, Langer, C.L. & Furman, R. 2006. Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5: 441-458.

Lietz, C.A. & Zayas, L.E. 2010. Evaluating qualitative research for social work practitioners. *Advances in Social Work*, 11(2):188-202.

Lombard, A. 2003. Entrepreneurship in Africa: Social work challenges for human, social and economic development. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 39(3):224-239.

Lombard, A. 2008. Social work: A social partner in economic development. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 44(2):121-142.

Lombard, A. 2014. A developmental perspective in social work theory and practice. In Spitzer, H., Twikirize, J. M. & Wairire, G.G. (Eds). *Professional Social Work in East Africa: Towards Social Development, Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

Lombard, A. 2015. Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: A path towards sustainable social work, *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 51 (4):482-495.

Lombard, A. & Kleijn, W.C. 2006. Statutory social services: An integrated part of developmental social welfare service delivery. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 42(3/4): 213-233.

Lombard, A. & Strydom, R. 2011. Community development through social entrepreneurship. Themed issue: Community development in Africa. *The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher/ Die Maatskaplikewerk Navorsing-Praktisyn*, 23 (3):327-344.

Lombard, A. & Twikirize, J. 2018. Africa: Promoting community & environmental sustainability. In Jones, D. (Ed). *Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Third Report. Promoting community and environmental sustainability*. IASSW, IFSW and ICSW [pp. 51-79].

Lombard, A. & Viviers, A. 2014. Inclusion of children as stakeholders in social, economic and environmental development. In Hessle, S. (Ed). *Environmental change and sustainable social development*. Social Work – Social Development Volume II. Surrey: Ashgate.

Louis Botha Children's Home. 2018. <https://jacarandachildren.co.za/about-us> (Accessed: 2018/07/04).

Major, C.M & Savin-Baden, M (2010). *New approaches to qualitative research: Wisdom and uncertainty*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.

Maree, K. & Pietersen, J. 2016. Sampling. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First steps in research*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Masoga, M.A. & Shokane, A.L. 2019. Viewpoint: Indigenous knowledge systems and environmental social work education: Towards environmental sustainability. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education*, 35: 1-11. DOI: 10.4314/sajee.v35i1.14

Mathbor, G.M. 2007. Enhancement of community preparedness for natural disasters. The role of social work in building social capital for sustainable disaster relief and management. *International Social Work*, 50(3): 357-369. DOI: 10.1177/0020872807076049

Martin, R.L. & Osberg, S. 2007. *Social Entrepreneurship: The case for definition*. *Social innovation review*. Stanford Graduate School of Business. Stanford University.

McKinnon, J. 2008. Exploring the nexus between social work and the environment. *Australian Social Work*, 61(3):256-268. DOI: 10.1080/03124070802178275

Melekis, K. & Woodhouse, V. 2015. Transforming social work curricula: Institutional supports for promoting sustainability. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 573-585.

Midilli, A., Dincer, I. & Ay, M. 2006. Green energy strategies for sustainable development. *Energy Policy*, 34 (2006):3623-3633.

Miller, E. & Buys, L. 2008. The impact of social capital on residential water-affecting behaviours in a drought-prone Australian community. *Society and Natural Resources*, 21(3): 244-257. DOI: 10.1080/08941920701818258

Miller, S.E., Hayward, R.A. & Shaw, T.V. 2012. Environmental shifts for social work: A principles approach. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21(3):270-277.

Molyneux, R. 2010. The practical realities of eco-social work: A review of the literature. *Critical Social Work*, 11(2): 61-69.

Mulligan, M. 2015. *An introduction to sustainability: Environmental, social and personal perspectives*. Oxon: Routledge.

Mutie, P.M. 2014. The quest for clean water in Kenya: Social workers' uneasy role. In Hessle, S. *Environmental change and sustainable social development*. Social Work – Social Development Volume II. Surrey: Ashgate.

