



**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERVENTION  
STRATEGY FOR CAREER EDUCATION IN  
BUSHBUCKRIDGE**

By

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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY FOR CAREER EDUCATION IN BUSHBUCKRIDGE (BBR)

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## **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.1 Aim of the chapter**

This chapter provides a background to the nature of the problem addressed by this study. The chapter also provides a scientific explanation of how the dissertation should be read.

In this study the focus will be on exploring sustainable career education in Bushbuckridge, a rural area in South Africa. The first chapter demonstrates how partnership between government, non-government organisations and other institutions has been successful in reproductive health education in this rural area. Hence this multidisciplinary team approach serves as a model for sustainable career education in rural areas. The ability of the educational system to compete in a changing society depends on the ability to prepare both young people (learners) and adults (educators) for the new changing environments. As a result different groups of interested persons, such as non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, educators, counsellors and consultants, have taken it upon themselves to provide for career education in Bushbuckridge.

### **1.2 Background**

The 1994 political breakthrough in South Africa represented the creation of a platform, which aims to remove the inequalities of the past, and to place the new system of education on a sound footing. Following developments in other countries can enhance understanding of career phenomena. However,

South African educationists will be well positioned to make an effective contribution to psychological knowledge, both locally and globally, by developing intervention strategies from which communities will benefit (Stead & Watson, 1999:223).

Effective, democratic and quality management of education should be central to the vision of providing quality public career education. In the local context it has been suggested that stronger links should be forged between community structures such as the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium (BHSSC), the Health Systems Development Unit (HSDU), the Education Department, universities and all other role players in promoting health and career education in rural areas (Ngwenya, Mbetse & Stadler, 1996).

This chapter describes a partnership between the university of the Witwatersrand, non-governmental organisations and the local community, which has had success in improving health and career education in Bushbuckridge. An important aspect of this partnership has been recognising the limitations and potential of each sector of the partnership. The partnership has emphasised the need to hand over the responsibility and control of programmes to the community, as well as the need for career education in Bushbuckridge.

Over the past decades South Africa's education system was characterised by complete fragmentation and inequality along racial, regional and gender lines. The quality of South African education in townships and former

homeland areas (rural areas) was generally neglected (Cross, Mkhwanazi-Twala & Klein, 1998).

The consequences of this neglect on a functional level were an inefficient system, unacceptable gender distribution, poor management of very scarce national resources and the exclusion and disempowerment of the majority of youngsters who live on the brink of poverty, unemployment, violence and crime (Cross, 1992:20).

Stead and Watson (1999:9) have stated that career education and counselling in South Africa have always been determined by race, and it is no surprise that the question of race in career appointments is still contested. From the late 1970s, the role of non-governmental agencies increased, providing a significant sector focused on providing broadly defined career education to communities and support to educators. A prototypical example is the Career and Information Centre (CRIC) in Athlone near Cape Town (Stead & Watson, 1999:10).

Furthermore, these authors have stated that access to career information is an integral part of the decision-making process (Stead & Watson, 1993:18). There is very limited access to career education information in Bushbuckridge, and this is likely to have affected effective career decision making of the youth in this area.

Inadequate career education in post-primary schools, coupled with the negative impact of the policies of the apartheid system in South Africa, specifically in Bushbuckridge, has led to many “making career choices that

are based on trial-and-error methods” (Stead & Watson, 1999:181). Not all people have had access to formal education in Bushbuckridge. Many have been unable to complete their schooling, often dropping out in the primary phase and many are unemployed with no access to career services (Leach, 1994:72).

An assumption of this study is that Bushbuckridge requires career information and career services that are more systems-oriented and community-based. Research shows that a large majority of respondents in a black community prioritised the need for a career resource centre to provide information, rather than dealing with the process of career choice (Stead & Watson, 1999:8). The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium (BHSSC) serves as a resource centre for the Bushbuckridge community. The researcher wants to explore what the career education expectations of Bushbuckridge inhabitants are.

### **1.3 A case study of health, career education and promotion in Bushbuckridge**

Attempts for a holistic and sustainable approach for learners/young people in need of career education, remains an unexplored aspect of rural areas of South Africa like Bushbuckridge. This deficiency is fuelled by the extreme underdevelopment of basic amenities like education and subsequent absence of employment opportunities. Bushbuckridge is the seventh region of the Limpopo Province (Appendix I), being an area of 20 square kilometers with a population of more than 850 000 and is best described as a labour reserve due to the high level of migrant labour systems. Mozambican refugees constitute 30% of the population (Tollman, Ngwenya & Stadler, 1994).

According to the baseline study conducted by the Health Systems Development Unit (HSDU) in 1997, this region has a high incidence of unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS (HSDU, 2000).

This study builds on collaboration between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the rural district of Bushbuckridge, such as the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium (BHSSC) of which the researcher is the founder member and the Health Systems Development Unit (HSDU). This study will demonstrate the importance of the partnership that these non-governmental organisations have attempted to forge between the universities, such as the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Pretoria, the health services, the educational services (both local and national) and community structures.

This study pays tribute to all individuals, groups and institutions that have worked hard to improve the health and education of others. This case study is an example of one of many health and career education schemes in rural South Africa; it shows that attempts are being made to contribute to career education for all South Africans in this new century. It is however not an ideal model study since it is open to critical comments and support from all those involved in career education. A key aspect of this study has been the formation of a locally based health and social services consortium, which has gradually assumed the responsibility for running sexuality education workshops, career education information, counselling, and referring clients to relevant institutions (Appendix II).

While the initiative is still in an early developmental phase, it is believed that this approach can constructively contribute towards the demystification of health knowledge, career education and it represents an example of true community participation in the health and educational processes.

### **1.3.1 The role of non-governmental organisations in career education and promotion**

Programmes worldwide are increasingly scrutinised for their contribution to health, career education and promotion. These programmes are evaluated according to the success they have had in strengthening individual skills, developing community actions and creating a supportive environment (Ottawa Charter, 1986).

Stead and Watson (1999:10) describe the role of non-governmental organisations, and point out that that the Soweto insurrection of 1976 raised the profile of South Africa as a target for developmental funding. Much funding was set aside for educational and developmental programmes given the dearth of such programmes in disadvantaged communities. There was a also corporate response to provide funding for community initiatives involving dedicated non-government organisations. Many non-governmental organisations began to emerge from the late 1970s. One example is the Career and Information Centre, which was the primary resource for many learners to obtain career counselling and relevant career information in Athlone near Cape Town.

Similar kinds of community organisations have played a major role in developing alternative contextual approaches to guidance and counselling

under the heading of the liberal socialist framework of “peoples education” and life skills training. These community organisations attempted to redress a gap in the provision of career development services when the educational system in black schools was in great disorder (Stead & Watson, 1999:11).

### **1.3.2. The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium (BHSSC)**

The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium was established as part of a health promotion exercise for a community-based programme that further adopted a multisectoral approach. The main stakeholders in the BHSSC include health professionals, educators, traditional healers, peace officials, clergy, social workers and community leaders in the Bushbuckridge area of the rural Limpopo Province. The consortium was established in 1994 by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme of the Health Systems Development Unit (HSDU) of the Community Health Department of the University of the Witwatersrand, based at Tintswalo Hospital, Acornhoek. The project is an offspring from the intervention research conducted by HSDU on sexual health in 1992 (Weiner, 1998:4).

It is a community-based organisation (CBO), which has developed spontaneously in the community in an effort to deal with community obstacles. The BHSSC is a planned effort of community action to involve local groups in the process of the implementation of services (Drake, 1993:87).

The initial aims were to increase community involvement in addressing the identified need for sexual health awareness and to augment existing

preventative and support interventions targeting Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STIs/HIV/AIDS), teenage pregnancy and sexual abuse in the area. The BHSSC has since raised funds and become established as a CBO, gaining independence from but maintaining links with HSDU. While previously based at the HSDU offices at Tintswalo Hospital, the Organisation moved to the Old Post Office in Acornhoek in 1997 (Weiner, 1998:4).

The organisation exists amidst a growing awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues in South Africa. In view of the increasing demand for HIV/AIDS interventions, including care and support NGOs and CBOs have been identified as having a vital role to play in augmenting the service provided by the health and welfare systems. Their flexibility and innovativeness have been cited as features that enable responsiveness and quick action when necessary (Stadler, 1996:6).

#### **1.3.2.1 The consortium as a multidisciplinary team**

A multidisciplinary team approaches a specific problem from various discipline-oriented perspectives (Garbers, 1996:163). A problem such as family violence in Bushbuckridge would, for example, be investigated by a psychologist (who analyses behaviour patterns), a sociologist (who investigates the group dynamics), an educator (who investigates parent-child relationships), a jurist (who addresses the legal implications), a social worker (who analyses the social care set-up) and a clergyman (who provides spiritual support).

A multidisciplinary team like the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium would therefore use a similar strategy in promoting career education in Bushbuckridge. Career education would be investigated through the various professional disciplines to begin a holistic approach to the concept. The consortium has three main roles:

- To educate;
- to refer clients to relevant institutions;
- and to provide counselling for those in need.

It was envisaged that the consortium would become a model strategy for rural areas in sharing health education, career education, as well as an interface between the health and education services and the community. It has also succeeded in bringing together different institutions that previously would not have imagined sharing the same platform; particularly in the context of conflicting morals and cultural ideas concerning sex and fertility.

#### **1.3.2.2. List of services offered by BHSSC**

- Career education services
- Training curriculum
- Training services
- Consulting services
- Consulting and support services
- Referral services
- Fundraising
- Clinical services
- Facilitating workshops to various community groups

- Home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS

### **1.3.2.3 Career education, counselling and referral services**

The above-mentioned services are based at the BHSSC offices and are provided for people with STIs/HIV/AIDS. Career counselling is an added service provided to the community. Clients are self-referred or from local institutions such as schools, clinics or hospitals. Different professionals provide counselling to young people. For example, career counselling is provided mostly at the centre by guidance practitioners/teachers of whom the researcher is a member. Clients are also referred to other relevant institutions, where they can obtain further help. The centre also responds to requests for training sessions and has regular workshops with community groups, schools and other institutions.

Approximately forty people visit the centre daily, predominantly young people, requesting condoms and advice on how to use them. Requests for career information are also frequent. The resource centre is based in a central location in the town of Acornhoek. A coordinator, a health promotion officer and a number of volunteers run it (Weiner, 1998:7).

The consortium is a community and youth centre-based service. Services are based in the community set apart from the school and the clinic (Friedman, 1994:509). The BHSSC centre deals with a wide range of issues and services, but incorporates a strong health and career education component. International examples of this kind of centre include programmes such as the Zuni Native Projects in New Mexico and the International Health African Forum programme. The former aims to promote healthier life styles and

combat the high rate of alcohol abuse, whereas the latter promotes self-confidence as part of a strategy against gang-related violence and drug abuse among young African-Americans. Both programmes are outstanding in their level of community involvement and the extensive use of local cultural resources in their design and operation (Stivens, 1994:113). The BHSSC's level of community involvement makes it a relevant and most needed local resource.

The BHSSC centre reaches individuals who previously may not have had access to health and career services (McGurk *et al.*, 1993). Most importantly these services are accessible and affordable. It also provides continuity of care by promoting links between existing school health services and the establishment of a community health care and career education delivery systems (Falsetti & Kovel, 1994:364).

#### **1.3.2.4 Initial limitations and expansions**

Not everyone was supportive of the activities of the initial health programme during the early years. Indeed the BHSSC study received criticism from many prominent community “figures” who claimed that these efforts were contributing towards sexual experimentation among the youth. A number of school managers refused to allow the researchers to conduct sessions during school hours, even though time was allocated in the school timetable for Guidance and Counselling.

The solution was to involve the school educators more actively in the programme. The researchers felt that it was time to begin to lobby for the introduction of sexuality education in the school curriculum. Educators were

sent to the University of Pretoria for further training in family and sexuality education courses (Ngwenya, Matjee & Stadler, 1995).

Other groups were introduced to the programme: women groups were given workshops on the prevention and early recognition of sexually transmitted diseases, contraceptives and management of sexual abuse. The South African Police were provided with workshops on support to victims of sexual abuse and the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases for peace officers and prison inmates. By means of social workers, clinic nurses and traditional healers, particular attention was paid to the recognition and management of STIs, HIV/AIDS (Ngwenya *et al.*, 1996).

The consortium continues to blossom and in 1996 it was awarded a grant from the University of South Africa, to establish a resources centre for HIV/AIDS prevention. In 1998 the BHSSC attained full autonomy as a community-based organisation. It is registered under Section 21 as a non-profit organisation. Both the provincial and national department of health and the Transvaal National Development Trust (TNDT) are funding the consortium.

The BHSSC identified the field of career education as a prominent need. Based on the successes of the health intervention programme, it was decided that an intervention strategy for career education in Bushbuckridge should be developed. Being a member of the consortium, the researcher was given this research mandate.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The focus of this study is reflected in the following key research questions.

- What intervention strategy could be developed for career education in Bushbuckridge?
- What intervention strategies exist nationally and internationally for career education?
- What do Bushbuckridge stakeholders view as an appropriate career education intervention strategy?
- What are stakeholders' perceptions of, and solutions in response to the career education crisis affecting young people in BBR?

This study examines possible ways of addressing career education in Bushbuckridge in a post-modern career education context.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

- To explore Bushbuckridge stakeholders' expectations of career education;
- to develop an intervention strategy for career education in Bushbuckridge;
- to identify and describe the impact of career education on young people;
- to describe, analyse and interpret stakeholders' perceptions of career education and solutions offered in response to career education and
- to describe the process in which these understandings and solutions emerged.

