THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTIVE
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PLANS
BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

MAESALA THABE

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PLANS BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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(Educational Psychology)

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University of Pretoria

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Professor R Ferreira

CO-SUPERVISOR
Professor L Ebersöhn

PRETORIA
SEPTEMBER 2015
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Maesala Thabe (04414675), hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *The development of supportive school-community plans by community volunteers* is my original work, and that all of the resources I consulted are included in the list of references.

____________________
Maesala Thabe

____________________
Date
I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the following people who contributed to the completion of this study:

My supervisor, Professor Ronél Ferreira, I could not have done it without you. Thank you so much for your insights and guidance throughout this study. Thank you for believing in me. The exposure and opportunities you gave me both locally and abroad inspired me. Your support throughout this journey has made this study a success. TOGETHER we made it!

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“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”

Joshua 1:9

---oOo---
Date:
17 August 2015

To whom it concerns:

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited a Master's dissertation in Educational Psychology for Ms Maesela Thabe.

Yours sincerely

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RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT
MEd
The development of supportive school-community plans by community volunteers

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DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE
APPROVED

Please note:
For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years
For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE
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DATE
24 March 2015

CC
Jeannie Beukes
Liesel Ebersohn
Prof R. Ferreira

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:
1. It remains the students’ responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.
ABSTRACT

The development of supportive school-community plans by community volunteers

by

Maesala Thabe

Supervisor : Professor R Ferreira
Co-supervisor : Professor L Ebersöhn
Institution : University of Pretoria, Department of Educational Psychology
Degree : M.Ed (Educational Psychology)

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how community volunteers, in collaboration with teachers and the community, developed and implemented supportive school-community plans. The study forms part of the broader SHEBA (Supporting Home Environments in Beating Adversity) project (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011-2013), which investigated the way in which community volunteers applied the asset-based approach in supporting vulnerable communities, by utilising school-based partnerships.

I followed a Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA) methodological approach, relied on interpretivism as meta-theory and implemented a case study research design, as this allowed me to focus on a selected issue of a broader phenomenon. In selecting the case and participants I combined convenience and purposive sampling. Thirty eight community volunteers participated, who have been involved in the broader SHEBA project and have been supporting schools in high-risk communities in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa. For data generation and documentation I relied on PRA-based workshops, observation, field notes, and visual and audio-visual techniques. I analysed and interpreted the data by means of inductive thematic analysis.

Four themes (with relevant sub-themes) emerged. The first theme relates to the roles of volunteers in school-community partnerships, indicating that community volunteers fulfilled four roles in the school-community. The second theme represents relevant partners in the school-community partnerships that were established. The third theme concerns the implementation phases of supportive school-community plans. The last theme relates to the challenges experienced by participants in school-community partnerships.

Based on the findings of this study, I posit that community volunteers possess the necessary skills to formulate and develop supportive school-community plans that can address the
needs of schools, families and the community at large. Volunteers are able to identify, mobilise and manage existing assets and can become resources to the school-communities they serve. This study therefore indicates the ability of volunteers to collaboratively construct knowledge, and provide direction to supportive school-community projects they initiate in collaboration with other stakeholders, in order to support those in need of help. In this way, community volunteers can support teachers, learners and the community in addressing challenges and pursuing positive change.

LIST OF KEY WORDS

- Assets
- Community volunteers
- High risk school-communities
- Participatory action and reflection (PRA)
- Partnerships
- Resources
- SHEBA intervention
- Supportive school-community plans
CHAPTER 2
EXPLORATION OF EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................. 15

2.2 VOLUNTEERING ........................................................................................................... 15
  2.2.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 15
  2.2.2 WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING? .................................................................................. 16
  2.2.3 BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING IN SOUTH AFRICA .......................................... 17
  2.2.4 CHALLENGES GENERALLY FACED BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN SOUTH AFRICA ............................................................................................................. 18

2.3 HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES ........................................... 20
  2.3.1 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES ....................................... 20
  2.3.2 SOUTH AFRICAN DISCOURSES ON HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES .......................... 21

2.4 THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES ............................................................................................................. 23
  2.4.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 23
  2.4.2 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES ............................................................................................................. 23
  2.4.3 SOUTH AFRICAN DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES ............................................................................................................. 24

2.5 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT ............................................................................................................. 25
  2.5.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 25
  2.5.2 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT .......................................................... 26
  2.5.3 SOUTH AFRICAN DISCOURSES ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT .......................................................... 27

2.6 POLICY DOCUMENTS THAT MAY ASSIST COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN SUPPORTING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA ............................................................................................................. 27
  2.6.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 27
  2.6.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY ......................................................................... 28
    2.6.2.1 Purpose of Inclusive Education Policy .............................................................. 29
    2.6.2.2 Relevance of Inclusive Education Policy for community volunteers ............... 29
  2.6.3 POLICY ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ........................................................................ 30
    2.6.3.1 Purpose of the Children’s Rights Act .............................................................. 31
    2.6.3.2 Relevance of the Children’s Rights Act for community volunteers ............... 31
  2.6.4 CHILD JUSTICE ACT ......................................................................................... 32
    2.6.4.1 Purpose of the Child Justice Act .................................................................... 32
    2.6.4.2 Relevance of the Child Justice Act for community volunteers ....................... 33
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6.5</td>
<td>POLICY ON HIV/AIDS AND TB</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.5.1</td>
<td>Purpose of the policy on HIV/AIDS and TB</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.5.2</td>
<td>Relevance of the policy on HIV/AIDS and TB to community volunteers</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.6</td>
<td>SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.6.1</td>
<td>Purpose of the Sexual Offences Act</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.6.2</td>
<td>Relevance of the Sexual Offences Act for community volunteers</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.7</td>
<td>DIVORCE ACT</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.7.1</td>
<td>Purpose of the Divorce Act</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.7.2</td>
<td>Relevance of the Divorce Act for community volunteers</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ASSET-BASED APPROACH</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2</td>
<td>UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.3</td>
<td>PHASES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.4</td>
<td>APPLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO THIS STUDY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 66

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY ............................................................................................. 66
4.2.1 THEME 1: ROLES OF VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS .......... 67
   4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Prevention role ................................................................. 68
   4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Intervention role ............................................................. 70
   4.2.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Capacity development role ............................................. 71
   4.2.1.4 Sub-theme 1.4: Income-generation role .................................................. 72
   4.2.1.5 Findings on the roles of community volunteers in school-community partnerships 73

4.2.2 THEME 2: PARTNERS IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ......................... 76
   4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Community volunteers as partners .................................. 77
   4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Partners within the school context .................................... 78
   4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Partners outside the school context ................................... 79
   4.2.2.4 Findings on partners in school-community partnerships ........................... 81

4.2.3 THEME 3: IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PLANS 84
   4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Initiating phase ............................................................... 84
   4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Implementation phase ...................................................... 85
   4.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3: Sustaining supportive initiatives ....................................... 86
   4.2.3.4 Findings on the phases involved in supportive school-community plans .... 87

4.2.4 THEME 4: CHALLENGES VOLUNTEERS EXPERIENCED IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS 90
   4.2.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Material constraints ......................................................... 90
   4.2.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Lack of support by school-community stakeholders ........... 91
   4.2.4.3 Sub-theme 4.3: Limited SNE .................................................................... 92
   4.2.4.4 Findings on challenges related to school-community partnerships ............. 93

4.3 CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................... 96
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 97

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS .......................................................... 97

5.3 CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................................................ 98
5.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1 ................................................................. 98
5.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2 ................................................................. 99
5.3.3 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION ......................................................................... 100

5.4 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY ......................................................... 102

5.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY ............................................... 104

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS .............................................................................................. 104
5.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING ............................................................... 104
5.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE ................................................................ 105
5.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .............................................. 106

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS ....................................................................................... 107

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 108

APPENDICES ............................................................................................................... 125

---oOo---
## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.1 &amp; 3.2:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The context where participating community volunteers assist (18.01.2013, 05.07.2012)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.3 &amp; 3.4:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants discussing policies (09.07.2012, 10.07.2012)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.5:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing school policy (05.07.2012)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.6:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing school policy (05.07.2012)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.7:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on supportive plans by Group 1 (01.10.2012)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.8:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on supportive plans by Group 3 (01.10.2012)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.9:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small group discussions on progress of implementation of supportive plans (02.05.2013)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 3.10:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member checking (02.05.2013)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.1:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference to awareness campaign on drug abuse (01.10.2012)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.2:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants highlighting the importance of confidentiality when discussing HIV/AIDS and related matters (09.07.2012)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.3:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing aftercare (01.10.2012)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.4:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community volunteers’ progress report during second field visit (01.10.2012)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.5:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example of community volunteers developing together (09.07.2012)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.6:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knitted hats and scarves as income-generation project (09.07.2012)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photograph 4.7:</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with the school in support of children who needed medical care (10.07.2012)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photograph 4.8: Liaising with the SGB (10.07.2012) ................................................. 79

Photograph 4.9: Example of partnerships with stakeholders outside the school context (10.07.2012) ................................................. 80

Photograph 4.10: Consultation with relevant partners (10.07.2012) ................................................. 85

Photograph 4.11: Community volunteers marketing themselves (01.10.2012) ................................................. 87

Photograph 4.12: Challenge with sewing project (09.07.2012) ................................................. 91

Photograph 4.13: Indication of stolen equipment (09.07.2012) ................................................. 92

Photograph 4.14: Challenge to obtain sponsorships (09.07.2012) ................................................. 92

---oOo---

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

---ooOoo---

Figure 3.1: Overview of field visits ................................................. 51

Table 4.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1 ................................................. 67

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2 ................................................. 76

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 3 ................................................. 84

Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 4 ................................................. 90

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CHAPTER 1
SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In this study I explored how community volunteers participating in an intervention project, namely Supporting Home Environments in Beating Adversity (SHEBA\(^1\)), developed supportive school-community plans. SHEBA builds on an existing funded\(^2\) longitudinal intervention research project, namely Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience (STAR), which was initiated in 2003 to study how teachers could promote resilience in high-risk schools. The initial objective of the partnership between teachers and researchers was to examine how teachers’ psycho-social support initiatives could buoy resilience, mainly within the HIV/AIDS sphere (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012).