Mwansa, L. 2011. Social Work in Africa. In Healy, L.M. & Link, R.J. (Eds). *Handbook of international social work. Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Nesmith, A. & Smyth, N. 2015. Environmental justice and social work education: Social workers' professional perspectives. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 484-501.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2016a. Introducing qualitative research. In Maree, K. (Ed). *First steps in research*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2016b. Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In Maree, K. (Ed.) *First steps in research*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Patel, L. 2015. *Social welfare and social development*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Peeters, J. 2012. The place of social work in sustainable development: Towards eco-social practice. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21:287-298.

Phillip, D. & Reisch, M. 2015. Rethinking social work's interpretation of "environmental justice": From local to global. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 471-483.

Rainey, D.V., Robinson, K.L., Allen, I. & Christy, R.D. 2003. Essential forms of capital for sustainable community development. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 85(3):708-715.

Ramsay, S. & Boddy, J. 2017. Environmental social work: A concept analysis. *British Journal of Social Work*, 47: 68-86.

Republic of South Africa. 1997. Ministry for Welfare and Population Development, White Paper for Social Welfare. Notice 1108 of 1997. *Government Gazette*, 386(18166). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2011. National Planning Commission (NPC). *National Development Plan Vision 2030*. The Presidency. Republic of South Africa.

Rodin, J. 2014. *The resilience dividend: Managing disruptions, avoiding disaster, and growing stronger in an unpredictable world*. London: Profile Books Ltd.

Rogge, M.E. 2000. Children, poverty and environmental degradation: Protecting current and future generations. *Social Development Issues*, 22 (2 & 3):46-53.

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R., 2013. *Essential research methods for social work*. 3rd ed. California: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

Rule, P. & John, V. 2011. *Your guide to case study research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Shlosberg, D. 2007. *Defining environmental justice: Theories, movements, and nature*. New York: Oxford University Publishers.

Schlosberg, D. 2013. Theorising environmental justice: The expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental politics*, 22(1): 37-55.

Schmitz, C.L., Matyók, T., Sloan, L.M. & James, C. 2012. The relationship between social work and environmental sustainability: Implications for interdisciplinary practice. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21: 278-286.

Schnegg, M. & Bollig, M. 2016. Institutions put to the test: Community-based water management in Namibia during a drought. *Journal of Arid Environments*, 124(2016):62-71.

Schoeman, M. 2001. South Africa's political economy in a global context. In Venter, A. (Ed). 2001. *Government and politics in the new South Africa: An introductory reader to its institutions, processes and policies*. 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Schurink, W., Fouché, C.B. & De Vos, A.S. 2011. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. (Eds). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Shokane, A.L. & Nel, H. 2017. Community development intervention guidelines for communities affected by natural disasters. In Rinkel, M. & Powers, M. (Eds). *Social work promoting community and environmental sustainability: a workbook for global social workers and educators*. International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Berne, Switzerland.

September, R. 2007. Separating social welfare services and social welfare grants: Challenges and opportunities. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 43(2):93-105.

Sewpaul, V. 2014. Social work and human rights: An African perspective. In Hesse, S. (Ed). *Human rights and social equality: Challenges for social work*. Social work – Social development. Vol I. UK: Ashgate Publishers.

Shelton, A. K. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22: 63-75.

Stain, H.J., Kelly, B., Carr, V.J., Lewin, T.J., Fitzgerald, M. & Fragar, L. 2011. The psychological impact of chronic environmental adversity: Responding to prolonged drought. *Social Science & Medicine*, 73 (2011):1593-1599.

Strydom, H. 2011a. Sampling in the quantitative paradigm. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed). Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Strydom, H. 2011b. Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed). Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Strydom, H. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2011. Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In De Vos, A.S. (Ed). Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Taylor, S.A. 2013. Social science research in ocean environments: A social worker's experience. In Gray, M., Coates, J. & Hetherington, T. (Eds). 2013. *Environmental Social Work*. New York: Routledge.

Teixeira, S. & Krings, A. 2015. Sustainable social work: An environmental justice framework for social work education. *Social Work Education*, 34(5): 513-527.