## **1.6 Research paradigm.**

The paradigmatic perspective of the researcher is that of post-colonialism. Morrow (1995) in Waghid (2000:26) describes a paradigm as a grammar of thinking / a form of discourse / a shape of consciousness or a form of rationality. Post-colonialism is described as a groundbreaking work of criticism, which is still influential today, although several critics have questioned many of its arguments. It is a mechanism aimed at refuting and ending the claim of absolute objective science; the glorification of rational knowledge; the exalted status of empirically verified knowledge; the claims of universality, validity and certainty (Savickas, 1993; Steyn, 1997; Lotter, 1995; Hollinger, 1994; McLeod, 2000; Maree *et al.*, 2001)

This study is qualitative; therefore post colonialism is applied as many qualitative researchers favour it, i.e. policy analysts, administrators, programme evaluators, market researchers and planners (McLeod, 2000:35). Post-colonialism leads to new possibilities, but it is not free from its own problems; therefore it is important to maintain an element of suspicion. McLeod (2000:34) adds that post-colonial research is sometimes called an instrumental orientation or a technical interest, because knowledge is used as an instrument to satisfy human wants and control the physical and social environment. For this study the paradigm is used, as a post-colonial researcher uses a theory to identify key characteristics of a community system that predicts individual learning. The researcher assumes them precisely to verify the theory. Educational officials can use this knowledge in Bushbuckridge to change such inputs and to affect learning by individuals (Neuman, 1994:58).

The researcher has been influenced by post-colonialism, as this brought with it constructivism, which emphasises that knowledge of the world is not gained through reflecting merely on what is there, but rather through reflecting on what is made of that-which exists. This is because everything that is labelled post-colonial is likely to be replaced by other terms as the process of transition continues in this rapidly changing world.

The following three paradigmatic perspectives are used to accentuate the subjective and interpretative processes of this research study.

- Methodological assumptions
- Theoretical assumptions
- and Metatheoretical assumptions

### **1.6.1 Methodological assumptions**

#### **a. Research design**

The research approach of this study is a qualitative case study design and is exploratory by nature (Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Community-based and education-based approaches will be utilised. Whatever this study contains arises directly from the experiences of members of the BHSSC.

A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study as it was felt that this would best meet the aim of promoting career education in Bushbuckridge. Qualitative research is defined as a multiperspective approach to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing these interactions in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to them or representing people, actions and events in social life (Neuman, 1994, De Vos 2000; Mouton, 2001).

Community participation and empowerment are more vital and more overtly problematic than ever in the current global situation. In the face of deepening poverty resulting from international recession and restructuring, international agencies, national and local states have demonstrated increasing interest in strategies to promote community participation as a means of enhancing the development process. There has been increasing emphasis on the importance of alternative, grass-roots approaches to development, starting with resources of local communities. Hence this study explores community-building career education processes. This kind of career education intervention strategy is called asset-based community development/ empowerment (Craig & Mayo, 1995).

This study will also include a literature review. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:112), a literature review is usually a critique of the status of knowledge on a carefully defined topic. The literature for review includes many types of sources: professional journals, reports, scholarly books and monographs, government documents and dissertations.

**i. Ethical considerations**

“Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students” (De Vos, 1998:24).

This implies that, in spite of the existence of ethical guidelines and committees, which may support the researcher in his decision making, the final responsibility for ethical conducts rests with the researcher concerned. He will be accountable for the positive and negative results of every decision. Ethics is about applying moral principles to prevent participants from being harmed or wronged in any way. The research must therefore be conducted in a respectful and fair manner (De Vos, 1998:25).

Standards for research ethics in this study were achieved through ensuring privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. The participants volunteered to participate and were in no way forced to attend the sessions. For the purpose of consistency however they were asked to commit themselves to participating in all sessions. All the stakeholders were informed of the research verbally and in writing.

## **ii. Trustworthiness**

De Vos (1998:331) indicates that trustworthiness in qualitative research can be applied with positive results. He further indicates that there are four factors that are relevant to ensure trustworthiness, and that have been considered for this study: i.e. truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

- Truth-value: asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth findings for the subjects and the context in which the research was under taken.
- Applicability: refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups.
- Consistency: considers the consistency of the data.

- **Neutrality:** the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives.

The researcher will ensure that these factors are present in the philosophy, methodology and implementation of this research study and they will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **b. Research methods**

The study employs a multimethod approach which further enhances its trustworthiness.

- **“Bandla” or “Xivijo” methods (Adapted from the focus group method)**

These are culturally relevant methods for this study, adapted from focus group-brainstorming session (first used by the researcher). They may differ from culture to culture. “Bandla” in the context of Bushbuckridge refers to where a group of stakeholders (not more than twenty) gather and discusses intervention strategies that affect the community. “Xivijo” means the entire community gathers and discuss matters as a joint working group. The purpose of utilising this method in this study is that the researcher wanted to explore the use of the bandla tradition method in career education data collection.

- **Focus Group**

The focus group method is a special kind of interview situation that is largely qualitative. Researchers gather six to twelve people in a room with a moderator to discuss one or more issues for one or two hours (Neuman, 1994:245). For the purpose of this study the issue to be

explored with community stakeholders is appropriate career intervention strategy.

For this study a structured focus group schedule will be utilised. Participants will be asked the same questions, which will be translated into their mother tongue where necessary. A V-shaped approach where participants talk via the moderator to avoid arguments will be used. Confrontations will also be observed. The researcher will be flexible, keep the participants to the topic and encourage discussion. Responses will be recorded by means of flip charts (Neuman, 1994:246).

The focus group method is useful in exploratory research to generate new ideas for hypotheses, questionnaire items and the interpretation of results. There are several advantages in using the qualitative focus group method in this study. The method can provide a relaxed environment when discussing the topic of career education. Provision is made for individuals to respond using their own opinions and ideas. The method allows the researcher to ask questions to uncover reasons for responses that might not be revealed on paper-and-pencil tests or survey (Greenbaum, 1998; Vaughn *et al.*, 1996).

Straw and Smith (1995) emphasise that the results of qualitative methods are easily interpretable to the general public and policy makers. These methods can be utilised to assess positive and negative aspects of career education and promotion intervention strategies in this study. The approach can guide and monitor a programme implementation. The approach can also generate ideas for communities to use a career

education service, identify methods for improving service delivery, gather information about optimal times to deliver services and understand barriers that may limit access to services (Khan *et al.*, 1991; Shaw *et al.*, 1995; Romualdi & Sandoval, 1995; Weist, 1997)

This study makes use of the following aspects of discussion:

### **i. Sample population**

De Vos (2000:191) defines a sample as “the element of a population considered for actual inclusion in the study or can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested”. The participants in this study consist of four bandla/focus groups of stakeholders such as Psychological division officials, career guidance educators, community members and youth. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The researcher decided on use these particular participants as they all represented something of specific relevance to this study. The motives for their selection will also be discussed in the next chapter.

### **ii. Data analysis and interpretation**

Transcriptions of the bandla/focus group interviews will be analysed by the researcher in terms of guidelines in which the analysis involves “breaking up” the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. Analysis is to understand the various constituting elements of one’s data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data (Mouton, 2000:108).

### **iii. Contextual evaluation**

De Vos (1998:390) states that researchers must look beyond the literature of their particular fields. This is essential since they contribute to the generation of new knowledge and the establishment of new linkages between concepts and methods of various disciplines. Hence the literature dealing with the subject was explored throughout the study.

### **1.6.2 Theoretical assumptions**

In the early 1950s Ginzberg, Roe and Super published career development and occupational theories that have become landmarks in the development of the career education and counselling domain. These publications were instrumental in generating an increase in career education practices and support materials as well as numerous research projects and subsequent methods for delivering career education programmes in Bushbuckridge (Roger, 1998:25).

Other theorists include Holland, Tredeman, Krutmboltz and Brown, who have contributed to career development and choice theories. One of the early theorists on career counselling is Parson (1909), who maintained that career guidance was accompanied by studying the individual, by surveying occupations and by matching the individual with the occupation. This is called the trait-and-factor theory, which became the foundation of many career-counselling programmes and is still applicable in this study. The trait-and-factor approach has been the most durable of all theories of career education (Brown, 1990b; Zunker, 1998).

Donald Super, who wrote extensively on career development, mainly influences this study. His theoretical propositions were highly influenced by

the research generated within areas of differential psychology, developmental psychology and provide the basis for an individual's career behaviour and attitudes. Super's constructs of values, self-concept and thematic exploration were used to enrich the trait-and-factor approach. The constructs of career development, career maturity and career adaptability helped to shift the focus from occupational choice to career development as a lifelong process (Stead & Watson, 1999:69).

The researcher utilised one of Super's career guidance constructs (Life themes) in collecting data. No research has been done on the narrative and "bandla" methods in career development in South Africa to date. Some could argue that the system was observed in rural areas, although not scientifically implemented. In traditional African cultures story telling and "bandla" methods play an important role. Hence the researcher utilised them in this study (Stead & Watson, 1999:76).

### **1.6.3 Metatheoretical assumptions**

South African career educationists have accepted, or have been on the receiving end of the modernist philosophies and have seldom conducted independent research. Most programmes use an adaptation of Western theories, counselling models and measuring instruments. Most career counselling practices and research originate in the United States of America (USA). Such practice and research are largely grounded in neo-positivism, which reflects de-contextualised and reductionistic perspectives of career behaviour (Stead & Watson, 1999:214).

Stead and Watson (1999:214) have emphasised that utilising and adapting theories, constructs, counselling techniques and instruments from other countries can be beneficial in the South African context and researchers should be careful about rejecting such approaches entirely. However it is also important for South African career counsellors and educationists to develop and employ theories, models and paradigms that originate in Africa.

Career researchers and practitioners should be cautious when embracing Euro-American perspectives as the touchstones for the advancement of a contextually appropriate career education. One does not produce contextually appropriate knowledge solely by having a South African sample, but there is a need for the careful development of new theories, constructs and career interventions and determination of the meaning of existing approaches in the South African context. One way in which this objective can be realised and which reflects the post-colonial metatheory underlying this research, is through indigenous psychology and indigenisation approaches.

### **1.6.3.1 Post-colonialism in terms of indigenous psychology and indigenisation approaches**

Sinha (1997:132) in Stead and Watson (1999) defines indigenous psychology as “those elements of knowledge that have been generated in a country or a culture, and that have developed therein, as opposed to those that are imported or brought from elsewhere”. In other words local cultural traditions or frames of reference should be used in defining career education concepts. Indigenous psychology helps researchers and counsellors not to

lose sight of differences in the meanings, people from different cultural contexts attribute to career education for example career choice process.

Adair's (19992) definition of indigenisation implies that international career education can be modified to fit into South African culture, including Bushbuckridge. Sinha (1997) additionally warns of possible problems associated with research conducted from an indigenous and an indigenisation perspective. Counsellors and researchers may overemphasise the negative aspects of neo-positivistic research methods, preferring to highlight intelligible ways of obtaining knowledge.

If one accepts trustworthiness as important in career counselling and research, it will be necessary to authenticate such methods rather than merely accept their usefulness. Furthermore a clear description of what trustworthiness means to the researcher should exist. The danger of overemphasising the Western and non-Western dichotomy and implying that these perspectives are irreconcilable should be taken into account.

Indigenous psychologies can enable scholars to accept both traditional and imported psychological perspectives. They can also enable career practitioners to focus on being part of the larger body of psychological knowledge. Such a framework should also prevent career practitioners from premature generalisation and ethnocentrism (Stead and Watson, 1999:216).

Berry and Kim (1993:276) add that indigenous psychologies enable researchers to provide more accurate accounts of career education in specific cultures. It is also possible that such knowledge will contribute to a universal

psychology. Bushbuckridge is a multicultural rural area. It cannot be divorced from the rest of the world in terms of career education. Therefore, career education should not be to provide career phenomena that vary substantially from Euro-American perspectives of career development.

### **1.6.3.2 Indigenous psychologies research strategies**

Six research strategies exist within an indigenous psychologies research paradigm according to Berry and Kim (1993). In this study these strategies will be used in order to describe in part, both the current status of and future development of an intervention strategy for career education and promotion in Bushbuckridge (Stead and Watson, 1999:217).

#### **1.6.3.2.1 Psychological knowledge within various contexts**

The work context in South Africa differs from that in developed countries like the USA. South Africa has undergone a historic period of political, social and economic transformation. Given the legacy of apartheid, this transformation process has to date been relatively successful. However, the situation in certain areas like Bushbuckridge remains worrying, in particular with regard to unemployment. The population of Bushbuckridge had legitimate expectations in respect of an improvement in their living conditions after so many decades of social and political segregation (Department of Labour, 1999/2000).

South Africa is struggling with a high unemployment rate of more than 37% (SAIRR, 1999; css.gov.za, 2000). Contextual factors such as unemployment, a weak national economy and shifting requirements for entry into various occupations continually impact on individuals operating within Super's

career development paradigm. This continually compels individuals to return to previous developmental stages, thus making the notion of career development stages appear artificial within the South African context (Stead and Watson, 1999:217).

Stead and Watson (1998a) also indicate that the validity and reliability of test scores of career instruments in the South African context yield mixed findings. For example, the aptitude tests, which were used in former Gazankulu schools in Bushbuckridge, were meaningless. There was no feedback to candidates. Learners could not be helped as these tests were just one of the school's programmes. Most individuals had mixed feelings and findings about those psychological tests. This does not imply that there are contrasting views in career education between South Africa and the USA. It merely suggests that American career counselling and research may not necessarily give an accurate reflection of career phenomena in South Africa.

#### **1.6.3.2.2 Indigenous psychologies do not focus on the bizarre or the exotic**

The BHSSC aims to coordinate career education and promotion among the local Bushbuckridge community; amidst the social and developmental constraints outlined above. The vision of the BHSSC is for a sustainable career education programme that is conducive to individual development. Therefore the purpose of career education in South Africa should not be to provide career intervention strategies that vary substantially from the Euro-American perspective of career development. Career education should be directed towards providing informal descriptions of career development and career interventions in various contexts for the benefit of South Africans.

This study aims to explore the interpretations and meanings of career phenomena as generated by Bushbuckridge stakeholders. These data may not be applicable to other people in South Africa and other countries (Stead and Watson, 1999:218).

#### **1.6.3.2.3 Multiple perspectives may be held by various cultures**

Stead and Watson (1999) stress that counsellors should note that career behaviour of people within various cultural and ethnic groups can vary considerably. Bushbuckridge is a multicultural area, comprising Shangaans, Swazis and Northern Sotho speaking people.