SHEBA is an adaptation of STAR involving community volunteers as participants in the initial STAR school-community setting\(^3\). SHEBA thus entails an intervention with community volunteers to determine to what extent school-based partnerships may have value in providing psycho-social support in high-risk school-community settings (and thereby promote resilience). The SHEBA intervention is presented over four sessions (two to three days each) of which I participated in two, namely session 4 in July 2012 and 1 in October 2012 (included in appendix H). The focus of my study within SHEBA was to explore how community volunteers developed supportive school-community plans.

Prior to undertaking this study (July 2011), I fulfilled the role of field worker at a seminar\(^4\) which formed part of the STAR project. I listened to the teacher-participants of the STAR project highlighting the multiple roles they fulfilled as teachers and caregivers to learners. In addition, I heard how care workers were volunteering in some schools to assist with the provision of psycho-social support so that teachers were free to focus on instruction (Department of Social Development, 2013). I wondered if such care workers from communities were adequately trained to fulfil this role. My experience at the seminar thus raised my initial awareness that, regardless of limitations in terms of resources and literacy in South Africa, teachers and community members are willing to play a positive role in the lives of learners living in adversity.

---

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\(^2\) Funded by the National Research Foundation, ABSA Foundation, Foschini Group, Education Development and Training Programme-SETA, Toyota Albert Wessels Trust, University of Pretoria.
\(^4\)STAR colloquium, titled Past, Present and Future of STAR communities, Zebula Golf Estate & Spa, 15-17 July 2011. Thirty participants were divided into groups of six to eight, representing five schools.
Many communities and settlements experience poverty, a lack of service delivery and limited resources, which place members in these communities at risk and reduce their ability to cope with negative impacts (Jooste et al., 2006). Such communities are often characterised by child-headed households, single-parent households, skipped-generation households, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and increasing levels of abuse and crime (Jooste et al., 2006). These communities are furthermore typically negatively affected by factors such as illiteracy, malnutrition, child neglect and increasing levels of mortality, therefore, exacerbating vulnerability (UNICEF, 2007).

Partnerships between schools and community members are generally viewed as something that may benefit both learners and the community at large (Strom & Strom, 1999). Community volunteers in schools imply the potential of providing individualised attention to learners which the latter may otherwise lack in large classrooms (Lie & Baines, 2007). According to Elliott et al. (2000) many parents may not be able to provide assistance at school or with their children in terms of activities such as homework, due to factors such as illiteracy or un-involvement. Thus, according to Russel et al. (2005), as teachers act in loco parentis, community volunteers may extend that role by assisting learners with homework or providing other forms of assistance (Russel et al., 2005). Strom and Strom (1999), as well as Lie and Baines (2007), view the value of community volunteers in the possibility of volunteers assisting with tasks such as learner support, improving and safeguarding school’s property, being involved in learners’ physical activities and assisting with after-school care (Strom & Strom, 1999; Lie & Baines, 2007).

In at-risk communities, the relationship between schools and communities is often even more important, possibly because both the community and school may need to rely on one another for support, mutual development and educational advancement (Elliott et al., 2000; Torgeson, 2002; Lie & Baines, 2007). When community volunteers are involved in schools, they can therefore become mediators between teachers and learners’ families as they gather relevant information for teachers from learners’ homes (Torgeson, 2002). Community volunteers will thus gain insight into how classrooms, and as a result schools, are run by becoming partners. In return, they can assist with advancing the education level and improving discipline in schools (Elliott et al., 2000).

In support of schools forming partnerships with others, the Department of Basic Education (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010) developed a framework on how care and support can be facilitated for teaching and learning. With this framework, coordination with various service providers and other government departments is essential to collaboratively support high-risk learners (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010). This collaboration is regarded to be “multi-sectoral” in nature with relevant stakeholders coming into play to support the needs of high-risk learners (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010:41).
Additionally, the caregivers of these learners are required to play a supportive role in the identification of resources that can assist in improving adverse situations (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010). Not only is caregivers’ commitment and support imperative in assisting high-risk learners, the community at large also play an important role. School-community partnerships can potentially create active and increased participation in identifying and supporting high-risk learners. By engaging the community, volunteers may thus become involved in such partnerships (Department of Basic Education & MIET Africa, 2010).

The possibility of engaging volunteers to extend the reach of teachers and initiate supportive plans comes to the fore. Against the background of this argument, the current study explored an intervention with community volunteers focused on them developing supportive partnership plans. Musick and Wilson (1997:695) define volunteer work as “productive work that requires human capital, collective behaviour that requires social capital and ethically guided work that requires cultural capital”. In support, Tilly and Tilly (1994:694) view volunteer work as “unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial or friendship obligations”.

These definitions of volunteer work indicate that community volunteers offer their time and effort, often free of charge, for the benefit of those who need help. According to Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002:47), being a volunteer, in most cases, entails an element of an “expressive orientation”. People may experience a sense of social responsibility, aspiring to give back to their communities. However, some may be involved in volunteer work as a way of spending their leisure time or gaining experience (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002). Thus, volunteering has the potential to yield benefits in high-risk school-communities.

The Department of Social Development also makes use of volunteers referred to as care workers. These care workers liaise with relevant stakeholders within and outside the department in order to intervene and support high-risk learners to function optimally (Department of Social Development, 2013). Integrating services and efforts as care workers and schools is of importance to the Department as this allows an opportunity for schools (learners) and high-risk community members to receive information and other much needed services (Department of Social Development, 2013).

Partnerships between care workers and schools further create a prospect for these partners to collaboratively and holistically identify existing assets and therefore address adverse situations (Department of Social Development, 2013). Additionally, partnerships between schools and care workers can assist in prevention and early intervention of risks that may have a potentially negative impact on learners’ wellbeing (Department of Social Development, 2013).
In this study, community members bore the responsibility to “stretch their limited resources” in order to intervene and aim for protection and sustainable development (UNICEF, 2007:3). With limited response and intervention from government authorities, participants in the current study took the initiative to establish partnerships with schools in their proximity and their communities in order to support learners and other members of the community (UNICEF, 2007).

Community volunteers continually deal with incidents affecting children and their communities, such as loss of parents, provision of food and assisting in the school environment (Konoé, 2011). The potential role of community volunteers is characterised by them being able to identify and mobilise assets and resources in support of the community (VSO & RAISA, 2011). The implementation of supportive plans, however, incorporates community volunteers being resources and significant links between the community and schools, and sources of information at schools and in the community (VSO & RAISA, 2011).

Research in the field of volunteerism has been ongoing, with studies typically focusing on formal and informal volunteer work (Musick & Wilson, 1997), and the satisfaction of volunteers in their field of work (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002). Some research studies focus on the voices of older volunteers to make sense of organisational change (Lie & Baines, 2007), while others pay attention to types of volunteer experience and health among adult volunteers (Jirovec & Hyduk, 1999). Other studies’ focal point is concerned with volunteering in schools to assist learners (Torgerson et al., 2002). Some studies attempt to formalise the concept of volunteering by recruiting volunteers in a procedural manner, having a set of characteristics that volunteers need to possess in order to become part of the organisation (Burke, 2001). In most instances, however, the training of community volunteers seems inadequate to ensure the success of their plans (Marti, 2003). The current intervention study included sessions on the asset-based approach and guided reflection.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not an intervention (SHEBA), adapted for use from an intervention with teachers (STAR), could have utility with community volunteers to develop supportive school-community plans. Said plans could operationalise an assumption that community volunteers can assist with psycho-social support in high-risk school-communities. In this way the bulk of the burden of care and support will not be the responsibility of teachers only.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question that directed this study is: Which school-community plans can community volunteers develop as part of an asset-based intervention to assist teachers to provide support in high-risk school contexts?
In order to answer the primary research question, the following secondary questions were addressed:

- Which risks do community volunteers identify in high-risk school-communities that may require support?
- How can community volunteers assist teachers to provide support in high-risk school-communities?

1.4 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

In this section, I define the key concepts of the study.

1.4.1 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

A community volunteer is one who contributes positively to the wellbeing of other community members and improvement of the community (Niskala et al., 2004). Community volunteers shape communities and assist in forming the basis for other community members’ involvement and participation in various activities (Niskala et al., 2004). Community volunteers are typically viewed as concerned members of the community who have and want to achieve mutual goals with various organisations, thus joining forces in order to develop and sustain the community (Niskala et al., 2004).

According to Pink (2005), community volunteers are citizens who are eager to realise communal harmony, unity and transformation through involvement, participation, leadership and ownership of self-constructed initiatives and projects. Although projects and initiatives may be constructed by community volunteers, their role is to liaise with different stakeholders to succeed in penetrating the community at large (Pink, 2005). Their role is furthermore dedicated to serving communities they belong to, and to recruiting volunteers who originate from the communities they are assisting (Pink, 2005).