Ungar, M. 2011. Community resilience for youth and families: Facilitative physical and social capital in contexts of adversity. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(9): 1742-1748. DOI: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2011.04.027

UNITED NATIONS. 2015. Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Seventieth session. Agenda items 15 and 116. A/RES/70/1. Available: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents.21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

Vallance, S., Perkins, H.C. & Dixon, J.E. 2011. What is social sustainability? A clarification of concepts. *Geoforum*, 42(3):342-348. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum,2011.01.002

Wagner C., Kawilich B, & Garner M. 2012. *Doing social research: A global context*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Weyers, M.L., Strydom, H. & Huisamen, A. 2008. Triangulation in social work research: The theory and examples of its practical application. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*. 44: 207-228.

Wilson, M. Globalization. 2011. In Healy, L.M. & Link, R.J. (Eds). *Handbook of international social work. Human rights, development, and the global profession*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Yeasmin, S. & Rahman, K. F. 2012. Triangulation research methods as the tool of social sciences research. *BUP Journal*, 1: 154-163.

Yin, R.K. 2014. *Case study research: Design and methods*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zapf, M.K. 2010. Social work and the environment: Understanding people and place. *Critical Social Work*, 11(3): 30-46.

APPENDIX A



11 July 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Permission to conduct a research study in our organisation

This letter serves to certify that Funanani Trust give full consent to **Sonnika Nel** to conduct her research component for her Master's study within our organisation and the social workers employed within our organisation. As communicated to us, the title of her study is: *The role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGO's perspective in Tshwane.*

Funanani Trust fully support the study and eagerly awaits the outcomes of the research. We will accordingly evaluate our programmes, after the outcome of the research to also ensure our part in bringing justice for sustainable communities in and around Tshwane.

Should you need any more clarification, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

ELMIËN CLAASSENS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Funanani Trust (T 2824/02 • PBD Number: 920004195
Trustees: CMJ Norden, WK Moabi, RJ Norden, KH Molekane, CM Mathe
72 Brummele Road, Brummele, Pretoria, 0184 • P.O. Box 2059, Silverton, 0127
Tel: + 27 (0)12 845 8387 • Fax: 026 628 1169 • E-mail: info@funanani.com
Bank: ABSA Silverton • Account name: Funanani Trust • Account No: 4057264505 • Branch Code: 334445

APPENDIX B



CMR NOORD/NORTH:
Derdepoot

(012) 800 4866 / 1394 P.O. Box 13669, Lynn East, 6339, Fax: 086 324 4581 / 012 800 3638
E: manager2@cmr.co.za FMS: www.cmr.co.za NPO Reg. nr. 015-917

GAUTENG

- Child Centre**
T: 012 203 0421
- Child Protection Centre**
T: 012 306 1249
- Disposit**
T: 012 379 8820
- Derdepoot**
T: 012 800 4866
- Mid**
T: 012 301 3644
- Roodepoort**
T: 012 806 1433
- Soshanguve**
T: 012 799 8827
- Volonte**
T: 012 440 2266
- Workesterbos**
T: 012 847 4001
- Pretoria North**
T: 012 346 0650
- Pretoria West**
T: 012 306 1549
- FREDERIA CENTRAL**
VOS Community Centre
T: 012 341 2318
- Lynnwood**
T: 012 946 1249 x 314
- UMFOFO**
Isak Richard
T: 015 516 6118
- Mantola (Mudros)**
T: 013 334 0346
- Worster (Belo-Belo)**
T: 014 734 2827
- NORTH WEST**
Leti
T: 012 385 3007
- Wederburg**
T: 014 592 0455

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

20 July 2018

Permission to conduct research study: Ms. Sonnika Nel

Permission is here-with granted that Ms. Sonnika Nel interview the social workers at the CMR Noord: Derdepoot Centre of Hope, regarding her research study with the topic *"The role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs perspective in Tshwane."*

The CMR would appreciate feedback regarding the results obtained from the study as it may add value to its service rendering in communities.

Any further enquiries may be directed to the undersigned office manager at manager2@cmr.co.za.