Furthermore it might be easy to believe that all clients from a particular culture or ethnic group exhibits the same values and beliefs, but this too would be misleading. Within cultures people differ from one another (as in Bushbuckridge), according to career constructs in terms of moderating variables, such as socio-economic status, gender or whether they are rural or urbanised.

#### **1.6.3.2.4 Variety of research methods**

Indigenous psychologists do not favour a particular research method recognising both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In South Africa the oral tradition is very important in many cultures. In Bushbuckridge the Northern Sotho speaking people predominantly use oral methods in their initiation schools. Research participants from African cultures may prefer interviews or focus groups rather than multiple-choice responses, which they are not always familiar with and which they may answer just because they feel they have to.

Bushbuckridge lacks career education practitioners and research infrastructure. Therefore it urgently needs a career intervention strategy that will help all individuals to have career knowledge and an effective career choice process (Stead and Watson, 1999:219).

#### **1.6.3.2.5 Variety perspectives**

Stead and Watson (1998) state that the career theories of Holland (1995) and Super (1996) have elicited considerable interest among South African counsellors. They argue that South African career practitioners have become too entrenched in these perspectives and have not shown been reception to other career paradigms. Congruently less effort has been directed at developing career education techniques appropriate to the South African context, especially in areas such as Bushbuckridge where there are no researchers in career education. It is therefore important for career practitioners to broaden their skills and knowledge through examining a wide variety of the counselling approaches available and also by generating new counselling models.

#### **1.6.3.2.6 Psychological universals**

The primary aim of the indigenous psychologies is to determine psychological universals if they do exist. One way of achieving a universal approach is to examine career and work phenomena in various cultures and societies. For the purpose of this study Bushbuckridge is not considered as isolated from other regions, where a great deal of research on career education has been performed; thus career and work in various cultures and societies will be examined and applied. Inasmuch as psychological universal

theory, therapies and research methods are taught at universities, practiced by therapists and used in research projects in many countries including South Africa, they will therefore also be applied in this study (Stead and Watson, 1999:220).

### **1.7. Conceptual definitions**

Roger (1998:19) states that every profession/study has its own jargon and identifying characteristics. The following concepts/terms are used throughout this study. The researcher aims to provide himself with a clear understanding of what is intended with the use of these concepts/terms.

- **Career:** The term “career” is dynamic. It is important to examine it from the perspective of indigenous psychology, because its meaning continues to change depending on socio-historical contexts. The term has been associated with “work” or “vocation” Career refers to the course of events, which constitute a life; the sequence of occupations and other life roles that combine to express one’s commitment to work in his or her total pattern of self-development (Stead & Watson, 1999; Roger, 1998).
- **Career education:** All experiences, by which individuals acquire knowledge of and attitudes towards self and work and the skills by which to identify, choose, plan and prepare for work and other options constituting a career (Roger, 1998:20).
- **Career intervention:** Any direct assistance to an individual to promote effective decision making, or more narrowly focused, intensive counselling to help resolve career difficulties (Roger, 1998:20).
- **Career development:** The total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and change factors that

combine to shape the career of any given individual over his/her life span (Jacobs *et al.*, 1991)

- **Career counselling:** A process in which the school counsellor and the learners are involved in an interpersonal process designed to assist individuals with career development problems (Brown *et al.*, 1990)
- **Strategy:** A philosophy or a plan of action, or a group of techniques intended to change the career behaviour of an individual, group of individuals or an organisation (Roger, 1998:21).
- **Paradigm:** Includes basic assumptions, the important questions to be answered or puzzles to be solved, the research techniques to be used and examples of what scientific research looks like (Neuman, 1994:45).
- **Post-modernism/colonialism:** Mechanism aimed at refuting and ending the claim of absolute objective science; glorification of rational knowledge; the exalted status of empirically verified knowledge; the claims of universality, validity and certainty (Savickas, 1993; Steyn, 1997; Lotter, 1995; Hollinger, 1994).

### **1.8 Summary**

The BHSSC has made substantial progress in achieving its status as a community-based organisation and expand its various activities. Community members are committed to translate their visions into actions and have a diverse range of sectors in the community. An investment in community empowerment, particularly dissemination, counselling and management skills will enhance effective, high quality implementation and sustainability of any programme in Bushbuckridge.

## **1.9 Chapter outlines and Divisions**

**Chapter 1** provides an overview of this research study. The intention is to provide an orientation to the study, together with a discussion of the research questions, objectives and research methods of the research. The chapter also discusses the perspectives from which this has been conducted.

**Chapter 2** focuses on a discussion of the research design. The research methods utilised in order to attain the research aims are evaluated in terms of their ethical considerations.

**Chapter 3** elucidates the characteristics of the qualitative research interview. An analysis of bandla/focus group interviews with recurring themes within the interviews is provided. Themes are discussed in terms of their significance to the study and the implications thereof.

**Chapter 4** accentuates the current literature surrounding career education, in terms of national and international trends within the field. Findings are explored and interpreted in terms of current literature.

**Chapter 5** provides implications and a synopsis of the themes and trends of the results covered in this study

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

Whereas problems of career education are of national concern, it is only through the actions of communities that solutions will be found. Stead and Watson (1999:182) emphasise that at present there is a large gap between the real and the ideal situation regarding the quantity and quality of career education information services. Salie (1994:62) also argues that South Africa requires a career education counselling service that is systems-orientated and community-based. Consequently there is a great need for the provision of an appropriate career intervention strategy in Bushbuckridge. Professionals who engage in working with people in the field of career development need to have a good understanding of the career education sources and also of career education services (Stead & Watson, 1999; Gomby & Larson, 1992; Weist, 1997).

In this chapter the context of the inquiry and the purpose of the study are described. The research design provides the framework in which stakeholders' knowledge, values and attitudes with regard to the expectations of career education in Bushbuckridge community were understood and analysed. Of importance to this study is the process in which these perceptions emerged and the solutions offered to address the impact of career education on youth in Bushbuckridge.

## **2.2. The purpose of the study**

This research study was initiated by the desire to explore Bushbuckridge stakeholders' expectations of career education. The study is explorative. The importance of this study lies in the realisation that the illiteracy of career education is on the increase in Bushbuckridge community and as a result a vast number of young people are suffering the consequences. A second reason supporting this investigation is the fact that there are no official documents on career education research in rural areas and thirdly educators are expected to deal with the issue of career education without the necessary support and in-service training.

A contributing factor to the research is thus that there is a void in current literature regarding how stakeholders perceive career education and what they do to minimise the lack of career education knowledge among learners or young people in the community. There are no career education studies that can explain the career behaviour and attitudes of South Africa's diverse population groups. The absence of career education theory that could describe individual career education development relevant to the South African context requires the researcher to examine the relevance of international career education theories to the Bushbuckridge context (Stead & Watson, 1999:13).

Thus a qualitative study of stakeholders' perceptions and responses to the challenges of the career education crisis affecting learners/young people can make an important contribution towards stakeholders' development in this regard and this can subsequently minimize the effect of career education on young people within our community and school system.

Schools and communities are important settings for reaching the majority of learners and young people with intervention strategies aimed at effective career education processes. This is because schools and communities have a captured audience and they can target any vulnerable group in need of career education information.

From the above statement it has become apparent that to offer effective career education knowledge to young people in schools and communities, it is important to first explore the stakeholders' knowledge, values, attitudes and skills in this regard. Formally stated, the questions directing the research are the following:

- What intervention strategy could be developed for career education in Bushbuckridge?
- What intervention strategies exist nationally and internationally for career education?
- What do Bushbuckridge stakeholders view as an appropriate career intervention strategy?
- What are stakeholders' perceptions of, and solutions in response to the career education crisis affecting young people in Bushbuckridge?

The purpose of conducting research is to find answers to questions and in light of these research questions, the objectives of the study are the following:

- To explore Bushbuckridge community stakeholders' expectations of career education;

- to develop an intervention strategy for career education in Bushbuckridge;
- to identify and describe the impact of career education on young people;
- to describe, analyse and interpret stakeholders understandings of career education and solutions offered in response to career education and
- to describe the process in which these understandings and solutions emerged.

### **2.3 Research design**

To present an interpretation of stakeholders' subjective perceptions of this phenomenon the researcher applied a research design that included suitable techniques and methods to yield the data. This was achieved through the systematic collection of information in which the stakeholders were able to bring their unquestioned views and beliefs out into the open, to define their problems and to propose action to reduce these problems.

Thompson (1999:7) defines the process by the following steps:

- Stating the research problem
- Refining the problem statement
- Collecting data
- Analysing data
- Interpreting data and relating the data to the original problem
- Stating conclusions

These steps reiterate Creswell's design of presenting a problem, asking a question and collecting data to provide and answer the question. The

researcher followed these steps to ensure a systematic process and to and also the trustworthiness in this study.

The specific design used during this study falls within two approaches, which have been used by the BHSSC. It must be acknowledge that different situations require different approaches and these examples serve as basic guidelines. These approaches are community-based and education-based.

#### ❖ **Community-based approach**

Garbers (1996:265) emphasises that researchers should consider involving stakeholders in the community being investigated as full partners-in the sense, as patrons of the study. In this study the researcher tries to show that career education researchers in rural areas should present their plans for career education through local community groups as follows:

- Approach local civic structures/traditional leaders at their usual meetings and make arrangements for your presentation to be included in their agendas.
- Present the current situation of career education.
- Ask them who should be the ones to provide career education.
- Take note of what is discussed.
- Provide a brief overview of career education as this will give the participants a better idea of the scope and depth.
- Send out invitations about proposed focus groups.

### ❖ **The education-based approach**

One of the challenges facing career guidance educators in Bushbuckridge, who wish to introduce career education in schools or the community, is the acceptance by parents and community stakeholders. Ultimately the success of such a programme depends on their support. Hence the researcher came up with the following in dealing with this approach:

- Convene meetings with Department of Education Officials, i.e. Circuit managers, school managers and career guidance educators
- Be prepared for a fairly conservative response and objectives from these groups.
- Allow for open discussions on the issue of career education-take note of what is said and try to respond.
- Allow each group to have its own expectations.
- Emphasise the support you are going to offer.

#### **2.3.1 A qualitative research approach**

The researcher selected qualitative methods for this study both because he did not know what he would find, and because he wanted to capture data on the perceptions of the stakeholders without losing the rich descriptions of their attitudes, feelings and the essence of their expressions (Morse & Maykut, 1994:4).

The researcher develops explanations or generalisations that are close to the concrete data and contexts, but are more than simple descriptions. A new theory to create a realistic picture of social life and to stimulate understanding more than to test hypotheses is explored in this study.

Explanations for this tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context and capable of showing the complex processes or sequence of social life. Neuman (1994:406) points out that the form of analysis and theorising in a qualitative research approach sometimes makes it difficult to see generalisations; therefore the theories and concepts of this study are explicit. Without an analytic interpretation of theory provided by the researcher, readers of this study may use their own everyday, taken-for-granted ideas. Their commonsense framework is likely to contain implicit assumptions, biases, ethnocentrism and ill-defined concepts from dominant cultural values.

Qualitative research is flexible. This is a critical point as some flexibility is necessary if new ideas are to be explored and they fit in well with research questions asked by career educationists. This is due to the need for more information in such research, particularly when new areas are to be explored. Greenbaum (1998:25) confirms that the type of research depends heavily on the intended use of the results of the study. If the results are to be used in a development process, a qualitative methodology is usually employed.

The focus of this study was to describe and interpret the way stakeholders came to understand the effect of career education on young people in Bushbuckridge schools and community and to clarify how stakeholders account for their actions and manage their day-to-day situations (Miles & Huberman, 1994:7).

Although these data are considered richer than those collected during the use of quantitative research, their shortcomings are that generalisations cannot

be made for the entire school and community system (Morse & Maykut, 1994:7). They do however provide critical insights into and considerations of this particular issue.

Though the researcher had a general research objective that directed the decisions he made regarding the selection of stakeholders as well as the process that he followed and the context in which the information emerged. The researcher did not have a hypothesis to prove or disregard. Therefore, the unfolding of this study as it is presented here, was emergent. The discussions and interpretations determined the direction of this study. A qualitative approach ensured interpretations that were rich and unique in the sense that stakeholders' understandings emerged and their views were valuable in developing programmes to improve career education services for learners and young people.

The advantage of utilising this approach was that it also provided the researcher with an understanding of stakeholders' perceptions and experiences relating to career education. According to Morse and Maykut (1994:3) the aim of qualitative research is the development of theory, description, clarification and comprehension of a problem rather than the testing of a hypothesis. Since an aim of this research is to describe the effect of career education on learners and young people, the design was further characterize as descriptive.

### **2.3.2. Descriptive**

The aim of a descriptive study is to examine phenomena without interference and study events as they are. As a novice researcher, an

educator and a community member, the researcher did struggle to stay neutral and not to correct misconceptions. The researcher also struggled to plot themes relating to the research questions from the vast amount of data gathered. The realisation that ultimately the stakeholders' understandings and responses that are important to this study rather than their perceptions of this matter guided him in presenting their perceptions as they emerged. Therefore in Chapter 3 the researcher presents the "thick descriptions" from the stakeholders according to their perceptions and responses to career education.

### **2.3.3 Explorative**

The point of departure of this study was that of "not knowing" what the perceptions and responses to the career education phenomena were. The researcher had no prior hypothesis to prove or to investigate. The researcher's aim was to describe and explain themes as they emerged from the study. The themes or patterns were used to gain new insights and a better understanding of the research topic. In accordance with this, the aim of explorative research is to explore a relative unknown research area. Consequently the exploratory nature of this study is suited to the research topic.

### **2.3.4 Participatory**

The study is also deeply rooted in participatory methods and principles, for example the action-reflection cycle. The motivation for utilising these methods is based on the experience and research that claim current understandings of career education, which will come to the fore or be changed when people have time and space to identify and reflect on these issues in the context of their personal experiences and world views. The

participatory methods used in this study allowed stakeholders to explore their perception of career education, to express their thoughts and feelings, to examine the effect on them personally, and to clarify in what way they were prepared to act on the effect of lack of career education knowledge. This method of research sent stakeholders at the same time in the direction of using their existing resources to design solutions to manage the effect of career education within Bushbuckridge community.