To my view, community volunteers therefore originate from a particular community, and engage and commit to social change for their own good and for those of others. Community volunteers collaborate with different sectors and stakeholders to make their community a better place to live in, usually without any financial compensation. It follows that community volunteers are citizens who identify community resources and then push for their mobilisation and realisation. As such, they are concerned about sustainable development of the community and its people.

For the purpose of this study, community volunteers refer to community members who are committed to school-community partnerships and the development and implementation of supportive school-community plans. These community members display an attitude of service, and are responsible and available to support others. The majority of the community
volunteers who participated served the schools in their communities without receiving any remuneration.

1.4.2 SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PLANS

Supportive school-community plans can be defined as preventative and intervention strategies which may respond to challenges and adversity (Hienemann et al., 1999). A supportive school-community plan represents the recognition, assessment and implementation of certain steps in order to overcome adversity. Hienemann et al. (1999) view supportive plans as plans of action delineating particular steps that will promote participation and success. The success of these plans requires careful development and involvement of all relevant stakeholders, recognition of challenges to be addressed and thoughtful action (Hienemann et al., 1999).

According to Brown and Frohnapfel (2009), supportive school-community plans imply devices based on functional and realistic goals that are invented for improving a situation. Supportive plans thus aim to shape and improve unfavourable circumstances. They usually focus on the positive, on doable and beneficial interventions (Brown & Frohnapfel, 2009). Supportive plans further embrace available and accessible resources, making the most of them and at the same time ensuring that outlined strategies may be carried out with ease (Brown & Frohnapfel, 2009).

In my view, supportive plans focus on eliminating crises and adversity, and developing, improving and promoting wellbeing and sustainability. Supportive plans are helpful to facilitate and enable creative thinking in terms of strategies to implement. Moreover, supportive plans contribute to quality of life with the goal of addressing discomfort in a certain area.

The school-community plans developed by community volunteers in this study required the involvement of schools and communities, in order to provide support where risk is high. These plans furthermore required community volunteers' dedicated participation and commitment for successful implementation. Supportive school-community plans were developed by community volunteers for the sake of lessening the load of the teachers.

1.4.3 HIGH-RISK SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES

High-risk school-communities represent contexts that are “exposed to different kinds of adversities” (Stormont et al., 2003:55). These contexts are often typified by low socio-economic circumstances, illiteracy and demotivation. Furthermore, these contexts are seen as those that have limited resources, where residents struggle to meet their basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter. Stormont et al. (2005:55) state that as a result of such adversity, people who stay in these contexts face the potential of suffering “physical, cognitive, psychological and emotional hardships”.

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Gingras (2008) describes high-risk school-communities as those in need of special attention, and who may need external support. Furthermore, high-risk school-communities are those whose members, especially children, may experience learning difficulties, may be subject to bullying and who are non-fluent in their mother-tongue or any other language (Thürman et al., 2009). Additionally, Gingras (2008) views children from high-risk school-communities who are at risk, as those whose hardships are distracting their quality of schooling.

In my view, high-risk school-communities experience misfortune in terms of the level and complexity of challenges experienced, which may cause a lack of motivation and interest for any improvement and achievement. I regard these contexts as at risk of being undermined and likely to be exposed to crimes and other related forms of misconduct. Children living in such contexts may have experienced trauma or may live with uncertainty about their future and fear of what might happen to them.

In this study, high-risk school-communities specifically refer to under-privileged and resource-constrained communities in the Eastern Cape. The learners in this study are regarded as coming from adverse school-communities; they attend primary schools with which community volunteers have affiliations. They are thus children faced with adversities such as a lack of individualised teacher attention due to overcrowded classrooms, no school uniforms and insufficient food, or being infected with and/or affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some children in this study are heads of households, may be taking care of ill family members or are struggling to make ends meet.

1.4.4 Asset-based intervention to develop supportive school-community plans

Developing supportive partnership plans refers to overcoming the challenges that prevent a group of people from making progress (Salisbury, 2007). First these challenges are identified, and then strategies to overcome them are sought (Salisbury, 2007). According to Salisbury (2007), seeking out plans that are supportive requires that available resources be mobilised and managed in a way that will benefit all those who are affected by persisting challenges. In developing plans that can assist communities to recognise their resources and utilising these in the best possible way, ways may be found in which support can be provided and challenges reduced (Salisbury, 2007).

According to Fox (2011), the development of supportive plans requires insight into the history of the problem and how it affects particular people so that relevant measures can be taken. By this, Fox (2011) means that an assessment process must have taken place with some clarity on what needs to be done. In proposing any form of supportive plans, Fox (2011) points out that such plans should be able to prevent, as well as play an intervention role in the challenges experienced.

Development of supportive plans therefore refers to devising means that are able to assist communities and schools, through the help of community volunteers, to overcome their
challenges. The content of developed supportive partnership plans is characterised by strategies that are relevant to the challenges faced. Developing a supportive plan implies the fulfilment of needs after an evaluation has been made, with strategies being planned.

Thus, in view of this study, community volunteers developed supportive partnership plans after they had noticed the challenges and risks faced by learners, teachers and the community at large. They took upon themselves the responsibility of seeking solutions to existing challenges by developing prevention and intervention strategies that would benefit the recipients of their services. Supportive school-community plans which include, among others, after-care centres, cleaning of school facilities, home visits, and awareness campaigns were developed as part of the community volunteers’ assistance in addressing challenges.

1.5 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

In the following section, I briefly introduce my selected theoretical, epistemological and methodological stance as researcher. More detailed discussions follow in Chapter 3.

1.5.1 THEORETICAL PARADIGM

I relied on the asset-based approach as theoretical framework. My understanding of this approach is that it emphasises what people can do and what they possess, to achieve desired goals (“capabilities and assets”) and address “weaknesses and needs” (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006:31). According to Ebersöhn and Eloff (2006), this approach offers a way of dealing with weaknesses by focusing on strengths and assets.

The reason I chose the asset-based approach is that I believe that each individual has something to offer to the improvement of an undesired situation. I also believe that people possess the potential to empower themselves, and to face and overcome undesirable conditions. In addition, the asset-based approach allows people to realise what they have and therefore work with that or capitalise on it (Cameron, 2003; Nelson, Campbell & Emanuel, 2011). It gives power back to the person who may be regarded as powerless and it indicates that actions of people (participants, clients) can allow them to achieve what they desire (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006).

In this study, I focus on community volunteers’ development of supportive school-community plans based on the assets and resources already available in the relevant community and school. Community volunteers thus identified risks and challenges in the schools and community, and worked with what they had in overcoming these challenges, thus following the asset-based approach’s steps of asset mapping, asset mobilisation and asset management. As such, the asset-based approach as theoretical framework allowed me to observe how community volunteers recognised their capabilities and used what they had available in their immediate environment to reach their goals.
1.5.2 **META-THEORETICAL PARADIGM**

I relied on the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism supposes that there is no such thing as an objective reality and states that different people perceive and interpret the reality of an event differently (Carcary, 2009; Mack, 2010). Interpretivism suggests that a researcher cannot observe from the outside but needs to be part of the study and have direct experience with participants to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Carcary, 2009; Mack, 2010).

I selected this meta-theory because it embraces participants' own construction of meaning of their reality. As researcher, I did not impose what I thought was right to the context or situation in which the participants found themselves (Mack, 2010). I was rather guided by them in terms of the unique needs for supportive school-community plans, and how they experienced their involvement in, and their development and implementation of such plans.

Another reason I selected this meta-theory is that it assisted me in understanding the participants' collective reality, although each participant possessed a personal and individualised meaning of reality. For the purpose of this study I aimed to gain insight into the participants' situation as members of a community who participated in an intervention and collaborated with schools in support of their school-communities (Mack, 2010). It was important for me to view the participants holistically and not from selected angles that might have contributed to challenges (Carcary, 2009).

1.5.3 **METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM**

I relied on Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA) as methodological paradigm. PRA is defined as an approach that seeks knowledge for the sake of social action, it is said to be concerned with human purposes (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). Researchers in this field assume that society is co-constructed and they play a collaborative role with participants. They are aware that individuals do not exist in isolation but are rather related to one another and the various environments (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). PRA aims to generate and gain knowledge and action for a specific problem, empowering people to engage in knowledge construction, and encouraging them to use their newly gained knowledge in their lives (Walter, 2009).

The reason I selected PRA is based on the fact that this approach involves participants in solving the problems they face. In this way, PRA allowed for a solution to be created by community volunteers in addressing the need to support schools in their communities (Webber, 1995). I embraced the PRA philosophy of collaboration and participation, and approached participants as experts (Walter, 2009). Throughout I valued the knowledge of the participants, regarding them as owning the research. As researcher, my role was that of facilitating discussions and processes that could potentially result in change. In addition, PRA
has been implemented as methodological paradigm in both the STAR and SHEBA projects since 2003, of which the current study forms part.

1.6 Broad Overview of Research Methodology

I selected a case study research design. This design allowed me to focus my attention, and to study and understand a selected issue of a broader phenomenon (Gerring, 2004; Maree, 2007). According to Gerring (2004:341), a case study design is best defined as an “in-depth study of a single unit where the researcher's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena”. Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) assert that a case study design allows for thick descriptions of people, places and events, with the purpose to “particularize not generalize” (Stake, 1995:8).

I used a descriptive case study design which is generally used to describe a phenomenon and its real-life context in the natural setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008). My reason for choosing a case study design is that I could study a single part within a larger project, namely, the development of supportive school-community plans by community volunteers within the SHEBA project. I also wanted to cover contextual conditions due to the belief that these may be relevant to the phenomenon under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

I selected the case conveniently, as this study forms part of a broader existing project. In addition, I purposefully selected the participants who had to meet certain selection criteria, stipulated in Chapter 3. The community volunteers who took part in the study therefore possessed certain traits and were able to provide the information required to address the research questions. Thus, fulfilling purposive sampling’s implication that selected participants should be able to enhance the understanding of an issue under study (Given, 2008).