Yours in service rendering,

Mrs. R. Aylward
Office manager: CMR North – Derdepoot Centre of Hope



Chairman: Rev. J. van Lagenberg | Director: M. M. van der

APPENDIX C



17 July 2018

Mrs Sonniks Nel / Prof Antoinette Lombard

Re: Permission to conduct a research study at Echo Youth Development

In my capacity as a manager of Echo Youth Development, I can confirm that our Board of Management has approved Mrs Nel's request to conduct a research study with the social workers of our organisation. This includes permission to approach and engage with any staff members for the purposes of the study.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.



Sincerely

Natalie de Winnaar

Social Worker / Manager (10-27715)

natalie@echoyouth.co.za

+27-716064545

ECHO Youth Development | 593 24th Avenue, Villieria, 0154
P.O.Box 32813, Tokai, 0186 | Tel (012) 331 2341 | Fax 086 618 0721

info@echoyouth.co.za | www.echoyouth.co.za

Section 21 2001/02573308 | Sec 18A - R30 033 213

APPENDIX D



23 July 2018

To the Head of the Department
Dr Antoinette Lombard

RE :REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN THE ORGANISATION

Permission is hereby given to Mrs. Sonnika Nel, that she may conduct a research study at Kungwini Welfare Organisation.

Mrs Sonnika Nel have permission to approach and engage in interviews with the social workers to participate in the approach.

The only request from the organisation side is that the social worker's diaries be kept in mind and appointments to see them made well in advance, as all of their diaries is quite full.

It is a great honor that Kungwini Welfare Organisation was approach in this regard and will it be pleasure to be part of research.


Ansie Heymans (Mrs)

Chief Social work supervisor

Community development and social work services

APPENDIX E



2018/07/16

Person Involved: Mrs. Sonnika Nel
Topic: The Role of Social Workers in Promoting Environmental Justice for Sustainable Communities from NGOs Perspective in Tshwane.

This letter serves to confirm that we as Eleos (Non-Profit Organisation) agree that Mrs. Sonnika Nel can conduct her fieldwork and research for her Masters Dissertation in 2018 at our organisation by approaching the social workers at the organisation for interviews regarding her chosen topic. Mrs. Nel has been fostering working relationships with our organisation and we are therefore willing to grant her permission to engage with her research within our institution. We are also confident that her planned research is in line with our ethos and our purpose as an organisation. We trust that this letter will be in order.

For any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

MARNÉ JACOBS
Eleos Social Worker
SACSSP: 1038142
Tel: 012 379 9322
Email: marne@eleos.co.za

Eleos Gemeenskapentrum
Wilhelmstraf 1066 Booyensa, Pretoria.

2018 -07- 16

Signature:  Tel: 



To Donate : ABSA 4050-671-227 : To Donate
www.eleos.co.za

NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION Reg. No. 1970/066/04
PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANISATION Reg. No. 1987/066/06/05
P.O. Box 11024, Shawville, Tshwane, 0094 | 012 379 9324

APPENDIX F



**Louis Botha
Kinderhuis**
Where Learning Begins

tel | 012 333 4164
fax | 012 333 7960
www.louisbothakinderhuis.co.za
5 Broek Lane, Cueswood, Pretoria
NPO Reg. 131-482-NPO

09/07/2018

To whom it may concern,

Re: Sonnika Nel

Sonnika has permission to conduct her Master's study research at Louis Botha Children's Home. She may speak to the social workers, as needed for her Master's study which is entitled; the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs perspective in Tshwane.

For further information, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

Charlene Grobler
Head: Children's Affairs and MDDC

Bank besonderings/Bank Details: ABSA – Deedsport Tak kode/Branch Code: 330001 Rekening/Account No. 405 208 2794
De/voorsitter: Adriaan Visser, Mnr G. Botha, Mnr O. Tlou, Dr G. van Rensburg, Mnr L.C. van der Merwe, Dr R. Spierman, Mnr M. van der Merwe
Mnr J. Komman, L. van der Merwe, Mnr M. Grobler

APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Social workers

The goal of the study is to explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities

Section A: Biographical Information

1. What is your gender?

Female:		Male:		LGTBIQ:	
---------	--	-------	--	---------	--

2. What is your age group?

Under 24	24-29	30-35	36-40	41-46	47-52	53+
----------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

3. What is your highest tertiary qualification?

.....