## **2.4 Methodology**

### **2.4.1 Selection**

According to Thompson (1992:559) the concept “method” means way of doing something/systematic procedure. Based on the research aim to present stakeholders’ understandings of and solutions offered for action, as well as the process in which understandings and solutions emerged, the researcher limited this study to Bushbuckridge North, the sub-district of Bushbuckridge. The intention is not to draw conclusions from their views, but rather to provide rich descriptions of their discussions. Selecting a bounded system allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings stakeholders attach to career education (Mouton, 1996:133).

It has also allowed the researcher to take cognisance of the context in which these meanings emerged. This added value to his rationale for selecting the stakeholders from the Bushbuckridge community for the purpose of this study. Since the researcher set out to discover rather than to confirm and was interested in the process in which stakeholders’ perceptions and solutions emerged, a case study was the appropriate approach to follow. Qualitative

researchers usually select small samples of people representing the population and context of the study (De Vos, 1998:19).

The participants in this study were purposefully selected from a specific target group (stakeholders), whose perceptions and views were equally important. This process of selection was based on the researcher's intention to discover, understand and gain insight into the stakeholders' perceptions-hence the researcher selected the most appropriate group. They were selected as follows:

**Table I Sample populations and the reasons for selecting**

Sample	Reason
Stakeholders	These are parents, educators, important figures in the community, who are supposed to be empowered with career education knowledge. (They include both professionals and non-professionals).
Youth/learners	These are the main targets for this study.

Subsequently the stakeholders were appropriate and diverse in background and therefore additional stakeholders would not have contributed anything significant to this study.

## **2.4.2 Methods of data collection**

Taylor (1993) in De Vos (1998:46) points out that the qualitative researcher usually works with small samples and spontaneous events. He further indicates that data collection procedures in qualitative research involve four basic types: observations, interviews, documents and visual images, which have been mentioned in the first chapter. Rubin and Babbie (1993) in De Vos (1998:48) also highlighted the fact that field research is part of data collection, a matter of going to where the action is, and simply watching and listening. One can learn a great deal merely by giving attention to what is going on. At the same time, field research can involve more active enquiry, as was done in this study. The manner in which data are collected are a crucial aspect of the research, as this determines whether the study succeeds or fails.

A discussion of different dimensions of data collecting follows:

### **2.4.2.1 Bandla/focus group interviews**

In conducting this study, four adapted focus group (bandla) interviews were held.

According to Krueger and Casey (2000:10), focus group interviews typically have the five characteristics or features that have been observed in this study. These characteristics relate to the characteristics of a focus group: (1) people who (2) possess certain characteristics and (3) provide qualitative data (4) in a focused discussion (5) to help understand the development of an intervention strategy for career education as for example is in the case for in Bushbuckridge.

- **Focus groups involve people**

Focus groups typically consist of five to ten people as discussed in the previous chapter, but the size can range from as few as four to as many as twelve (Krueger & Casey, 2000:10). The group must be small enough for everyone to have an opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions. The researcher in this study discovered that when the group exceeds twelve participants, there is a tendency for the group to fragment as it was in the case of the stakeholders. Participants want to talk but are unable to do so because there is just not a sufficient pause in the conversation. In these situations participants share their own thoughts by whispering to the people next to them and this is an indication that the group is too big.

- **The people possess certain characteristics**

Focus groups consist of participants who are similar to each other in a way that is important to the researcher. The nature of this homogeneity is determined by the purpose of the study. The homogeneity can be broadly or narrowly defined. For example this study wants to know from community stakeholders more about what intervention strategy for career education that will be sustainable in the Bushbuckridge community. In this case homogeneity could be broadly defined as adult community stakeholders who attended community education sessions (Krueger & Casey, 2000:10). Group members vary by age, gender, occupation and interest, but members are adults as well as community members.

- **Focus groups provide qualitative data**

Krueger and Casey (2000:11) highlight the goal of the focus group, namely to collect data that are of interest to the researcher; typically to find a range of opinions of people across several groups. The researcher compares and contrasts data collected from at least three focus groups. Hence in this study four focus groups were constituted. The focus group presents a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others just as they are in real life. The researcher serves several functions in the focus group: those of moderator, listener, observer and eventually an analyst using an inductive process. The inductive researcher derives understanding based on discussion as opposed to testing a preconceived hypothesis or theory.

- **Focus groups have a focused discussion**

The questions in a focus group are carefully predetermined. The questions are phrased and sequenced so that they are easy to understand and are logical to the participant. These questions appear to be spontaneous but are developed through considerable reflection and input. In this study the questions have been discussed in the first and in this chapter (Krueger & Casey, 2000:12).

A wide spectrum of qualitative strategies were used to obtain data for this study because the researcher wanted to generate data rich in detail and embedded in the context. These methods (focus group [bandla] discussions, literature study, researchers memos and focused journal entries) provided the researcher with the data needed to answer the research question: What intervention strategy could be developed for career education in Bushbuckridge?

Permission had been requested from the District and Regional Department of Education in Bushbuckridge to conduct research among stakeholders, namely career guidance teachers, psychological division officials and learners. The research procedure involved two interactive discussion sessions with the participants. The first session entailed briefing the participants of the study on the process, aims and expectations of the research. This session also explored the participants' level of factual knowledge about career education and open up discussions on some of their self-and career knowledge.

Some of the themes and issues raised during the first session were used to further explore the participants' perceptions during the subsequent session. The second session focused more deeply on the unfolding of views on career education and included activities that elicited discussion on the effect of career education on young people in Bushbuckridge. The sessions were coded and transcribed onto flip charts. The researcher also made memos during the discussions as this allowed him to clarify participants' views and repeat them, as he understood them during sessions. This practice fits the paradigm of an action-reflection cycle. The researcher's memos contained reflective notes in response to some of the discussions. The process of analysis and interpretation began at an early stage of data collection. This aided him in facilitating further discussion and refining and presenting the stakeholders with questions for consideration. These considerations were included in the discussions.

Transcriptions of the bandla/focus groups were analysed in terms of recurring themes and opinions. The nature of the procedures, tools and

techniques used in this study will be discussed later in this chapter. In combination with other methods, they can provide preliminary research on specific issues in a larger project or follow up research to clarify findings obtained from another method (Morgan, 1997:17)

The researcher has explained that this study employs cultural methods such as “bandla” or “xivijo” and focus group methods for data collection. These methods were utilised in this study adopting the New Moderating Techniques of focus group methods according to Greenbaum (1998:118). They are the following:

- Projective technique
- Probing technique
- Control technique

#### **i. Projective technique**

This technique obtains information from participants by encouraging them to make associations with other stimuli as a way of expressing their feelings towards the specific conceptual idea, product, service or other entity with which they are being presented. Projective techniques employed in focus group moderating for this study were:

- Forced relationships
- Sentence completions

#### **ii. Probing techniques**

These techniques were utilised as moderators in order to delve further into a specific discussion. The questioning methods and group exercises used differ from projective techniques in that they are less abstract and are normally easier to use with the average group. Probing techniques stimulate discussion on a specific topic that may not otherwise be possible.

### **iii. Control techniques**

One of the most important advantages that focus groups have over other research techniques is the benefit obtained from people's interaction in-group dynamics. A person may emerge who influences the inputs of other participants. Participants may also feel a need to please the moderator and provide only positive feedback when asked for their opinions, even when their feelings are negative. The researcher has utilised the following techniques to control the negative effects of group dynamics:

- Assuring participants' authenticity
- Controlling the dominant participants

#### **a. Assuring participants' authenticity**

The best way a moderator can help the participants say what they really think and feel rather than be influenced by each other is to have them write down their opinions before sharing them with the group.

#### **b. Controlling the dominant participants**

- Take active control
- Enforced silence
- Explain the problem

- Remove the participants

In this study the researcher discovered that focus groups work particularly well to determine the perceptions, feelings and thinking of stakeholders about career education issues, products, services or opportunities. Focus groups are used to gain understanding of a topic so that decision makers can make more informed choices (Krueger & Casey, 2000:12).

Focus groups are helpful in the development of a programme as their goal is to learn how a target audience sees, understands and values a particular topic, and to learn the language used for the topic. How do they think about it? How do they feel about it? How do they talk about it? What do they like or dislike about it? What would get them to use the service?

As the BHSSC have mandated this study, focus groups methods have been used to gather accountable data to secure funding and document findings supporting programme development and extension. These methods have been used to guide and monitor programme implementation and to generate ideas for what motivates communities to use a career education service, identify methods for improving service delivery, gather information on optimal times to deliver services and understand barriers that may limit access to services (Stewart & Shamsandani, 1990; McKinlay, 1992; Straw & Smith, 1995).

#### **2.4.2.2 Literature study**

In order to conduct this research study, it was imperative to undertake a literature study first. The researcher needed to learn as much as possible about the study topic. This became a crucial step in justifying the research

and it provided the theoretical context for the study (Morse, 1994:26). Without a thorough literature review the formulation of the problem, selection of the research methodology and the interpretation of results could easily become vague. The findings of the study should be compared with what was previously known about the topic. Therefore the literature review serves as a framework for data collection and interpretation. Consequently the researcher consulted primary sources such as journal articles, policy documents, government publications and the Internet as well as secondary sources including a range of books relating to the research topic. All the information sources consulted are listed at the end of the dissertation in the references.

#### **2.4.2.3 The format of the sessions**

The focus sessions formed the base of the research tool as these sessions provided the context in which focus group discussions were facilitated. The sessions were participatory in nature as they allowed stakeholders to raise real issues without fear of reprisal. The use of participatory tools also helped stakeholders think through issues and interpret for themselves the effect of career education on youth in schools and communities. Issues raised during discussions with the stakeholders were explored by feeding preliminary themes back into the bandla for further discussion and deliberation. The activities were used to promote discussions and allow stakeholders to view the issues in new ways.

#### **2.4.2.4 Researcher memos**

The memos helped the researcher to gain ongoing questions to verify his own understanding of the information gathered during the discussions. The

memos included his personal thoughts, feelings and impressions in response to some of the discussions.

## **2.5 Ethical considerations**

Ethical conflicts often arise in research, because people may have opposing interests in the findings on a programme (Neuman, 1994:24). People who are personally displeased with the finding often try to attack the researcher or his methods as being sloppy, biased or inadequate; therefore researchers should evaluate their own conduct and the basis upon which this evaluation is made and set by ethical guidelines for research.

The researcher has conducted this study through the following ethical issues:

### **2.5.1 Harm to participants**

De Vos (1998:25) indicates, “One can accept that harm to respondents in the social sciences will be of an emotional nature, although physical injury cannot be ruled out completely”. The researcher has ensured that during this study participants’ feelings and opinions were respected and that the setting was prepared to avoid physical harm.

### **2.5.2 Informed consent**

Participants must be legally and psychologically competent to give consent for the study to take place and they must also be aware that they were at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time. Hence permission was granted from the Regional Department of Education in Bushbuckridge to conduct this research study. De Vos (1998:26) also highlighted the fact that the situations differ from one another; therefore it is important to develop an appropriate and informed procedure of consent for each

investigation. Ethical issues about informed consent always foresee all possible problems. The researcher ensured that all unforeseen situations such as coming late and withdrawing from participation in the focus group were handled in the best ethical manner.

### **2.5.3 Deception of participants**

Loewenberg and Dolgoff (1988) in De Vos (1998:27) describe deception as “deliberately misrepresenting facts in order to make another person believe what is not true, violating the respect to which every person is entitled”. The researcher adhered to this ethical guideline by ensuring that prospective participants had an idea of what the study entailed and allowed them the freedom to decide whether they wanted to take part or not (Judd *et al.*, 1991:497).

### **2.5.4 Violation of privacy**

Violation of privacy and identities of the participants were ensured by the researcher in this study. Singleton *et al.* (1988) in De Vos (1998:27-28) explain that the respondents have the right to privacy and to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour would be revealed. De Vos (1998:28) confirms that this principle can be violated in a variety of ways, and it is imperative that researchers act with the necessary sensitivity where privacy of subjects is relevant. The researcher has ensured that the information discussed by participants in the focus groups was kept confidential.

### **2.5.5 Actions and competence of researchers**

De Vos (1998:30) says: “Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation”. The researcher is competent, as objectivity and restraint from making judgement has been ensured in this study. The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium mandated the researcher (who is a founder member) to conduct this study as discussed in the previous chapter. The study has been presented at an Open Research Day of the Faculty of Education of the University of Pretoria on the 10 October 2000 and on the 4 and 5 October 2001 respectively. The researcher’s promoter evaluated the study on a field visit on the 6 August 2001. The study has also been presented in number of areas, from the local community and the University of Venda (Giyani College Campus) on the 18 October 2001 during their Career Guidance Week. This study is also presented annually in career exhibitions in the different regions of the Limpopo Province, for example Region 4 and 7. This implies that the researcher was given the opportunity to reveal himself as a variable in the study. As the researcher was also part of the health intervention strategy, he benefited much during the duration of the former and this present study.

The professional researcher should respect the cultural customs in order to obtain good cooperation from the community. Being a member of the Bushbuckridge community, the researcher has been aware of his ethical responsibility.

### **2.5.6 Cooperation with collaborators**

As this study was conducted after the successes of the health intervention strategy, which was successfully implemented and funded by the Health

Department (provincially and nationally), there has been good collaboration with the sponsors of this project. Funding proposals are still in process, pending the outcome of this study. Research projects are often so expensive and comprehensive that the researcher cannot handle them alone financially and in terms of time (De Vos, 1998:31).

### **2.5.7 Release or publication of the findings**

Strydom (1994) in De Vos (1998:32) states that the findings of the study should be introduced to the reading public in written form. Researchers should compile the report as accurately and objectively as possible so that report writing in words includes doing all one can to make sure the report is as clear as possible and contains all the information necessary for readers to understand what has been written. Although this study has not yet been published, the researcher was selected to present this study at a Research Indaba, two years in succession, 2000 and 2001, by the University of Pretoria. The researcher believes that all findings, whether positive or negative, should be published, in keeping with the true spirit of research.