For data generation and documentation I relied on PRA-based workshops, observation, field notes, and visual and audio visual techniques. PRA-based workshops focused on discussions on policy documents that could potentially be used by community volunteers, and secondly on planning supportive school-community plans. For the purpose of these sessions, community volunteers participated in small group discussions, documented their ideas on posters and then presented these to the larger group. Throughout, I relied on participant observation while facilitating PRA-based sessions and group discussions (Kumar, 2005; Maree, 2007). Furthermore, I visually documented (Mason, 2005) workshop artefacts (posters) and took photographs during the SHEBA-intervention. I used field notes (Wolfinger, 2002) to document my observations, experiences and reflections.

Co-facilitators included six female teachers from three high-risk schools who have been participating in the STAR project, as well as two volunteers from two of the school-communities. All facilitators were trained by Ronél Ferreira and Liesel Ebersohn in the SHEBA intervention, prior to the PRA-based workshops.
I thematically analysed and interpreted the visual and textual data obtained by following the steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The selected methodology allowed me to obtain insight into the participants’ experiences and ways of developing partnerships with schools. In this way I could recognise participants’ assets and strengths, and the way in which they used these in developing and implementing supportive school-community plans. More detailed discussions on the methodological choices I made follow in Chapter 3.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the course of this study, I was guided by relevant ethical guidelines. As my study formed part of the broader SHEBA project, informed consent (Flewitt, 2005; Silverman, 2000) had already been obtained from STAR facilitators and community volunteers prior to me entering the research field.

Participants were not misled with regard to the kind of data required from them or in terms of the content and purpose of this study (Silverman, 2000). No information about the study was withheld from the participants (Barret, 1995). Throughout the study, I respected the privacy of the participants and treated all information as confidential (Wiles et al., 2006). I did not disclose the participants’ identities and the data are being kept safe for a period of fifteen years at the University of Pretoria, as stipulated by the Ethics Committee, University of Pretoria (http://www.ais.up.ac.za/research/docs/code_ethics.pdf).

My study did not incur any physical or mental harm to participants (Eckstein, 2010; Oates et al., 2010). However, I remained aware of any potential emotional or psychological harm which could be caused by potentially sensitive discussions. If harm would have occurred, I was prepared to deal with it in a professional and confidential way (Barret, 1995; Patton, 2002), by debriefing the participants and then referring them for professional support (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

During the course of the study, participants were reminded that they were involved in the study voluntarily (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). If participants were to indicate the wish to withdraw from the study, they could do so at any time. Participants also had the right to withdraw any consent they gave at the conception of the study (Barret, 1995). I elaborate on the way in which I adhered to ethical guidelines in this study in Chapter 3.

1.8 MY ROLE AS RESEARCHER

My initial contact with SHEBA facilitators was in July 2011 when two fellow BEd (Honours) students and I fulfilled the role of field workers at the 2011 STAR colloquium. With the initiation of the SHEBA project my role changed from field worker to that of co-facilitator of workshops, observer and co-researcher. I continuously relied on reflexivity (Hughes, 2006; Hsuing, 2010) allowing me to interactively make meaning with participants and become aware of the situational dynamics while engaging in the process of reflection.
Throughout the study, I was aware of the values, beliefs and ideologies I held as a student and researcher. I respected the fact that it is important for participants to construct their own meaning without researchers imposing what they know or may have learned about the research context. I acknowledged the fact that although participants may have experienced similar challenges as researchers, they may have developed various, multiple truths from their experiences.

As stated, during the course of the study, I co-facilitated two workshops that took place in the Eastern Cape in July and October 2012. In co-facilitating PRA workshops, I was interacting with participants in a way that allowed reciprocal engagement and social, collective construction of knowledge and intervention strategies. My role furthermore involved observing participants as they interacted with one another during group discussions. I recorded these observations in my field notes. The role of being an active researcher was motivated by the paradigm I relied on, namely the interpretivist paradigm. I (as the researcher) thus wanted to embrace the participants’ construction of their own reality (Carcary, 2009; Mack, 2010).

Throughout, I considered the differences that could have affected the process of knowledge construction, such as age and gender, between the participants and myself (Hughes, 2006). However, these factors seemingly had little impact as respect was equally shared between the participants and researchers. In the process of interacting with participants and collectively constructing knowledge, I as researcher was taken to another level of understanding myself, my values and motives when entering a research field (Hughes, 2006).

1.9 QUALITY CRITERIA

In aiming to complete a rigorous study, I attended to the quality criteria of credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability and authenticity. Taking into account the interpretivist paradigm I relied on, I was actively involved in understanding and explaining the phenomenon the participants were experiencing. This role, as well as that of observer and co-facilitator of workshops, allowed me to obtain credible findings. The credibility of this study was further strengthened by the member-checking session I included (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Furthermore, I observed the research process throughout and was involved in the study for two years, first as a field worker (STAR) and then as researcher (SHEBA).

In an attempt to ensure transferability, I provide detailed descriptions of the experiences of participants as developers and implementers of supportive school-community plans in this mini-dissertation. It is essential to note that generalisability of findings was not my goal. Next, I aimed to ensure that findings were not elements of my biases and imaginations but rather derivations from the data obtained during the course of the study, striving to obtain confirmability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Even though it is difficult to remain objective in a
qualitative study, I attempted to provide findings that capture the experiences of the participants (Shenton, 2004).

In striving towards dependability, I report this study in detail and employed rigorous research practices (Shenton, 2004). In terms of authenticity, this study is evidence-based in the sense that data were generated with existing participants, addressing challenges (Jones, 2013). In Chapter 3, I elaborate on the way in which I strived towards completing a trustworthy study.

1.10 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE SCENE

Chapter 1 provides an introductory orientation, a broad impression of the study and rationale behind selecting the phenomenon I set out to explore. Prior to briefly introducing the selected paradigm, methodological choices and research design, I formulate research questions, state the purpose of the research and clarify key concepts. I also refer to my role as researcher, to ethical considerations and quality criteria.

CHAPTER 2: EXPLORATION OF EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Chapter 2, I explore literature related to the topic, discussing theory on volunteerism and the role and perceptions of community volunteers in the South African context. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on my selected theoretical framework, namely the asset-based approach.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROCESS

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the research process in terms of the research design and methodology I relied upon in undertaken empirical research. I indicate the selected methods of data generation, documentation and analysis, and explain my reasons for these choices. I conclude the chapter by discussing the ethical considerations and quality criteria of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 4, I present the results of the study in terms of the themes and sub-themes that emerged following the data analysis I completed. I also discuss the findings of the study when situating the results against the background of existing literature.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 incorporates the main findings of the study in my discussion of the research questions as formulated in Chapter 1. I draw conclusions and reflect on the limitations and potential contributions of the study. I conclude with recommendations for further research, training and practice.
1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I outlined the rationale and purpose of the study. I explained how I became involved in the SHEBA project and subsequently identified the focus of this study. I formulated the research questions and briefly explained how I explored these in terms of the selected research methodology. I briefly introduced the theoretical, epistemological and methodological stance I took, and also referred to ethical considerations, quality criteria and my role as researcher.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review I completed. I discuss existing theory and studies on volunteerism, specifically within the South African context. I also discuss policies that apply to the work of community volunteers, which were incorporated during discussions with participants that formed part of PRA-based workshops.

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CHAPTER 2
EXPLORATION OF EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I set the scene for this study by providing relevant background and explaining the rationale of the study. After stating the purpose, I also briefly introduced the methodological decisions I made and related these to the research questions formulated in section 1.3.

In this chapter, I discuss existing literature on volunteerism, the role of volunteers in the South African and global context, the policy documents discussed with the participants as part of the PRA-based workshops I co-facilitated, and the asset-based approach (my selected theoretical framework). Prior to proceeding with the study, I focused on understanding the concept of volunteerism or volunteering\(^5\), so that I could relate to the participants in this study. I also familiarised myself with the asset-based approach as the study involved participants recognising their (and that of their communities and schools) assets and strengths in order to develop supportive school-community plans. In the section on policy documents discussed with participants, I was guided by the voiced need of the participants to be informed of potential sources they could rely on when supporting their communities and schools.

2.2 VOLUNTEERING

In this section, I discuss the meaning of volunteering, as well as the benefits and challenges often experienced by volunteers.

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Volunteering takes different meanings in different settings when defined by different authors. In this section, I discuss volunteering in terms of its definition within the context of this study and the role of volunteers in primarily school settings. I also refer to the value of volunteering for people who pursue this route, as well as the challenges they may face. As literature on volunteering in South Africa is still emerging, I believe this study may add to the existing knowledge base of volunteering especially in the school-community context. This study could thus specifically shed light on the significance of volunteering in South Africa, in terms of the potential relationship between schools, volunteers and communities.

\(^5\) Even though volunteering and volunteerism can be regarded as synonyms, I have opted to use the concept volunteering in this study.
2.2.2 WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

According to the Fair Labour Standards Act (Young, 2004:4), a volunteer is “an individual who performs hours of service for a public agency (or organisation) for civic, charitable or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered”. In support of this definition, the state law in South Carolina, USA, defines a volunteer as “one who freely provides goods or services to any agency” (Young, 2004:4). As such, being a volunteer implies taking up an activity for no financial gain in order to benefit someone other than oneself (Papadakis et al., 2004).