4. How long have you been practicing as a social worker?

1-3	4-6	7-10	11+ years
-----	-----	------	-----------

5. In which sector do you work?

Government

Non-Profit Organisation

Parastatal

Other. (Please specify)

6. In which one of the following geographical areas do you work?

Urban

Semi-urban

Rural

Section B: QUESTIONS

1. What environmental injustices are common in the communities that you are working in?
2. Who are mostly affected by these injustices, and why do you say so?
3. How is the sustainability of these communities affected by environmental injustices?
4. What programmes and interventions are you, and your organisation/department engaged in, that promote sustainable communities and environmental justice? What impact to they make in terms of what has changed or is in the process of changing?
5. Who are you collaborating with as partners in promoting sustainable communities and environmental justice? Who do think you should engage as partners?
6. You have shared your views on what environmental injustices are prevalent and how it affects the sustainability of communities. How do you think, does it influence and challenge the role of social workers to shift focus to more sustainable practice that consider the environment, especially in the context of developmental social work?
7. What suggestions do you have in preparing and guiding social workers to play a role in contributing to sustainable communities and promoting environmental justice? What will be enabling factors to succeed, and what will be challenges in this regard?
8. Do you have any further comments on the research topic that we have not discussed, but what you think could strengthen the research findings?

APPENDIX H



Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Work and Criminology

Researcher: Sonnika Nel
Tel: 012 330 0168
E-mail: sonnika.nel@gmail.com

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

- 1. Title of the study:** The role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs perspective in Tshwane.
- 2. Goal of the study:** To explore and describe the role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities.
- 3. Procedures:** The study will use one-on-one interviews to collect data from participants. Each interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour. The interviews will be tape recorded with your permission. The tape recordings will be transcribed for purposes of data analysis. Only the researcher and the study supervisor will have access to the tapes and transcripts which will be stored in a secure place by the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years. If data is used again, it will be for research purposes.
- 4. Risks and discomforts:** There are no known risks and discomforts that may be endured by participants in this study.
- 5. Benefits:** Participants will not receive any incentives for being involved in the study. The study will benefit the participants indirectly in that they will contribute to social work theory regarding social work and environmental justice.
- 6. Participants' rights:** Participation in the study is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants have the right to refuse to answer any question that they do not wish to respond to.
- 7. Confidentiality and anonymity:** Information collected in the study will be treated confidentially and the names of participants will not appear in the research report or the scientific journal in which the results will be published. Findings will not be presented in a way that could be directly linked to any specific participant.
- 8. Person to contact:** If participants have questions or concerns relating to the study, they may contact the researcher at 012 330 0168 or email her at sonnika.nel@gmail.com

Department of Social Work & Criminology
Room 10-21-1, Level 10, Humanities Building
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20
Hatfield 0020, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 2325/2030
Email: Anickette.kamband@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Departement Maatskaplike Werk en Kriminologie
Lefapha la Bomiho
Ngano ya Modiro wa Lengo la Bomiho

Declaration

I,, understand my rights as a research participant, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being conducted.

Date

Place

Participant's signature

Date

Place

Researcher's signature

APPENDIX I



Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

110 September 2018

Dear Ms Nel

Project: The role of social workers in promoting environmental justice for sustainable communities from NGOs' perspective in Tshwane
Researcher: S Nel
Supervisor: Prof A Lombard
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 17220034 (GW20180807HS) (Group research)

Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

I am pleased to inform you that the above application was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the meeting held on 6 September 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxi Schoeman'.

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

cc: Prof A Lombard (Supervisor and HoC)

Febulath: Coosawaterstapper
Lefapha la Bomothe

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizo; Dr L Bland; Dr K Booysse; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fesseil; Ms KT Govender Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kekelver; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puffenberg; Dr D Rayburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljart; Prof V Tsebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mkalapa