### **2.5.8 Restoration of subjects or respondents**

Judd *et al.* (1991:54) emphasise “Debriefing sessions during which subjects get the opportunity, after the study, to work through their experience and its aftermath, are possibly one way in which the researcher can assist subjects and minimise harm”. After the completion of this project, the researcher will rectify any misperceptions, which may have arisen in the minds of participants. This implies that any relevant information on the project that has been withheld or misrepresented will be made known to participants and also reported back to the community (Dane, 1990:49).

## **2.6 Trustworthiness**

As mentioned in the first chapter, the “true sense” of scientific research should be kept in mind when determining reliability and validity as part of trustworthiness in qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in De Vos (1998:331) there are four aspects that are relevant to ensure trustworthiness: truth-value, applicability, constancy and neutrality.

### **2.6.1 Truth-value**

Truth-value is based on whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings relating to the subjects, and the context in which the research was undertaken. It deals with the truthfulness of the findings. The researcher strives to attain truth through this qualitative process by interacting with focus groups. Through this interaction the researcher constantly tries to gain clarity by evaluating and monitoring his own understanding of the research as well as creating opportunities for focus group interviews to explain it from their own frame of reference (De Vos 1998:331).

### **2.6.2 Applicability**

This factor refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or to other groups. It focuses on the possibility of generalising the findings to different contexts and larger groups. It may be assumed that the ideas and opinions expressed by the focus group are similar to those of other respondents in a similar context. In the case of this study, what exists in Bushbuckridge in terms of career education may be similar to the situation in other rural areas. The purpose, however, is to explore the

expectations of one particular community in order to develop an intervention strategy for career education

### **2.6.3 Consistency**

Trustworthiness concerns the consistency of the data. This aspect considers whether the findings are dependable in the sense that similar findings would be produced if this initial enquiry were replicated. The researcher ensured that consistency was maintained during the conducting of focus group discussions by comparing the information discussed and this could serve as a means of maintaining the trustworthiness of this study.

### **2.6.4 Neutrality**

Krefting (1990) in De Vos (1998:331) defines neutrality as the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, conditions and perspectives. The researcher therefore reflected on his/her personal biases, perspectives and motivations throughout the first four chapters of this study. The researcher also gained self-awareness and his/her paradigmatic assumptions were attained. The data analysis also maintains neutrality.

## **2.7 Data analysis and interpretation**

Data analysis of this study is based on the constant comparative method proposed by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:148). They proposed that qualitative data analysis can be defined as a process consisting of three phases: data reduction, data display and conclusion verification. Huberman (1994:119) confirms that the processes are in constant interaction and are interwoven, before, during and after data collection and analysis. This is

done to generate new ideas regarding future research in career education. There is no one best system for data analysis. The researcher may follow rigorous guidelines described in the literature, but the ultimate decisions on the narrative reside with the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:47). De Vos (1998:100) has confirms that there are naturally many situations in which the use of statistical analysis is not only impossible, but also inappropriate. Hence researchers must also describe the qualitative data analysis procedures they are intending to implement.

The investigation of adapted focus group (bandla) method transcriptions serves as a platform for analysis in this study. The researcher utilised the deductive, structured analysis in which major categories were identified and defined to guide the data analysis. A combination of open-ended and structured analysis was also utilised. The researcher started with open-ended coding and thereafter a rigorous coding-recording procedure and wrote the results into a theoretical framework.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a description of the research design. It also highlighted the methods of data collection and analysis and included a discussion on the criteria for ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### DATA ANALYSIS OF FOCUS/BANDLA GROUP INTERVIEWS

#### 3.1 Introduction

Comprehensive career education services for youths are needed in Bushbuckridge. For this explorative study adapted focus groups (bandla) were utilised to examine community stakeholders' expectations/perceptions of career education services in Bushbuckridge. Insights thus gained can be utilised in developing an intervention strategy for career education in Bushbuckridge.

The researcher's strategic thinking began by exploring existing career education in Bushbuckridge. This exploration included insights into community stakeholders' expectations regarding career education. The adapted focus groups (bandla) were transcribed and analysed. Consensus was used to resolve disagreements. Key themes were reviewed to ensure that data were consistent. According to Khan *et al.* (1991) this process increased the trustworthiness of the interpretations of data. During the researcher's comprehending and coding of the transcriptions, certain themes and patterns relating to the subject matter were revealed. These themes underwent further synthesising and grouping.

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. The emphasis of the study was to explore stakeholders' perceptions of, and solutions offered in with regard to career education. These perceptions and solutions are presented within the context through which they emerged and developed.

### **3.2 The context within which understandings and solutions emerged**

In the first session stakeholders were given an overview of the research process, and the climate was set to explore their perceptions of career education. The second session focused on discussing the effect of career education on learners or young people in Bushbuckridge and exploring solutions offered by stakeholders to address the effect within the schools and at community level.

The sessions with stakeholders were run in a participatory manner, using participatory activities, journals and interactive adapted focus group (bandla) discussions. Participatory tools were effective for eliciting profound and creative thinking on the effect of career education on young people. The process allowed stakeholders to think through issues and create for themselves.

The meaning generated from this process is based on individuals' own realities and therefore they are likely to act on this. The following statement made by one of the stakeholders at the end of the two sessions provides insight into the process that helped the community members to think through some of the issues relating to career education.

*“I think career education should be done by teachers at school level not at the community level. How will we support our children if we ourselves are not knowledgeable on career issues? What do we need to be doing that we are not doing yet?”*

The process of discussion and reflection set the stage in which information gathered during the sessions was used to inform the next set of discussions and activities. In this way the discussions depended on one another to lead to more detailed discussions.

### 3.3 Discussions and findings

Within the above framework themes of stakeholders' perceptions of, and solutions offered to the effect of career education on youths were found throughout the sessions.

**Table 3.1 Themes of stakeholders' understandings**

1. Limitations of existing career education practices	2. Possible interventions for career education in Bushbuckridge
1.1 Lack of self-knowledge 1.2 Lack of career-knowledge 1.3 Lack of expertise in providing career education 1.4 No career guidance support at school-based level	2.1 Community-based career education services (Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium, Love Life) 2.2 Implementations of career curriculum guide lines 2.3 Career education skills training/facilitation, e.g. goal setting 2.4 Networking between school and other career education services, e.g. institutions for Higher education learning

Although these themes are presented separately they overlap and are essential in order to understand stakeholders' views on the research topic.

## **Theme 1: Limitations of existing career education practices**

### **3.3.1 Lack of self-knowledge**

A good way to start any work on career education is to find out what people know about the topic because this influences the unfolding of the planned sessions. Some concerns were expressed about the subsequent lack of self-knowledge among learners in Bushbuckridge. This was linked to the need for greater guidance in the provision of information on individual strengths and weaknesses aimed at increasing self-knowledge.

Participants expressed concern about this theme in the following responses:

- *“I think learners do not know their strengths...they maybe find out after they achieved something.... a diploma, a degree, you know.”*
- *“We do that in class (personal strengths and weaknesses), but I do not know if they really do know”*
- *“We want to guide people’s expectations to have self-knowledge as not only to education which is not so much important alone... .. as to also interests and compatibility”*

Most stakeholders had some understanding of what career education is and how important it is to learners/young people but this lacked career information. It is vital that youth should have an overview of their talents and abilities and have given thought to their values, interests and personality. In this study the stakeholders agreed that they could help by allowing youths

to verbalise and crystallise these thoughts. Traditionally, according to Holland's theory, career education programmes were based on trait-factor approaches to career decision making. It was believed that knowledge of oneself and particularly of the world of work with its breadth of career opportunities would enable one to make more informed decisions. Based on this early work, Holland's theory emphasises the congruence between characteristics of the self and characteristics of the work, as an important determinant of job satisfaction. These characteristics were mentioned by stakeholders in this study (Stead & Watson, 1999:169/70).

### **3.3.2 Career knowledge**

Choosing a career is an ongoing process. With more than four thousand occupations to choose from, it is not surprising that many people are undecided about what they want to do with their lives. It seems that steps are needed to improve learners/young people's future vision and career decision making with the help of their parents and teachers. Many challenges were identified by stakeholders with regard to the amount and nature of career knowledge among the youth in Bushbuckridge.

Stakeholders perceived lack of career direction, which has been reflected as follows:

- *More than 70% of our matriculants here in Bushbuckridge do not know what they are going to do after passing Grade 12.*
- *"I have passed grade 12. I did not know, which career to follow. I never had an opportunity myself of receiving career guidance at school There were never career guidance periods...".*

- *“I never intended doing teaching...I followed mob-psychology. I never had an interest in teaching”.*

Stakeholders proposed that these concerns and realities confirm the need for career education assessment and guidance. It is urged that young people need increased information regarding career decision-making and the roles that self-and career knowledge play in the choice of the career field. The researcher wonders whether government, non-government organisations and institutions of higher learning could collaborate in providing career education in this regard. Stakeholders highlighted the influence of the family, friends, school, culture and religion that could lead to an awareness of self and also an awareness of career opportunities. All young people should have knowledge of global and local trends of careers. Today, however the youth should develop their own unique career paths. As the world changes, flexibility and a positive attitude to change become important (Rodriguez, 1994, Ofir, 1994).

Stead and Watson (1999:194) confirm that it is important to improve the accessibility, quality, relevance and quantity of career information to the consumer in Bushbuckridge. The evaluation of career information should be a priority for the Bushbuckridge career counsellor. Given the dire shortage of qualified people working in the field, career education practitioners should actively seek a partnership with formal and non-formal education (like the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium) and

particularly communities, to make their expertise accessible to as many consumers as possible.

### 3.3.3 Lack of expertise in providing career education

Career education in Bushbuckridge has traditionally been located in career guidance activities, which have been offered in a limited number of contexts by principals who are always busy or lack the expertise to provide career education. In some secondary schools, more than 80% of them, were no career guidance teachers or no periods at all. Career education has not been accessible to the majority of people in need of it. Career education has been located mainly in school guidance contexts up to the present and only 20% of schools in Bushbuckridge.

Stakeholders expressed their concerns as follows:

- *“We have done no aptitude tests...now those people who sort of wanted to see career education practitioners have done so privately.... Lots of people in rural areas cannot afford to pay for these services”.*
- *A very small percentage, about 5% have that opportunity (of going for career counselling)*
- *“We do lack expertise on individual consultation...assessments....”.*

This theme highlighted the fact that career education offered at schools is faced with limitations in its preparation of learners for the working environment and lack of expertise among career guidance teachers. Strategies are in place to address these shortcomings, for example the Curriculum 2005, Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) incorporated in Life Orientation (LO) learning area.

Limitations with regard to the training and experience of career education teachers were suggested as contributing factors to the inadequate career guidance offered at schools. The existing increase in schools mobilising resources and using specialists to assist with career education was emphasised. This confirmed the fact that teachers lack expertise, as they are already seeking specialists to replace gaps in their own training and experience. The theme also confirms the existence of needs for improved career guidance as well as career assessments in schools. Stakeholders pointed out that relevant social and cultural influence in career education counselling in terms of differences in priorities towards education lacks parental involvement and indicates inadequate parent education. This confirmed the need for expertise to improving career-counselling services and suggested that communities need to be informed and guided towards improved knowledge of career counselling and their roles in the guidance of their children.

Furthermore, in many schools in Bushbuckridge career education was a compromise owing to the limited number of trained personnel and the allocation of school guidance to teachers whose timetables needed a few extra periods to be filled in. This has led to career guidance being subsumed by examination subjects that were perceived as more important and as having greater status. The enormous urban-rural divide further complicated this. Schools in rural areas are the least resourced of all, their teachers the most underqualified in career education and their learners the most in need of the expansion of their knowledge of the world of work (Benjamin, 1995; Naicker, 1994; Stead & Watson, 1999).

### 3.3.4 No career guidance support at school-based level

Changes in education seem to be at policy level and they are not implemented. National Education Policy Investigation (1992:20) indicates that school guidance was designed to bring learners into contact with the real world in such a way that they are taught life skills and survival techniques, which will then enable them to direct themselves competently within educational, personal and social spheres and the world of work. However, career guidance was only introduced into black schools in 1981, following the Soweto student uprisings of 1976.

Stakeholders have expressed their concerns with regard to this theme as follows:

- *“The present government is doing less in resourcing schools in rural areas with regard to career guidance”*
- *“There are no longer school-based instruments at school level, which will assist educators and learners in search of their careers...”*
- *“Psychological division officials have lost direction in assisting/supporting schools with regard to career choice”*
- *“We are trying in providing career information...but lack of support from the education department (Limpopo)”*.

Stakeholders found that there were great variations in the provision of career education across former Departments of Education in Bushbuckridge, i.e. the former Gazankulu and Lebowa. For example there was no provision for career education in many schools, even though school guidance was meant to be part of the school curriculum (Mtolo, 1996). Until 1981 career

guidance for black schools consisted primarily of group psychometric testing for vocational decision making according to designated levels of human resource needs of the country. Furthermore in 1981 guidance was introduced as an auxiliary service into schools of the Department of Education and Training. In many schools an annual visit by an itinerant official, trained to administer career tests, was the only provision made to meet the career needs of most of the of learners. In most cases, although the tests were completed, the results were not made available. This was a totally fruitless exercise. Today the situation is worse than before as career tests are no longer available. (Harris, 1997; Mtolo, 1996; Stead & Watson, 1999).

Mtolo (1996:7) also pointed out that constraints on career education were the way in which subject choice limits the options available to learners. Important educational decisions are taken at the end of Grade 9 when learning area choices have to be made. At this stage learners are still at the beginning of the career exploration phase. The curriculum available in many schools in rural areas was deliberately designed to close occupational doors for learners. The unavailability of important educational streams, such as commercial subjects and science, has been a disadvantage.