Measham and Barnett (2007:1), as well as Penner (2002), perceive volunteering as “pro-social behaviour”, done out of one’s free will, without financial reward, to benefit either another individual, a group of people or a certain cause. This kind of behaviour is generally known as cooperative by nature. According to a study by Meier and Stutzer (2004) such pro-social behaviour will facilitate general life satisfaction. These authors further found that individuals who are happy increasingly opt for volunteering (Meier & Stutzer, 2004). In addition, an act of volunteering can be understood as having the potential of implementing community principles and values (Volunteer Now, 2011). By committing their time and effort, community volunteers in this study could potentially benefit learners, teachers and other community members (Volunteer Now, 2011; Perpek, 2012).

A volunteer is someone who upholds the spirit of service and wants what is best for society or for those she/he volunteers for (Perpek, 2012). Such people are perceived by Konoé (2011) as sensitive to discomfort and as individuals who have strong moral values that they would like to impart to society. Similarly, Penner (1995 as cited in Penner, 2002) found that people who score higher on a device that was used to measure personality traits correlating with volunteering are usually those who are prone to be helpful and not comfortable when other people are distressed. They are typically capable to function in a team and have social integrity.

Community volunteers in the context of this study refer to people who are able to work in teams and collaborate on ideas in order to support the schools they are involved in and the community at large. Konoé (2011) asserts that more often than not, volunteers are well-mannered individuals and possess good communication, leadership and interpersonal skills. According to Clary et al. (1998, as cited in Houle et al., 2005), volunteers are known for their concern about other people and their wellbeing.

Volunteers are said to be citizens who recognise needs and act on this recognition in order to fulfil that need or resolve unpleasant matters with an approach of social accountability (Perpek, 2012). In the community and schools they are involved with, community volunteers may come across many different challenges that need to be addressed. They will potentially take it upon themselves to resolve these challenges (Houle et al., 2005).
In this regard, Young (2004) perceives volunteering as an initiative that acknowledges the importance of societal responsibility where societal responsibility is demonstrated by people assisting others. Volunteering allows for a network of social relations, thereby promoting a connection between people and their communities, as well as contributing to a greater cause that is for the good of fellow citizens (Papadakis et al., 2004). Volunteering is furthermore regarded as a key channel through which values and principles of community advancement and sustainability are executed (Volunteer Now, 2011). It implies joint action which is aimed at safeguarding or promoting change (Volunteer Now, 2011).

Smith (1999) regards volunteering as an act of commitment and willingness performed for altruistic reasons. In this regard, Pink (2005) states that volunteering should be practiced based on one’s free will and not on coercion or obligation. Community volunteers are thus characterised by being helpful and productive in their endeavours in the community (Battersby, 2005).

Due to the fact that community volunteers in the current study are based in the community that they support, they have the potential to positively influence community members and become mediators between the local schools and the community, closing potential gaps that may exist between these schools and the community (Penner, 2002). By virtue of the kind of tasks they could engage in, community volunteers in this study seemed likely to lead by example and instil helpfulness when I set out exploring this possibility (Crocoll, 2001).

Community volunteers are viewed as important resources in the public sector, states Brundy (1995). They are a valuable resource in some institutions and are therefore recognised for their fruitfulness (Hager & Brudney, 2004). They tend to complement permanent employees in the sense that volunteers may add acquired skills to an institution or project (Brundy, 1995). In undertaking this study, I believed that community volunteers could potentially assist teachers in support of learners. Engaging in volunteering could potentially also provide community volunteers with the opportunity to make collective decisions, and cooperate and agree about what can be done to improve local schools and communities (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

### 2.2.3 Benefits of Volunteering in South Africa

Community volunteers can benefit in the sense that they may acquire knowledge, skills and valuable training through workshops and reflection sessions (Seiberg, 2010; Battersby, 2005). In this regard, being a community volunteer may provide the opportunity to learn new skills and apply them in the presence of others so that if mistakes occur they can be corrected (Houle et al., 2005). Volunteering can thus present a learning and self-development experience to community volunteers (Houle et al., 2005). As a result, volunteering holds the potential to also boost confidence and self-esteem, while allowing for friendships and partnerships to be formed and strengthened (Battersby, 2005; Simango, 2006).
Community volunteers may get the opportunity to put their talents to use and be empowered in the process of volunteering (Simango, 2006). In addition, volunteering can allow people to identify career options and goals, as well as to establish and build personal and professional networks (VSO & RAISA, 2011). In the context of this study, community volunteers could potentially become affiliated with other stakeholders such as government departments and churches with the aim of bringing services to the community and building lasting relations (Alexander & Bakir, 2010).

In a study by Hager and Brudney (2004), it was found that volunteers can benefit organisations by helping them save costs and provide services that the organisations cannot provide due to a lack of human resources. Closely related, Haski-Leventhal (2009) states that community volunteers may add value to services, promote social harmony, and create public trust. In Crocoll’s (2001) view volunteering provides an effective way to influence public participation in non-profit or governmental operations and decision-making processes. In support of this view, Burke (2001:49) states that in most cases volunteers “improve citizenship” and serve as an efficient channel “to educate” individuals about the virtues of public service.

Furthermore, in a survey study conducted by Hager and Brudney (2004), it was found that community volunteering can build strong communities characterised by trust, peace and hope. Engaging in volunteering may also provide community volunteers with the opportunity to make collective decisions, cooperate and agree on what can be done to improve schools and communities (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

When applying these benefits to the context of volunteers supporting vulnerable communities in South Africa, it becomes evident that volunteer services, and most importantly the commitment of community volunteers, is required and valued as social development is collaboratively promoted. In the context of this study, it was foreseen that community volunteers could potentially assist teachers in support of learners and the broader community.

2.2.4 CHALLENGES GENERALLY FACED BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A distinct challenge that may affect volunteering in the South African context relates to lack of funding and sponsorships (Alexandra & Bakir, 2010). Some activities that community volunteers want to embark on require monetary funding to obtain the necessary materials for implementation of the activities (Alexandra & Bakir, 2010). Generally and closely related, unemployment and poverty may also affect the decision to volunteer (Blinkhoff et al. 2001, as cited in Akintola, 2010).

As per the definition of volunteering stated earlier and based on the fact that a number of families in rural areas of South Africa consist of elderly people who financially support their families through old age grants, some community members may find it difficult to engage in
volunteering (Papadakis et al., 2004; May, 2008, as cited in Stats SA, 2012). Community volunteers in the current study will for example be responsible for seeking sponsorships to implement the supportive plans they identified, or they will have to rely on themselves for this purpose. Furthermore, in South Africa “financial, material and human resources” are generally lacking in public schools (Akintola, 2010:2).

Gomez and Gunderson (2003) state that community volunteering can divide social classes if community volunteers who receive a stipend perceive non-paid volunteers as inferior to themselves. Consequently, prejudice and discrimination may be experienced. If community volunteers with better sponsorships are however not trained to work in disadvantaged contexts, the outcomes of their work may not necessarily be positive (Gomez & Gunderson, 2003).

Closely related, Laverie and McDonald (2007) explain that a negative outcome of volunteering may be the effect of community volunteers doing something good yet not being aware of the level of (specific) training and experience demanded of them. If specific skills are required, some people may also be prevented from becoming volunteers in cases where they perceive themselves as lacking these skills (Laverie & McDonald, 2007).

Gomez and Gunderson (2003) conducted a study determining the relationship between volunteer work and family demands. Their study revealed that family time may be consumed by volunteer work especially when community volunteers are eager to gain as much skills as possible. Community volunteers may feel that it is more important to be at work and gain experience than to be at home, or that they are more needed at work than at home, thus neglecting their families and other responsibilities (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2002). Eager community volunteers may also be overly optimistic and strive to take over the job of paid employees. This may cause conflict and suppress the smooth running or performance of duties (Brent, 2000).

Another prominent challenge relates to limited or insufficient training of volunteers in South Africa (Ngubeni, 2012). Some areas of community volunteering may need certain skills and approaches even if these are not obtained through formal training (Ngubeni, 2012). Community volunteers often feel inadequately equipped for the tasks at hand, experiencing the need for training and skill acquisition.

According to Claassens (2004), it is imperative for volunteers to be trained in their designated area of functioning so as to understand their roles. Claassens (2004) further states that the training of volunteers implies the potential for them to focus on offering the services they are volunteering for. In order to serve the schools and communities in which they are involved, community volunteers require some basic skills and training, some of which are needed to protect the community volunteers and those that they serve (Claassens, 2004).
In addition, training will lead to improved intervention and service delivery. Due to the fact that community volunteers typically function in adverse circumstances in terms of poverty, crime and high levels of illiteracy, training has the potential to support them in dealing with the challenges they come across as they interact with schools and communities.

A lack of skills on the other hand, can result in limited support from volunteers for learners, teachers and the community at large. It is evident that basic skills are necessary to be an effective volunteer. This can be witnessed for example when community volunteers get involved in sewing and vegetable garden activities (Attanasio & Székely, 1999) or when they provide nursing services to bedridden community members (Akintola, 2004). Akintola (2004) emphasises that in most cases HIV/AIDS patients are discharged from hospitals within a short period of time and family members are not provided with the training or necessary skills to take care of them. Community volunteers often need to intervene, but they need the relevant skills to deal with community members who are affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS. To this end, one of the principals in Simango’s (2004) study mentioned that some community members found it difficult to volunteer in school settings as they thought they lacked the necessary knowledge and skills.

Based on the need for community volunteers to be equipped with some skills and to possess knowledge of how to support vulnerable communities, I identified and discussed some policies with the participants of this study as part of the SHEBA intervention. These policies apply to the South African context of vulnerability, and could potentially equip the participants with relevant knowledge to support vulnerable communities or the schools they worked in at the time. I discuss these policies at a later stage, in section 2.6.

In the following sections I explore the context of high-risk communities and school-communities, the role of volunteers in supporting these communities, as well as partnerships between teachers and volunteers to provide care and support. These sections are discussed in terms of both the global and South African discourses.

2.3 HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES

Many countries are rich in terms of culture, but face a number of challenges including poverty, high levels of illiteracy, a problematic health sector, child-headed households and malnutrition (Statistic South Africa, 2012). Although community volunteers may not be able to alleviate most challenges experienced, their efforts seem to make a difference in the regions where they work (Gomez & Gunderson, 2003). The assets and resources that volunteers capitalise on may benefit the schools and communities they reach (Landsberg et al., 2005).

2.3.1 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES

According to a study by Faulkner and Davies (2005), high-risk communities are characterised by challenging health issues and therefore require support. High-risk communities are
exposed to threats that at times may endanger people's lives and their circumstances (Faulkner & Davies, 2005). In addition to Faulkner and Davies' (2005) view of high-risk communities, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2011) state that these communities are faced with hardships not only of health but also by social, physical and natural (such as natural disasters) threats that shake them and leave them exposed. Such communities, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2011) adds, are susceptible to an increased number of misconducts such as crime, children engaging in substance abuse and teenage pregnancy, who could benefit from the efforts of volunteers.

High-risk school-communities are considered to be those that have overcrowded classrooms where learners who require teachers' individual attention, do not get it (Thürmann et al., 2010). Such school-communities are said to lack the necessary services such as remedial educators for the benefit of the learners (Thürmann et al., 2010). Parents’ involvement is also often lacking in high-risk school-communities. Although codes of conduct exist in these school-communities, learners may engage in risky behaviours such as gangsterism with some eventually dropping out of school (Thürmann et al., 2010). Motivation seems to be low and learners typically underperform (Thürmann et al., 2010).

Generally, high-risk communities and school-communities are considered a hub for misfortune. These communities have limited capacity to cope with adversity and typically require support. According to Valls and Kyriakides (2013), European schools often struggle with educational achievement. Although they have come up with the idea of cooperative learning, it does not seem to work and little success is achieved, resulting in underachievement and educational needs not being met (Valls & Kyriakides, 2013).

### 2.3.2 South African discourses on high-risk communities

South Africa is characterised by three adversities that particularly puts the country at high-risk, namely unemployment (poverty), education challenges and health-related challenges. Although attempts have been made to collaborate in alleviating these, South Africa still remains divided (National Planning Commission, 2011). It is divided in terms of economic prosperity between the less and the better privileged, with resources also being unevenly distributed (Pansieri, 2011).

Even though statistics show that at least 86,4% of South Africans above the age of 15 years can read and write, many people in the country live in extreme poverty and hunger (International Association for Community Development [IACD], 2009). The Statistics South Africa (2012) report shows that 71,1% of black African children live in low-income households. In addition to the high poverty rate, South Africa is also characterised by an increased level of unemployment, with approximately 45% of South Africans being employed (Saidi & Karuri, 2006; Stats SA, 2012).
Most South Africans are perceived to lack the necessary skills for employment, resulting in them opting for jobs such as cleaning or general occupations (National Planning Commission, 2011). Despite a lack of relevant skills among South Africans, it will be difficult to reach full employment if inequality remains, if policies and programmes are not conducive to human development and if more pressure is put on natural resources (Pansieri, 2011).

A mismatch can also be seen between higher education institutions and the job market, which results in graduates possessing skills that may not be relevant to what the job market may require. People therefore end up being unable to find jobs (National Planning Commission, 2011). South Africa’s failure to create more sustainable employment opportunities in the midst of challenges has had a negative impact on the standard of living of its inhabitants and has created an unstable society characterised by a battle for resources (International Association for Community Development [IACD], 2009).

The unemployability of South Africans can partly be related to the quality of education in the country. The education system and the provision of education is currently a challenge in South Africa, and it has thus been reported that “the quality of education provided to the majority is poor” (National Planning Commission, 2011:3). Even though it is important to provide knowledge that equips South Africans with innovation in an ever-changing society, this has not been achieved by the country’s education system (Saidi & Karuri, 2006).

It is worth noting that a “strong education system” is necessary in South Africa to alleviate poverty and inequality (National Planning Commission, 2011:263). Such a system has to start remediating education from early childhood development through to the higher education and training sector. Such a system holds the potential of improving the skills base of South Africa and therefore educate for innovation. Although there has been some progress since 1994 (following the end of apartheid), low-quality education has persisted especially in less privileged areas where resources are limited (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Another factor that constitutes a high-risk for many South Africans relates to health. Between the year 2003 and 2011, chronic illness has increased from “10,3% for individuals in the age group 18 to 49 years, to 59% for individuals over the age of 70 years” (National Planning Commission, 2011:20). The HIV/AIDS pandemic has also taken its toll, as it has been reported as affecting at least 17,8% adults in the country since 2009 (National Planning Commission, 2011). A major challenge related to HIV/AIDS is that most infected people struggle to access medical care on time, with some not being informed about treatment plans, while others find themselves too far from health facilities and unable to pay for transport to reach such facilities. The involvement of volunteers may however address some of these challenges.

Although literature on community volunteers in South Africa is still emerging, some studies have been conducted in the field of volunteering. In a study that set out to “explore the
challenges experienced by volunteer caregivers of people living with HIV/AIDS”, Akintola (2008:1) found that volunteers who take care of people living with HIV/AIDS are recruited through care programmes which receive little support from government in terms of funds, training and medication. Volunteers are, however, seen as useful in households where family members do not know how to deal with a person living with HIV, where “50% of HIV/AIDS affected households made use of volunteers” (Steinberg et al., 2002, as cited Akintola, 2008:356). Such volunteers are seen as competent, as they have learnt on the job what the needs of AIDS patients are (Akintola, 2010).

2.4 THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES

In this section I discuss the global and South African role of volunteers in high-risk communities and school-communities.

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Community volunteers have been found able to develop communities through their dedication and commitment over time (Volunteer Now, 2011). As various communities may have development goals, community volunteers may play an important role in supporting others to reach these (Volunteer Now, 2011).

2.4.2 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES

In addition to developing their own skills, community volunteers can support communities to become better places to live in (VSO & RAISA, 2011, Alexander & Bakir, 2010). In review of previous international research on volunteering by McCloughan et al. (2011), Dolan et al. (2008, as cited in McCloughan et al., 2011:9) found that it is generally agreed that to some extent volunteers “build a sense of purpose and belonging within their communities”.

Similarly, Smith and Bornstein (2001) conducted a study on volunteering and social activism, indicating that diverse interpretations of volunteering are shaped by different contexts and experiences. In their study, volunteering was found to be fostering participation that holds the potential of contributing positively to social change (Smith & Bornstein, 2001). Additionally, volunteering can positively change society’s attitude and the way they view volunteers and the work they do (Smith & Bornstein, 2001).

In a cross-national study by Patel (2005) on civic service and volunteering in South Africa, people engaged in volunteering for reasons such as the achievement of self-reliance, the empowerment of individuals and communities, and the fostering of civic responsibility. In Zimbabwe, it was found (Patel, 2005) that volunteering provides an opportunity for volunteers
to collaborate and reach mutuality where both volunteers and receivers of volunteer services are less fortunate and dependent on each other for survival and support.

In other countries such as Zambia and Malawi, volunteers mainly engage in the act of volunteering for the purpose of earning stipends (Patel, 2005). Young people may also engage in volunteer work in order to gain skills and work experience and therefore be exposed to the job market, equipping them to seize job opportunities, when these arise (Patel, 2005).

One of the roles of volunteers in high-risk communities is to assist individuals in the communities, as well as learners in school in prevailing adverse circumstances and collaboratively working towards improving these (Faulkner & Davies, 2005). Specifically, these authors (Faulkner & Davies, 2005) argue that volunteers are useful in high-risk communities where there are health issues, as they can assist in improving the health conditions of those they work with.

According to the findings of their study which was conducted in the United Kingdom, Faulkner and Davies (2005) hypothesise that there is a link between volunteers’ involvement and improvement of the wellbeing of the recipients of volunteers’ services. As such, volunteering is considered to be useful in high-risk communities and schools as it benefits those who are served in improving their wellbeing, and assists them to rely on their inner strengths (Faulkner & Davies, 2005).

2.4.3 SOUTH AFRICAN DISCOURSES ON THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOL-COMMUNITIES

In South Africa, the field of community volunteering may bring about unity within a context of diversity (Akintola, 2008). Cohesion among community volunteers can potentially be built and their lives, as well as the lives of those they serve, can be improved (Konoé, 2011). Although there may not be enough support for volunteering initiatives, as community volunteers realise their capabilities and strengths, they may utilise these for the benefit of the community at large (VSO & RAISA, 2011). Community volunteers may for example increase access to healthcare especially in remote areas (Campbell et al., 2008). Therefore, the act of volunteering can lead to inclusion of community volunteers when decisions are made, as well as to a sense of belonging (Konoé, 2011).

Against the background of high incidences of unemployment in South Africa, the services of community volunteers are valued and may improve the perception of other community members of them being worthy and able to make a positive contribution (Ngubeni, 2012). Some community volunteers become concerned when they see limited infrastructure and neglected properties, which compels them to intervene (Konoé, 2011). For this reason, some community volunteers engage in volunteering to build community resilience and teach good practices in terms of making a social contribution and looking out for one another. This may
contribute to community volunteers assisting and advising members of the community to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to visit health facilities regularly (Konoé, 2011; Maree, 2007).