A large part of the content of what has been called career education in the past was concerned with tertiary studies and one segment of career spectrum, i.e. the “white collar” work. Part of the reason for this was that teachers would draw on their own limited work knowledge to inform the content of their lessons. They often had little experience in industry or other segments of the career world. One way of countering this in Bushbuckridge

was the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium, which provides teachers with materials and training during this latter post-apartheid era. There are additional challenges where customs and attitudes differ among teachers and learners. There are also many schools in Bushbuckridge where learners underachieve or where families do not prize education. Bushbuckridge poses her own special problems in terms of accessibility and access to various career experiences, and there is also little support for prolonged education owing to economic pressures (Mtolo, 1996; Ntshangase, 1995).

Career education was and is still afforded low status and considered a luxury at best, or expendable. In general, career guidance and counselling are conspicuously undeveloped and in many cases non-existent in many schools in Bushbuckridge. Hence many students entering tertiary institutions report a high level of career indecision (De Jong *et al.*, 1994; Nicholas, 1995).

## **Theme 2: Possible interventions for career education in Bushbuckridge**

### **3.4.1 Community-based career education services (Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium, Love Life)**

In Bushbuckridge career education services must rank as one of the most important modes of career service delivery. Career education in Bushbuckridge can be described as being nascent, emerging or still in its formative stages of development. While several fundamental features of the discipline are present (The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services

Consortium and Love Life), its defining anchors and mission have not been meaningfully integrated because of its dysfunctional gestation.

Stakeholders have expressed their concerns about this theme as follows:

- *“What is the community doing in complementing the government with regard to career education...?”*
- *“Xana leswi mintirho ku nga hava, hinga endlisa ku yini tani hi vatswari ku pfuna vana va hina...?” (How should we help our youth as community stakeholders as there are no longer job opportunities...?)*
- *Hi yihi migingiriko leyi hinga yi endlaka ku pfuna vantshwa va hina emigangeni ya hina” (What interventions should we develop to help our youth in our communities?)*

The researcher believes identifying problem areas provides the impetus for improved career intervention strategies, which are community-based. While embracing a broader community objective the BHSSC has developed an intervention for youth, which will deal with all youth issues i.e. the Acornhoek Love Life youth centre. The youth centre is a primary resource for many learners to obtain career counselling and relevant career information. This initiative plays a major role in developing alternative contextual approaches to career guidance and counselling and life-skills training. Young people could be helped through the computer programme where they could find different careers through the Internet. They are able to match their careers with the help of Langley’s (1989) comprehensive model of career development, in which she proposes 11 universal career

development tasks that young people have to complete in every life stage in order to make successful and appropriate career decisions, which are as follows:

- Identify needs
- Evaluate life roles
- Identify interests
- Investigate other relevant factors (e.g. personality, ability, sociocultural factors)
- Evaluate career maturity
- Evaluate decision-making ability
- Obtain career information
- Integrate self-information with career information
- Make career choice
- Plan a career

The growing demand of the Love Life Cyber Wise-computer programme has resulted in the production materials that may be used by young people without the assistance of an educator. Such materials may be process - rather than content oriented and are designed to take the reader through steps in the career education and decision-making process. They include self-assessment exercises and various suggestions regarding information seeking and assistance in searching for jobs (Bolles, 1997). Love life programmes

present a framework that highlights important aspects of the career choice process that may be assessed. Programmes at the Love Life Youth Centre include motivation, life skills, vitality centre (youth clinic), sport and recreation and studio programmes. The Youth Centre targets youth from 12-17 years of age. Youths are further referred to the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium, where there are trained counsellors (the researcher as one of them) for more career information. With major advances in technology, new methods of obtaining career information at Acornhoek Love Life Youth Centre have emerged. An important trend in this career development is that of career information delivery systems. These are essentially computer systems where young people are provided with information on careers and training opportunities and are also allowed to match personality characteristics with career information. Most career information obtained via the computer is from the Internet where local sites, namely the South African Career Web and international sites, the Career Mosaic, may be accessed. Access to and the use of computers has great potential for development in Bushbuckridge. Such access is limited mainly by lack of funding in rural communities. The model described in this theme provides a comprehensive list of career development tasks that may be assessed in the career counselling process at community level (Stead & Watson, 1999; De Bruin, 1997).

### **3.4.2 Implementations of career curriculum guidelines**

From a developmental perspective career counselling should include an exploration of the various ways in which young people's careers may unfold

in the future. Careful planning and implementation of the career curriculum may also be necessary to achieve the career goals that a learner may have.

Concerns were voiced about the limitations of career guidance teachers in their delivery of service. The following quotations highlight these concerns:

- *“We are experiencing problems at the moment because we are too few staffed with too little teachers and we cannot give career guidance to all grades any longer because we are too full”.*
- *“We have lots of talks and there is material...but I do not believe I am the one to say: ‘This is your personality, these are your interests and this is your aptitude...therefore here is your three or four things to pursue’...I do not have the qualifications for that”.*
- *“I see a big limitation in the training of guidance counsellors... if they are not exposed to the different work environments.”.*
- *“The problem is that you have the guidance teacher...he/she is been at school....he/she is been trained and then went back to school environment”.*

Stakeholders came up with the idea that in the current economic climate, and a result of future trends in the working world, greater pressure is being placed on the individual to make and manage career decisions continually. These trends appear to be international and it is questioned whether

adjustments to formal career education have been implemented in schools in Bushbuckridge to better equip their learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to make career decisions (Stead & Watson, 1999).

Career planning and the implementation of curriculum guidelines may therefore be seen as an important area for assessment. Several authors have recently commented on the changing nature of work. In contrast to earlier times, workers can no longer expect to enter an organisation, progress in the organisation in an orderly fashion and then retire. The changing world of work implies that clients should be prepared for change and uncertainty. Young people should realise that uncertainty about work is likely they should design a personal plan for taking decisions on the future even though they do not know what it will be like according to this point of view, career curriculum guidelines implementation and planning includes acknowledging the fact that the future is uncertain and that any career choice or decision may have to be changed at a later stage (Hansen, 1997:255).

### **3.4.3 Career education skill training/facilitation e.g. goal setting**

It is too late to start thinking about career direction halfway through the Grade 12. An early start should be made. Parental involvement can begin at an early stage. Stakeholders have expressed their concerns about this theme as follows:

- *“People always say that if you want to be successful you must have goals in all different areas of your life, how will we plan our goals?”*

- *“How will we assist young people/learners to realise their goals?”*
- *“I wanted to be a doctor, but now I will no longer continue, because I did not have money to proceed with my desired career and now I am becoming old. Is there any hope for me?”*

Stakeholders realised that career decision making presupposes choice. It assumes that individuals have at least two options for a satisfactory outcome. In Bushbuckridge many young people seldom have the luxury of choosing a tertiary institution for further study or selecting an occupation. The scarcity of formal work in what is currently an unfavourable economic climate in Bushbuckridge leads many young people to apply for any available job, or for some to resign themselves to unemployment. This theme provides an overview on current thinking on career education skill training, which includes career decision making that may be pertinent to the Bushbuckridge context. Stakeholders believe that counsellors who presume that teaching career education training skills to unskilled people is irrelevant are doing themselves a disservice. Young people who are not equipped with career decision making skills will be disadvantaged when either career choices present themselves or the economic climate and the resultant job market improve (Stead & Watson, 1999:123).

Stakeholders also realised that career development/skill facilitation is a lifelong process, starting as early as childhood and continuing until after retirement. This is in line with Super's constructs of values and self-concept, according to which he stated that the constructs of career development,

career maturity and career adaptability helped to shift the focus from occupational choice to career development as a lifelong process.

#### **3.4.4 Networking between school and other career education services**

It is worth noting that most schools have teachers who have undergone training in career education through the individual's commitment to study at higher institutions of learning. It is on this premise that there should be a network between schools and institutions for higher learning. Career education should be an open system allowing individuals to commit themselves to this task.

Stakeholders expressed their concern about this theme as follows:

- *“How shall we get institutions for higher learning to be part of career education in rural areas...most of them are very far from us....found in urban areas?”*
- *“We do not know what are the requirements for university entrance, where shall we get information about them...”*
- *“What is the difference between universities, technikons etc...?”*

Stakeholders suggested that networking with schools and institutions for higher learning is of importance and that the career information and counselling process are strongly linked. Career counsellors need to develop their sources of information and access to other sources (institutions for

higher learning) if they are to be successful in career work. It is the provision of career information which distinguishes career counsellors from other forms of counselling (Sharf, 1997), and one of the key tasks of career counsellors is to evaluate where and when career information should be introduced by networking with institutions for higher learning. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) state that this consideration serves the purpose of introducing career information by networking with tertiary institutions, which is an important stage when this should occur.

### **3.5 Proposed solutions**

In looking at the solutions that the stakeholders proposed to deal with the effects of career education on young people, the theme that dominated discussions is community-based career education services (the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium and Love Life). The stakeholders felt that young people should be encouraged to use the BHSSC and Love Life services. Some express their personal need to be involved in the programmes. They brainstormed strategies to facilitate similar services in different villages of Bushbuckridge. One stakeholder summarised this as follows:

*The BHSSC and Love Life Youth Centre is a necessity. We need these community-based services in all the villages of Bushbuckridge. How should we start such projects in our different villages as these services are only concentrated in the Bushbuckridge North?*

They identified career education as a core learning area that has been neglected and that should be revived in all schools in Bushbuckridge. Some felt that career education should be offered to young people as the need arises while others felt that the group career counselling session could lead to deeper understanding of career issues. Content career issues were debated in terms of age appropriateness that should underpin the career messages. However the stakeholders were in agreement that career education should be examined within a broader context of life orientation skills.

One stakeholder voiced the following:

*“I am teaching grade one’s. Do you think I should educate them on career education? They will know nothing about career education. They will easily forget about what they have learnt. Children should be taught about career education at post-primary schools.”*

The stakeholders felt that they should do more to teach universal values of career education. They felt that the learners in different schools should respond appropriately in this regard. This was of great concern to them and they felt that in order to make a right career choice they should set examples of role models in Bushbuckridge.

One stakeholder also suggested the following:

*“Teachable moments need to be identified to address this with them. For example when young people choose their careers inappropriately, they should be assisted by whoever had knowledge about such a career as some*



*may have unrealistic motives of choosing careers or have been influenced by their parents....”.*

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion what stakeholders echoed was a need to shift from blaming and judging the apartheid system or lack of resources in rural areas. Given the depth of compassion and willingness of stakeholders to meet this challenge the need exists to facilitate more discussions and create opportunities for stakeholders to share their understandings, biases, fears and experiences. This process facilitated the development of an in-depth understanding of career education and the effect it had on young people. This process should be furthered and supported through an action research approach and applied in practice.

## CHAPTER 4

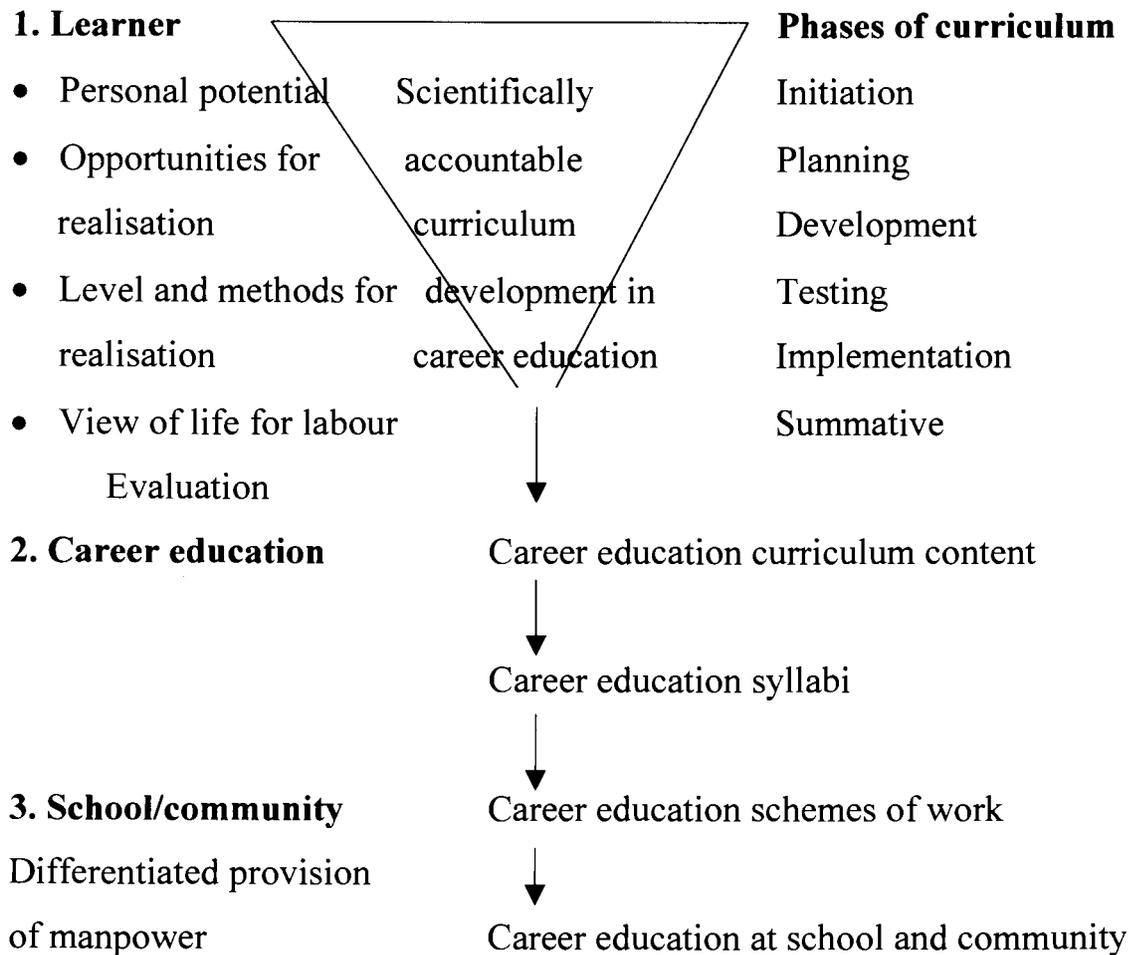
### LITERATURE REVIEW: DATA INTERPRETATION, THEORISING AND RECONTEXTUALISING

#### 4.1 Introduction

Most research begins with a thought, a question, or an idea to either create or enhance aspects of reality. In order to maintain the continuous flow of research, the data collected need to be weighed against existing literature, from studies impacting on the researcher's particular study, in order that the new data may be either supported or evaluated.