As representatives of the community, community volunteers can establish relationships with various governmental departments, NGOs, religious groups and other key role players in the community. These could become useful assets for the establishment of school-community partnerships in terms of financial assistance for community volunteers’ projects or helping them access the broader community (Metz et al., 2003).

In a research report by Smith and Bornstein (2001), it was found that community stakeholders such as NGOs fulfil a crucial role when collaborating with volunteers. The participants of that particular study stated that they formed partnerships with NGOs to collaboratively contribute efforts towards “a bigger goal” (Smith & Bornstein, 2001:28). Participants furthermore highlighted the importance of resources from both sides being brought to the fore in order for these to complement each other when developing a community (Smith & Bornstein, 2001).

In promoting collaboration between communities and schools, there is a conceptual framework that encourages care and support of learning and teaching. Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is a framework that offers a “comprehensive, coordinated, multi-sectoral response to address the barriers to teaching and learning” (Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa, 2010:11). The relevance of the CSTL framework to this study is based on the fact that one of its goals is to collaboratively serve high-risk, under-resourced communities. In the current study, community volunteers namely work collaboratively (with each other and with teachers) to serve high-risk learners and community members. In addition, community volunteers in this study involve relevant external partners when required, who can play a vital role in supporting high-risk schools and communities.

2.5 PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT

In this section I discuss the partnerships between teachers and community volunteers, in the global and South African context.

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, community volunteers displayed the potential to support schools or community members on a broad level by performing tasks that could not be performed if they were not present (Carpenter & Myers, 2007). In addition to supporting teachers, volunteers’ potential role could include becoming resources and being useful to learners and the rest of the school-community (Feirman, 2001). They can develop activities that may assist learners individually or in groups, recognise learners’ strengths and work on capitalising these (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007). As such, I regarded the community volunteers in this
study as potential assistants to teachers who could support teachers and vulnerable children, as well as their families within the school context and the community at large (Carpenter & Myers, 2007), when I set out to explore this topic.

2.5.2 GLOBAL DISCOURSES ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT

In their “education volunteer call to action” United Way Worldwide (2011) faced the challenge of lowering the rate of school dropouts. In addressing this challenge the organisation called on volunteers to assist with reading in schools, tutoring and mentoring learners. United Way Worldwide has also documented the Minnesota Reading Corp evidence that when learners are assisted with reading, their reading skills and marks improve (United Way Worldwide, 2011).

In the case of tutoring, Minnesota Reading Corp’s volunteers realised the improvement of one-on-one tutoring sessions whereby learners’ classroom behaviour improved for the better (United Way Worldwide, 2011). With regards to mentoring, volunteers have been witnessed to instil cultural, social, educative and economic values to children in and outside the school premises (United Way Worldwide, 2011). Community volunteers in the current study have the potential to collaborate with schools in fulfilling such roles and responsibilities.

In a study by the Center for Mental Health in Schools (2007), volunteers were observed to assist teachers and schools in addressing barriers to learning. In the study, volunteers’ roles differed from assisting learners in classrooms while facilitating improved performance, to providing teachers with general assistance they required in the classroom or within the school (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007).

In supporting learners in the classroom, the volunteers for example spent time with disruptive learners to keep them calm so that the teacher could continue with lessons without the class being seriously disrupted (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007). Teachers seemingly appreciated the work of the volunteers and felt relieved as some struggling learners were able to receive additional attention (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007). Some teachers reported that it felt good to have an extra adult supporting them and that they could subsequently engage in more creative activities (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007).

In some instances, volunteers can be useful by assisting in the school library (Joshua, 2012). As a way of closing a possible existing gap between schools and communities, the libraries that volunteers assist in are typically located on school premises and are open for public use (Joshua, 2012; Chestnov, 2012). Volunteers can therefore assist learners, teachers and community members when they visit the library. This may in turn promote a partnership of trust between the school and community. In addition, such a library system can promote a conducive learning environment that will contribute to lifelong learning, not only of learners, but also of teachers and the community at large (Joshua, 2012).
2.5.3 SOUTH AFRICAN DISCOURSES ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE CARE AND SUPPORT

In a study conducted by Duvenhage (2009), volunteer care workers fulfilled the role of facilitators with young vulnerable children. In her study of children living in a poor urban community in South Africa, Duvenhage (2009:4) aimed to “explore the experiences of volunteer workers as they facilitate an intervention programme with the aim of strengthening resilience”. The outcome of this study proved to be successful as volunteer care workers reported that they were able to meet children’s daily needs and that they were given the chance to expose children to learning through play (Duvenhage, 2009). Not only were volunteer care workers reportedly useful to children, they also gained information that was beneficial to them, such as “parental skills” through working with the children (Duvenhage, 2009:57).

The initiative of Volunteer Africa32 (VA32, 2012) has successfully intervened in schools in the Eastern Cape region by providing computers, and volunteers to teach learners computer literacy. They achieved this through volunteers visiting schools in rural areas where resources are limited and computer skills lacking, or most of the time not taught at all. Volunteers have taken it upon themselves to empower learners and teachers at these schools. With the expansion of the project, these volunteers utilised a mobile computer lab with which they could teach computer skills to community members (VA32, 2012).

Simango (2004) has found that volunteers cannot only help schools with administrative duties, but that they can also serve as teacher aids, helping with extra lessons and coaching sport activities within the school context. It is thus possible to involve volunteers in extracurricular activities with learners (Simango, 2004). According to Gallagher et al. (1997), such extracurricular activities may include activities such as athletics, dancing or any other activity that learners are interested in and volunteers are able to assist with.

2.6 POLICY DOCUMENTS THAT MAY ASSIST COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS IN SUPPORTING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Based on the challenges often faced by high-risk communities in South Africa, community volunteers may benefit by being informed about current policies applicable to the South African context. In this section I discuss these policies, and their relevance to the work of community volunteers.

2.6.1 INTRODUCTION

Baseline discussions during the 2011 STAR colloquium with teachers who co-facilitated the SHEBA intervention, as well as with community volunteers who had participated in the preceding STAR project, showed the relevance of discussing policies with community volunteers working in high-risk school-communities. These policies include the:
• Inclusive Education Policy (Department of Education, 2001),
• Children’s Rights Act (Robinson, 2003),
• Child Justice Act (Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, 2010),
• Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2009), and
• Sexual Offences Act (Act No. 32 of 2007).

The Divorce Act (Act 70 of 1979) was later added based on a request by the participants following the first PRA intervention session. After foregrounding the essence of these policies in the sections that follow, I contemplate the potential value of each for community volunteers supporting vulnerable communities in South Africa.

2.6.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

Inclusive Education Policy (Education White Paper 6, 2001) has come to be understood most commonly as the commitment to construct a quality education system which may result in a more democratic society. The core idea of inclusion is that schools accommodate “all learners” despite their adversity or style of learning (Landsberg, 2005:4). This policy therefore focuses on “accommodating diversity of learning needs and learners who are excluded from the process of learning” (Education White Paper 6, 2001:11).

Following implementation of the Education White Paper 6 (2001), some South African schools have been converted into full-service schools whereby learners experiencing barriers to learning are accommodated without being referred to special schools. Mainstream education has also been adjusted to respond to individual learners’ needs. However, the Ministry of Education acknowledges that full-service schools have only been achieved in some districts such as Fezile Dabi district in the Free State (Education White Paper 6, 2001). It has thus not yet been implemented broadly.

Inclusive Education Policy implies that the education system will be familiar with and respond to the needs and expectations of diverse learners (Education White Paper 6, 2001). The policy was formulated in such a way that the needs of diverse learners are met and accommodated (Education White Paper 6, 2001). Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy implies a collaborative, preventive and intervention approach whereby the role of teachers and parents in supporting learners with special needs is considered as significant (Education White Paper 6, 2001). As such, a holistic approach is adopted in this policy.

Inclusive Education Policy therefore aims to enable an education system that will provide special needs education to all learners who require it. An important feature of this policy is that each and every child will have access to education regardless of his/her background, and that young people who drop out of school will be able to return to school, according to the policy. In this way, the development and extension of children’s participation can be
promoted and may motivate learners to reach their full potential. Inclusive Education Policy attempts to change attitudes in the teaching and learning arena. It also encourages faith in the system that learners’ learning needs will be met.

2.6.2.1 Purpose of Inclusive Education Policy

As stated, the purpose of Inclusive Education Policy is to enable the schooling system, more specifically that all schools effectively address, embrace and teach learners with diverse needs. The policy attempts to promote schools where all learners are accommodated with their unique styles of learning, race, culture, religion and ability. Inclusive Education Policy supports learners by involving all relevant role-players.

Although concerns such as practicality of the policy, the level of teachers’ competence to teach diverse learners, communication flow between learners, teachers and parents, and the safety of infrastructure for use by physically disabled learners are often raised, this policy aims to provide safe, relevant and sufficient learning opportunities and experiences to all learners. The purpose of the policy also includes challenges such as HIV/AIDS and children facing other “infectious diseases” (Department of Education, 2001:8). Despite the possibility of stigma and stereotypes in general society, this policy aims not to discriminate against learners facing such challenges, but rather to provide them with quality education like all other learners.

2.6.2.2 Relevance of Inclusive Education Policy for community volunteers

As stated earlier, community volunteers in South Africa may provide support within school settings. Some community volunteers can for example assist learners with homework after school hours (Martin, 2012). To this end, knowledge of school-related policies and classroom practices is regarded as important for volunteers entering school settings. As community volunteers typically work in resource-constrained areas where they may not receive formal training on for example how to work with learners implementing different learning styles (Martin, 2012), knowledge of Inclusive Education Policy may provide a gateway for them to provide support to vulnerable learners, as well as to teachers in schools.