Information or content gathered from the bandla/ focus group interview transcriptions were arranged into major themes, which are the most needed areas for career education in Bushbuckridge as identified by all participants. According to the content gathered, individuals should be aware of the job opportunities that are available to them and they should also be prepared to plan their careers and develop them while noting that this is an ongoing process (Jacob *et al.*, 1991:177).

This process can be summarised as follows as was directed by the practice for career guidance according to Jacobs *et al.* (1991:302/4), the schematic representation of curriculum development in career education:



**Improvement and refinement of career education practice**

Adapted from Career Guidance for the Primary and High School (Jacobs *et al.*, 1991:304)

This triad theoretically illustrates a scientific career education development process, which serves as a prerequisite for determining analysing and establishing career education process and content. This content is assembled in a formal, systematic and analytic manner, which serves as a social prerequisite for orienting every young person and stakeholder to have self-career knowledge in the career education situation. This will enable them to make career choices according to their own views of life, labour and on their

own responsibility. The choice also serves as a condition for entering a career/an occupation, planning and developing it.

If scientifically accountable curriculum development in career education occurs in this way, every individual can be orientated at school and in the community on the basis of meaningful curriculum content to gain self-insight with respect to the following given principles of career/work:

- Labour and career choices are serious affairs.
- Successful labour is determined largely by an individual's attitude towards ethics.
- Career choice should be made in the light of certain values and norms- every occupation should be regarded as a calling.
- Career choice and meaningful labour are impossible without the acceptance of the authority of God, parents and stakeholders.
- Career choice and work in this day and age are highly differentiated and expert guidance is essential. Young people should be prepared to accept guidance, but also to orient themselves.
- Unreliable influence by non-experts such as friends, family members, relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, employers lead to unreliable career choices.
- The individuals make career choices themselves after they have received expert career education information and nobody can mislead them or choose on their behalf.
- Career choice has a bearing on the type of school, learning areas, courses and marks of the learner. Certain entrance requirements that are applicable to a specific career have to be compiled.

- Every young person should know his own qualities and abilities and how well or poorly he/she can realise these before he/she can choose a career.
- The opportunities that are available in life serve as a preparation for labour and choice. In other words the family, school, church, occupational life and community should be utilised.
- When making a career choice, young people should take the socio-economic level as well as the labour traditions and values of their family into account.
- The country's career trends should also be taken into account when choosing a career i.e. type of careers/jobs for which the demand is the greatest.

For the purpose of this particular study, the researcher has integrated all the bandla/focus group interview information of the individual's personal potential (physical capabilities and talents, intellectual capabilities, aptitude, interests, sociality, perseverance and responsibility) into the encompassing themes of self-knowledge.

- Opportunities for realisation by stakeholders responsible for career education in Bushbuckridge form part of the theme relating to self-knowledge.
- For the purpose of this particular research study the researcher has also integrated the bandla/focus group interview information relating to career education concepts in Bushbuckridge into the theme of career knowledge.

## **4.2 Contextual evaluation of themes**

The researcher has already highlighted, motivated and explained the use of themes associated with career education in Bushbuckridge in Chapter 3. The researcher is therefore answering some of the questions posed during the reflections on the data analysis of the bandla/focus group interviews. This chapter deals with the phases of theorising and recontextualising as indicated by the Morse and Fields approach which has been highlighted and discussed in Chapter 2.

### **4.2.1 Limitations of existing career education practices**

#### **4.2.1.1 Lack of self-knowledge**

The lack of sufficient self-knowledge among stakeholders as well as the need to guide people to obtain greater self-knowledge was emphasized by this theme. Self-knowledge refers to the insight into one's personality which enables him to know what is he capable of (Gouws & Kruger, 1995:159).

The authors further maintain that the most requirements for learners' career self-knowledge is realistic career choice. The learner's personal acquisition of self and career knowledge can be coupled with the support of career guidance educators and parents as well as stakeholders in the community. The researcher acknowledges the interdependent factors playing a role in career choice, of which self-knowledge is one.

Career opportunities and decisions are influenced by the changing contexts of people' lives as opposed to only their internal interests, abilities and aptitudes. New intervention strategies for making career decisions are needed, which include orientations and motivations characteristic of not only

the self but also the community. Self-knowledge is an important consideration in making career decisions that include interests, abilities and aptitudes (Hardijzer, 1999:45).

The researcher believes that self-knowledge is a limited concept when isolated and it therefore needs to be extended to include contextual knowledge or knowledge of the particular community or working environment in which a person lives, as added factors in career decision making. The researcher also questioned whether the concept of managing a learner's own career development is linked to the extent of the individual's own self-knowledge.

Career planning and choice is an ongoing process, so the sooner an individual starts planning and choosing his career and exploring different options, the better equipped he will be (Department of Labour, 2000:17). Swanepoel (1998:429) confirms that career management is an ongoing process and that it depends on the following dimensions:

- To gather relevant information on the self and the world of work.
- To develop an accurate picture of one's own talents, interests values and preferred lifestyle.
- To develop realistic career goals based on the above information.

This implies that the acquisitions of career management dimensions are imperative components of young people's development and it plays a vital role in successful career management in adult life. The task of self-knowledge is gained from birth and continues throughout childhood through comparing others' reactions to them, testing their limits and internalizing what is being told to them (Gouws & Kruger, 1995:170).

### ❖ **Individuals have the potential to succeed**

Modern career choice theory says: *“Until you know who you are, you cannot know what you can become” Niels Lindhard.*

Self-knowledge is that insight into one’s own personality enabling one to know what one is capable or incapable of. The most important requirement for a realistic career choice is self-knowledge. All individuals have within them some special gift with which they were born, something that has to be brought out for others to see, appreciate and employ.

### ❖ **Insight in planning a bright future**

People should make a commitment to succeed. Will, determination, persistence and visions all play a part in planning a bright future. People need to know the following things about themselves in order to make the right career decisions that are:

- Personal qualities (The things which make you unique).
- Abilities and aptitudes (Things which you can do).
- Interests (that which you enjoy doing).
- Aspirations (the goals that you would like to achieve).
- Needs (the requirements you have).
- Values (that which you believe doing).

### ❖ **Attitude to knowledge**

Rainbow (2001/2002:13) indicates that other people and events that take place in life influence all individuals. Therefore, be aware of what influences

you and how it affects your values, your life and your goals. You may ask successful people how they have been successful. Find out what influenced them. Even if you are in a different field, you will still gain many insights from doing this. When confused or challenged ask yourself questions like, “What do I need to know right now? Where can I find the information I need? Who can I ask, or who can I turn to for a clear explanation?” Ask yourself, “What is the most creative way to handle this?” If no answer, write down the question and brainstorm with some colleagues or friends to find a solution. When you need to make a change that is difficult, make a list of what you might lose if you do not change and make another of what you will gain by changing.

Career education practitioners should help others to find their strengths and talents so that they accomplish more. When you help others, you feel better about yourself. Young people should look for a role model or mentor to guide them.

#### ❖ **Self-acceptance/image/awareness**

Individuals should note the following:

- They are unique.

There are many ways in which you can use your uniqueness to your advantage. You have a way of expressing yourself that is special to you. Tap into your own uniqueness and potential and this will open many opportunities for you.

- They have the right to achieve.

A happy life with a sense of value and meaning is every person’s right.

- Appreciate who you are.

Your goals, thoughts, speech and actions are all affected by your sense of identity and who you think you are. Working through the following information will help you to appreciate your true potential and set realistic goals for the future. It will also enable you to develop the staying power that is needed to reach them. This will help individuals to turn their dreams into reality. It is in the individual's best interests to be totally honest, completely objective and realistic about himself or herself. If you are good at something concentrate on it, build on it and use positively.

- Improve your self-image.

By repeatedly giving your brain positive ideas about yourself you can look forward to having a better self-image, which will almost result in an improvement in the way in which you approach your work, your studies and your life. Remember every person is special. It is his/her right to think positively and do great things. People with a positive self-image are more likely to succeed in life, overcome barriers and obstacles and turn every challenge into an opportunity.

It is upon the researcher's opinion that our values, personality and self-discipline will affect how we think, feel and act. It is our attitude more than anything else, which governs the way we act and react in our day-to-day lives and this involves our happiness and fulfillment. A person who has a high self-esteem is able to interact with others positively, can learn more easily and tackle new experiences with confidence (Rainbow, 2001/2002:18).

#### **4.2.1.2 Lack of career knowledge**

This theme highlighted concerns about the lack of career direction and career misconceptions among learners, parents and teachers. There is a need for career education counselling, which was justified by the data collected from the bandla/group interviews. The change in the world of work has made career education a necessity. Changes in the working environment have resulted in increasing gaps between schools and communities (Rohlen, 1999:253).

The researcher assumed that the lack of career direction in career education is partly due to insufficient career knowledge. The world of work has become a major concern in career education counselling (Brickman, 2000:15).

Brickman (2000:16) furthermore suggested that inadequate knowledge of the different working spectrums has attributed largely to the lack of freedom of career choice. This lack of career knowledge is coupled with the pretentious falsification of careers by the media industry, e.g. television and film, which may be supporting influences of career misconceptions held by the youth.

Gullenkson (1995:38) also suggested that career education programmes are most effective when they are presented developmentally according to grade level and can offer learners the opportunity to be in control of their personal development at all levels, same as the activities that are taking place in the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium. Learners need to be helped to have realistic views of their strengths and limitations so that they

may not only discover but also accept those aspects of their personal potential they may not only discover they can change, and those they cannot (Gouws & Krueger, 1995:166).

In focusing on school workplace collaboration, it is stated that collaborative partnerships between schools (learners), community (parents/stakeholders) and workplaces are vital contributors to effective career education. This is in accordance with the commitment and comprehensiveness of the standard of excellence, which is currently proposed by the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium for effective career planning programmes in Bushbuckridge.

The idea of networking and lobbying was expressed (as discussed in Chapter 1) and the researcher considered of utilising professionals to play a network and guidance role in the schools and community. Wilson (1996:56) who implies that effective networking relies on building and maintaining stable networks of experts who can be called upon when necessary has supported this idea.

The role of professionals is to share expertise and knowledge with the young people and parents and to provide assistance in the application of specific functions. This links within the idea that the professional does not replace a function but exists as a specialist who helps in the execution of the particular function. This indicates the need that career-counselling services should be community-based, specialised and professional.

The researcher believes that the young people need the professional guidance of a career education practitioner. The practitioner should allow a degree of independence in terms of the youth's own responsibility towards career exploration. The extent of the learner's responsibility towards personal career exploration is therefore questioned. It is the educator's task to ensure that the learners accept the process of career decision-making as their own, but that enough guidance relating to relevant sources and support is given (Gouws & Kruger, 1995:168).

The authors further suggested that the young peoples' responsibility and self-management in terms of career decision-making is a crucial element if skills for lifelong career management are to be instilled in the learners at schools and in parents in the communities. It is evident how the rapid changes within economic and employment climates influence the job market. Owing to this, the importance of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis as well as skills in personal career management cannot be emphasised enough. This implies that an individual should be empowered to employ ongoing personal job analysis strategies throughout the life span.

Research on the predictability of compatibility of learners in future careers is needed to convince corporations of the necessity to become involved in career education counselling programmes at schools and communities (Schnitzer, 2000:30).

The introduction of technology to the workplace demands that every young person take advantage of every opportunity for job training. Job trends and

work opportunities in Bushbuckridge are inextricably interlinked with macro-economic and socio-political development strategies. The isolation, marginalisation, derivation and impoverishment endured by Bushbuckridge people are no unfortunate whims of fate. Landlessness, the absence of social infrastructure, basic services and job opportunities as well as political powerlessness are all socially constructed features of the fabric of rural life for the majority of Bushbuckridge people (SAVGEA, 1994:20).

SAVGEA (1994) further suggests that rural labour markets offer a restricted number of employment opportunities as well as circumscribed range of “careers tracks” for local job seekers from impoverished communities.

#### **4.2.1.3 Lack of expertise in providing career education**

Many stakeholders do not feel competent enough to prepare their children to face an increasingly complex world. Although it is true that young people prefer not to discuss certain topics with their parents, it is likely that they will talk to them about careers and be influenced by them in their decision making (De Haas, 1992:30).

Haffajee (1991:43) also found that parents are rated as more important than career guidance teachers in influencing career decision making. However they may be illiterate or unskilled in work and feel that they cannot advise their children. In such cases other people in the community, for example older peers, play a very significant role (Mtolo, 1996:29).

Stead and Watson (1993:55) have reported similar findings in disadvantaged black young people and also that schools have an important part to play in

involving parents in the career education process, particularly since the career world has changed so much in the past. Parents need to be updated on the issues which their children have to face. Arranging careers evenings or days (as discussed in Chapter 2, Community-based approach), at which all stakeholders are welcome may be one way of drawing parents into the process.

Stead and Watson (1999:176) also emphasise that with regard to the responsibility of schools, partnerships with parents, the broader community and commerce and industry become very important in an integrated system of career education. It is simplistic to believe that an add-on programme by a career guidance teacher or outside agency is sufficient. However, with the backlog in career education and the demands of a fast-changing career world, career education has become an important part of the work of formal or informal educators. The economy and education system cannot afford a system that promotes the value of career education and guidance as an integral part of the school programme, but reality ignores these in the majority of schools. We owe it to the young people to ensure that there is appropriate career education in schools, as well as in broader educational programmes.

#### **4.2.1.4 No school-based career education support**

Stead and Watson (1999:175) state that career education has been seen primarily as the responsibility of the schools and, particularly, educators responsible for guidance. This study however has shown that career education is the responsibility of primary and secondary school educators, planners of adult education programmes, and human resource developers in

commerce and industry. Much was said in terms of lack of career school-based support in most schools in Bushbuckridge, almost 80%. Partnerships between education, schools and the world of work becomes an integrated system of career education and is imperative (Department of Education, 1997).

### **4.3 Theme 2 Possible interventions for career education in Busbuckridge**

#### **4.3.1 Community-based career education services**

Several theorists regard career information as an important element of career maturity and people may find it difficult to make sound career decisions if they do not have sufficient information on the world of work (Super, 1990). Career education in Bushbuckridge can be described as being nascent, emerging or in its formative stages of development. This study has examined the origins of and seminal influences of the Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium and the Acornhoek Love Life Youth Centre as community career-based services. This study presented reporting stakeholders' evaluation and understandings of the quality and extent of career education needs in Busbuckridge.

#### **4.3.2 Implementation of career education curriculum guidelines**

One of the major trends in career education is to consider its position in education more broadly. There are increasing calls for career services to be moved "from peripheral role as an enrichment activity to a central role as a required element of the curriculum". (Peterson *et al.*, 1991:164). Such an approach to career education encourages a programme of activities that is systematic and coordinated across the boundaries of academic subjects to

enhance the career development of all learners throughout the school experience.

Law (1996:68/9) identifies four “frames” within the broader curriculum from a career-learning perspective:

- Foundation learning should begin in primary school, possibly as part of personal and social education, and should link occupations with life roles and provide a framework on which the future learning could be based.
- Connecting learning involves the developmental “mini-progressions of learning skills”, and links subject-based learning with the world of work.
- Pivotal learning is necessary at crucial stages that require career information and decision-making, particularly in young people. For example, information on subjects choices and further training.
- Recovery learning is needed for “rebuilding” after disappointments, lost opportunities, or when there is a need for cognitive restructuring.

Such an approach demonstrates how career learning could be integrated into the whole curriculum, and that learning about “work”, role and self are long-term processes.

In a whole-school approach an integrated system of career education in every primary and secondary school is proposed in this study. This is based on the acknowledgement that all learners need career guidance as they develop their interests and abilities and prepare for the transition from school life to adult life (Avent (1988) in Stead & Watson, 1999:174). Mtolo (1996) confirms that a whole school policy for career education must involve most educators and all learners. It should take account of the problems of all groups of young people.

The integration of career into the curriculum has become a possibility in education in Busbuckridge through policy decisions taken in recent years. The first was the Interim Core Syllabus for Guidance (Department of Education, 1995), in which career education is listed as one of the seven major themes that should be integrated into every learner's experience. This syllabus has had little impact to date because school guidance has been a non-examination subject that has been seriously affected by cutbacks in education and has not been prioritised by Departments of Education. It has also been superseded by Curriculum 2005 (Stead & Watson, 1999:174).

In Curriculum 2005 career education forms part of one of the eight learning areas, i.e. Life Orientation. The implication is that career education should be an integral part of every school programme and that it can potentially have a far more central role. However, with the current crises in education, the slowed implementation of the new curriculum, and moratoriums on the writing of new text books, the risk is that school guidance, and particularly career education, will again collapse. As a result another generation of learners will have minimal exposure to career education as education is reorganised. It appears that a great deal will depend both on the successful implementation of Curriculum 2005, and also on the skills of the material developers. It is also likely that the small initiatives in individual schools/communities and circumscribed localities by motivated stakeholders with vision will be the reality of career education for next few years (Department of Education, 1995).

### **4.3.3 Career education skill facilitation/training**

Rogers and Frieberg (1994) said that educators should become facilitators of learning, should accept learners as they are and be sensitive to where each individual is in the process of learning and to do this they need skill training. A facilitator of learning creates open and non-threatening learning situations, in which the traditional role of the teacher as the purveyor of information is replaced by the acknowledgement of learning as a two-way relationship. In facilitating learning, the educator and learners work together actively and learning becomes a process of mutual discovery. The educator who is motivated to take on the role of facilitator needs to acknowledge that he/she will learn together with the learners, and that accountability for the learning is shared. The facilitator challenges and questions, provides opportunities and activities, and resists the temptation to provide prescriptions and ready-made answers.

Harris (1997) highlighted that an approach, which considers learners holistically, takes account of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Traditional teaching in academic subjects tends to focus only on thinking. In career education, learners should be encouraged to find out more about themselves, their thoughts, images and feelings regarding the career world. This requires an approach or skills training, in which learners are free to explore, discuss and get involved in activities. Such learning demands that the facilitator is able to encourage discovery and that he/she does this through exercises and experiences that are carefully designed.

#### **4.3.4 Networking between school and other career education services**

The Bushbuckridge Health and Social Services Consortium has been in the forefront of developing local and relevant career and employment information in Bushbuckridge. Recently, however this centre has begun to struggle for funding. Universities and technikons are being networked to provide this community-based organisation with career information support materials (with the help of the researcher). Stead and Watson (1999:185) also state that networking involves the identification of individuals, groups and/or agencies that are able to provide relevant information; establishing communication with such people; and at times formalising the network by making a list of contact people. Once one person or institution has been identified as a source of information, the names of other contact people who may be helpful can be provided. One of the best ways of networking or obtaining career information is to obtain hands-on experience. Visits to training sites, for example, tertiary institutions may be very valuable. Preparations for the visit as well as the follow-up are important considerations. Work experience for learners is another valuable way of learning about careers. School counsellors should have a network of professional/tertiary institutions that will allow young people to shadow them. Networking with various tertiary institutions for career exhibition annually is another useful way to find out about careers (Harris, 1997; Mtolo, 1996).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed at reviewing the literature of the themes and sub-themes elicited as the most responses during the interviews in this study. It attempts to find suitable contextual information to substantiate, support or contradict data that were collected and placed in the context by approaching national and international sources with similar questions to those asked during reflection and theorising. This contextualising provides confirmation or rejection of the views and ideas expressed by stakeholders through the focus group interviews from the relevant literature. Certain findings that could be found in the literature can be considered valid reasons for further research in this field.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **IMPLICATIONS, SUMMATIVE AND CONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This study took a closer look at the researcher's exploration of developing an intervention strategy for career education in Bushbuckridge. For the purpose of this chapter, the researcher would like to include a synopsis of the views expressed during the bandla/focus group interviews as an overview of what was discussed throughout the study.

In this final part of the study the findings and their implications for the research questions were summarised. The researcher set out to capture the perceptions of stakeholders through a process of deep attentiveness and empathetic understanding and though the researcher offered certain themes to be reviewed, he tried to keep to the original format in which this understanding and perception evolved within the context of this study. The findings indicate a need for stakeholders to talk about career education and the impact it has on young people.

#### **5.2. Implications of the study**

The following implications relating to the research were considered:

5.2.1. Despite the priority given in education policy documents with regard to the career education this is not always put into effect at school level since insufficient time is allocated both to the educator development and learner education. However this may differ from school to school and depends on the extent to which role players at school level have committed themselves to the programme.

5.2.2. Within the context of this study, stakeholders noted the need for greater responsiveness to young people who are directly affected by lack of intervention strategies for career education in Bushbuckridge. Thus the focus of intervention strategies should be to respond more directly to the career education needs of the community.

5.2.3. There is a fundamental need to extend on the skills of the learners and the educators in the education system in order to intervene and support learners, for example, educators need to explore ways in which they can assist learners in decision making or career exploration.

5.2.4. Schools and communities need to become more responsive to learners/young people who are affected by lack of career education knowledge. They need to address the gap and to create an atmosphere of care and support.

5.2.5. Through community mobilisation's actions, a caring community environment and interaction with stakeholders on matters concerning career education, a climate of community career education service delivery which will eventually form part of society, can be created.

5.2.6. There is a need for all schools in Bushbuckridge to develop a policy for career education, so that all role-players at school level can participate in the elimination the schools lack of career knowledge and in creating supporting career school environments.

5.2.7. Schools should enhance networking with instructions for higher learning that could address career knowledge limitations and support career exploration activities and also lead to the capacity development of educators and community volunteers.

5.2.8. The study has implications for the role of the psychological division officials in terms of support and sustaining educator development, in developing and implementing a life skills programme for learners and also developing and implementing career education workshops for both educators and parents.

Furthermore psychological division officials will need to provide support to schools and community-based organisations to deal with the many difficulties that young people may experience as a direct result of the impact of career education.

### **5.3. Analysis of the study**

The study focused firstly on providing an increased understanding of career education in Bushbuckridge. Stakeholders' views of career education on the part of both stakeholders and the researcher and secondly on exploring stakeholders' suggestions of strategies for future career education were indicated. These findings show that through a process of knowledge and reflection, the researcher was able to gain clarity on their perceptions of career education and the solution they offered for future action.

knowledge beliefs and perceptions, with regard to career education, of the stakeholders in the research sample. Consequently the findings cannot be generalised to all communities. However, given the universality of the problem the findings may be transferred to similar communities. An analysis of the findings have been summarised as follows:

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success of the health intervention strategies</li> <li>• BHSSC and Love Life community initiatives</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study limited to one community</li> <li>• Findings depend on the interview data, which reflect experiences, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of BBR stakeholders</li> <li>• Findings cannot be generalised to all communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study serves as a baseline study for Bushbuckridge community</li> <li>• BHSSC potential for funding</li> <li>• It is a model that can be used in other communities</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability</li> <li>• BHSSC depends on volunteers</li> </ul>

## 5.4 Recommendations for further research

5.4.1 Research is needed to develop and refine the findings regarding strategies for career education in practice.

## **5.4 Recommendations for further research**

5.4.1 Research is needed to develop and refine the findings regarding strategies for career education in practice.

5.4.2 Research with regard to the implementation of career education curriculum and educator skill training is recommended.

5.4.3 No research has been done on the Xivijo or bandla methods of career development in South Africa. The researcher has explored these methods by linking the integral Bushbuckridge tradition with the paradigm shift towards multiple realities and perspectives. These methods could have a place in the practice of career education. Researchers can collect data from community structures, especially traditional leaders, by using these methods.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

At the conclusion of this study the Bushbuckridge community was already addressing career limitations. The chosen strategy is that of community-based intervention. Resources identified in this study are being mobilised. For example, the BHSSC and the Acornhoek Love Life Youth Centre serve as community-based intervention strategies. Understanding the impact of career education within the context of education is only just emerging as a research topic. Yet research in this area is of great value to young people and community stakeholders. The Bushbuckridge community is an environment in which young people and stakeholders spend a great deal of time and are equally placed where career education intervention strategies can have the greatest impact on the optimal development of everyone involved in the community. Consequently this research study is embedded in a process

that explores stakeholders' perceptions of career education and it looks at ways to further the increase the impact on young people.

The analysis shows that understanding is emerging and that it precedes response and action. The stakeholders need a good grasp of the topic and the impact it has on young people in order to respond. Having sketched the context for the emergence of understanding and response, of this study provides the framework in for alternative views on career education and the impact on young people.

This study serves to answer the question: What intervention strategy could be developed for career education in Bushbuckridge? The descriptions of stakeholders' views reveal understanding on a deeper level of care and support. This in turn has led the researcher to establish that there is a need for stakeholders to engage in a dialogue about career education and the impact it has on young people in Bushbuckridge. Once stakeholders are able to understand this for themselves or have formed a group, only then that they be able to mobilise identified resources.

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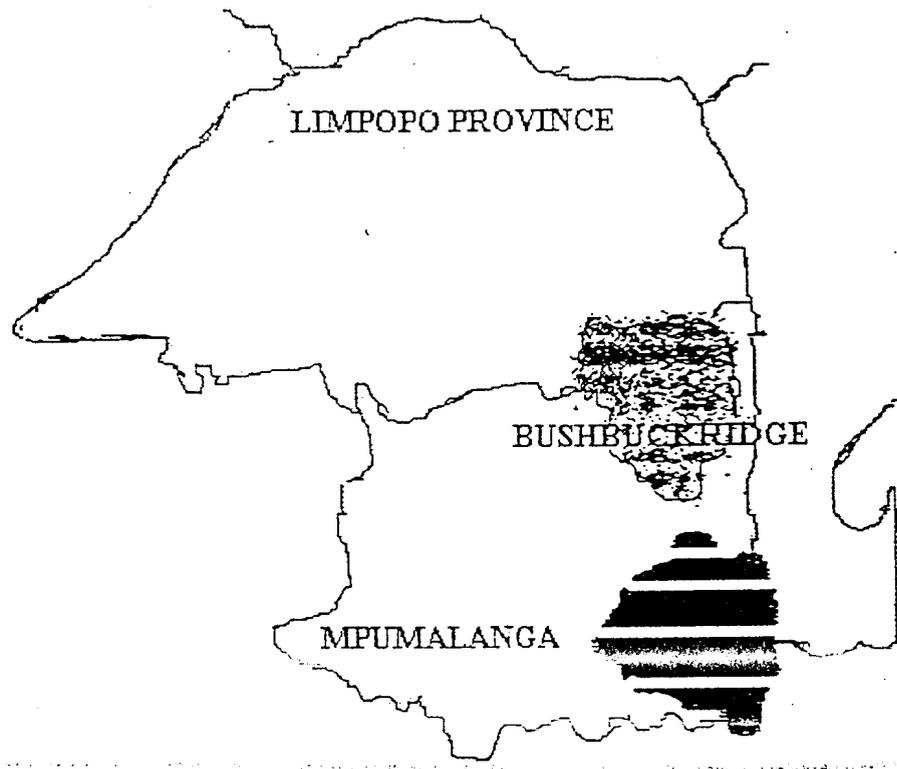
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Appendix I



Bushbuckridge Region Map (Boarded by Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces)



# Busibuyiswa Health and Social Services Commission

Po Box 3092, Acornhoek 1360  
Tel: 013 797 0412  
Fax: 013 797 0414  
E-Mail: rchsdu@wn.apc.org

## Referral Form

NO. 0745

Name and Address of Referral Point (School, Church, Hospital, etc): \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel/Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and professional status of referee: \_\_\_\_\_

### CLIENT'S DETAILS

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Case History: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Specific Instructions for the Referral: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Referee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

CUT \_\_\_\_\_  
Reply Section (To be filled in by Doctor/Social worker/Police/ Councillor, etc and returned to the client)

Findings: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Management: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Further management instructions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_