The potential value of knowledge about Inclusive Education Policy for community volunteers lies in the preparation of a responsible, responsive and informed community that is willing to work in schools and communities with learners from different cultural backgrounds (Landsberg et al., 2005). Such insight has the potential of transforming attitudes towards teaching and learning. Community volunteers are often eager to assist learners to reach their potential (Berger, 2006). When fulfilling the role of a teacher’s aid in class, thus extending the hands of a teacher, community volunteers are required to be familiar with the education system and how it works (Berger, 2006). This includes being informed about current policy, such as the policy on Inclusive Education.
The value of knowledge about Inclusive Education Policy for community volunteers furthermore relates to the essence of the process of learning as compared to the product (Dixon, 2005). Inclusive Education Policy acknowledges that every child can learn and need support. This emphasises the reality of not all children learning in the same manner and at the same pace. In this regard, according to Inclusive Education Policy, community volunteers may scaffold learners especially in cases where teachers cannot attend to all learners (Dixon, 2005). Against this background and the potential value of having knowledge of the policy, it seemed important for the participants in this study to understand the policy and its functionality, for them to be able to support learning and performance in schools.

2.6.3 CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ACT

The Children’s Rights Act (Act No. 38 of 2005, www.gov.za/documents/index,) provides guidelines in support of children’s dignity, equality and freedom in a democratic South Africa (Eckman, 2001). This act prohibits detrimental conduct of and/or against children and it implies proper and fair treatment in terms of legal matters (Eckman, 2001). The act stipulates the rights of children and what the responsibility of parents are in ensuring that their children’s rights are respected, such as the right to a name and nationality, and to be taken care of.

Children are generally regarded as a vulnerable group of people in South Africa (Stats SA, 2012). Children who have lost both their parents through death (Statistic South Africa, 2012), children whose parents are infected by HIV (Duvenhage, 2009), child-headed households, children exposed to poverty and lack of basic services (Cannon & Snyder, 2013) and children who are abused (Stats SA, 2012) form part of this vulnerable group of South Africans. In support of such children, the policy on Children’s Rights is rooted in children’s right to be treated fairly (Children’s Act, 2005).

The South African Children's Rights Act protects children from harm and respects their interests (Eckman, 2001). This act implies that inferiority and inequality of resource provision, especially in terms of education, healthcare and socioeconomic needs, is addressed and improved. It furthermore implies developing children’s potential through access to education and equal distribution of resources, believing in each and every child’s ability to reach his or her full potential, while adults fulfil a supportive role in children’s learning, growth and development.

The essence and realisation of the Children’s Rights Act lie in government’s delivery of services and facilities, as well as in support by society (Robinson, 2003). The Children’s Rights Act stipulates that it is imperative for those involved in a child’s life to act in the best interest of the child and model the best possible conduct. Parents and teachers are regarded as being in a good position to know children and support them according to the Children’s Rights Act.
2.6.3 Purpose of the Children’s Rights Act

The Children’s Rights Act aims to protect children who are defenceless. The aim is to hear the voices of children and to not discriminate against them. As such, the Act aims to promote the wellbeing of children and of society at large (Abrahams & Matthews, 2011), and to support autonomy in their growth and development. This Act informs parents, care-givers, courts of law and society at large about what children are entitled to and how they are supposed to be treated (Abrahams & Matthews, 2011). Treating children as stipulated in the Act and protecting them is regarded as acting in their best interest.

Broadly speaking, the Children’s Rights Act provides a measure to make people aware of the holisticty of children’s development. Resources that may promote education, for example, will not only exist in their own right, they will also be “intertwined with the socio-economic, cultural and political characteristics” (Robinson, 2003:13). This relates to the fact that children function, grow and learn at home, at school and in the community, in both formal and informal settings (Education White Paper 6, 2001).

2.6.3.2 Relevance of the Children’s Rights Act for community volunteers

Knowledge on children’s rights may inform community volunteers about how to treat and respect the children they work with. Knowing children’s rights may also provide community volunteers with insight into how to identify vulnerable children and what their role may be in intervening and/or referring these children for help (Abrahams & Matthews, 2011). According to Abrahams and Matthews (2011), constitutional measures have been taken in the past in order to remedy negativity that has often been experienced by children and their families. Community volunteers need to be informed of such measures to promote these in the lives of children and the community at large (Cannon & Snyder, 2013).

Due to changing family organisations and disintegration of family structures, the number of children living on the streets has increased over recent years (Robinson, 2013). Many children live in child-headed households or are raised by their grandparents (Eckman, 2001). When community volunteers support such children, knowledge about how to work with children from different households and contexts of vulnerability may assist them in their task (Wilson et al., 2007).

In this regard, in cases where care and support is lacking in a child’s family, community volunteers need to be informed about suitable measures and who to consult when a specific need arises (Abrahams & Matthews, 2011). This emphasises the importance of community volunteers having access to or liaising with relevant stakeholders on behalf of children so that vulnerable children can be taken care of (Wilson et al., 2007). However, permission from a child’s family still needs to be obtained by the volunteer and all actions must be in the best interest of the child (Flewitt, 2005). By being informed about the Children’s Rights Act, community volunteers will potentially know how to respond to children in need of support.
2.6.4 **CHILD JUSTICE ACT**

The Child Justice Act focuses on keeping children from the justice system, safe with their parents or legal guardians (Child Justice Act, 2008). It aims to involve children in beneficial programmes that will keep them away from crime and corrupt conduct. The Child Justice Act therefore focuses on how children are managed within the justice system. Fair treatment of children with the child’s wellbeing as a priority is important in terms of this Act.

According to the Act, each child’s case is carefully evaluated and scrutinised in a way that may result in limited contact with the justice system (Child Justice Act, 2008). This is often achieved through an established preliminary inquiry which aims to transform previous adverse practices that did not adequately and sufficiently deal with children’s cases, but had instead resulted in imprisonment. The Act propagates the best place for children as being with their parents or at school, learning rather than standing trial for immature criminal offences.

As such, the meaning of this Act lies in the belief that imprisonment should be the last option for child offenders and that imprisonment should not be prolonged (Child Justice Act, 2008), due to the negative impact of imprisonment on children. The Child Justice Act (2008) furthermore emphasises the importance of collaboration with government departments when dealing with matters of child justice. Such collaboration may lead to effective decision making about child punishment, allowing for a holistic view and assessment of the child. Partnership for the purpose of reinforcing a child’s justice system is viewed as significant in the Child Justice Act, as it promotes cooperation and communication that are beneficial to the safety of children.

### 2.6.4.1 Purpose of the Child Justice Act

As indicated, the purpose of the Child Justice Act is to protect the rights of children and provide them with justice. The Act focuses on minimising children’s contact with the criminal justice system and views imprisonment as the last alternative and suitable for the shortest applicable period of time (Child Justice Act, 2008). The aim of the Act is to prevent children from being arrested; and if they do get arrested, to discharge them as soon as possible into the care of their parents, guardians or other suitable adults (Child Justice Act, 2008).

The primary aim of the Child Justice Act thus entails diverting children away from the formal justice system. Although the child will be held responsible for committing a crime, formal court proceedings are avoided (Sloth-Nielsen & Gallinette, 2004). Diversion is initiated for the purpose of promoting social security and placing a child at the best possible place other than prison.

The Child Justice Act encourages the spirit of union in dealing with and preventing child offences (Badenhorst, 2012). It upholds the belief that child injustice can be challenging if
handled by only one government department, but that through collaboration, it can be resolved and children’s rights protected. The ultimate aim is to ensure safer neighbourhoods and raise “law-abiding”, responsible, productive citizens (Child Justice Act, 2008).

2.6.4.2 Relevance of the Child Justice Act for community volunteers

Community volunteers can initiate programmes that may prevent children from getting into contact with the justice system (Child Justice Act, 2008). Community volunteers can thus assist in intervening with cases involving children through supportive programmes that may help children learn and develop at the same time. In addition, community volunteers may promote the reduction of stigma of children who become involved in criminal deeds, by educating other community members about the justice system, children's behaviour and the possibility of not fully understanding what they are involved in (Child Justice Act, 2008). Such support efforts have the potential of building a strong sense of trust, ensuring public safety and becoming part of children’s development (Wilson et al., 2007).

For community volunteers to be able to mediate and impart important information concerning the Child Justice Act, they need to acquaint themselves with the content of the Act (Child Justice Act, 2008). Community members are able to raise awareness at schools and in communities about children's bad conduct and what could be done to prevent it (Cannon & Snyder, 2013). Building and maintaining relationships with government departments can facilitate the process of prevention and reaching the community at large to do the same (Child Justice Act, 2008).

2.6.5 POLICY ON HIV/AIDS AND TB

The policy on HIV/AIDS and TB (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB management policy for the public service, 2009, www.gov.za/documents/index) focuses on educating the public about the meaning, spread and prevention, as well as the management of, and the “co-epidemic” nature of HIV/AIDS and TB. This policy aims to reach multitudes of people and provide them with essential information about HIV/AIDS and TB.

The meaning of the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB lies in the criticality of factors such as HIV/AIDS and education, the practice of safe sexual intercourse and commitment to testing and counselling. In this policy, relevant role players are cautioned and provided with guidelines on how to manage the pandemics of HIV/AIDS and TB. As such, the essence of the policy is to inform the public about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and TB within the public sector. Furthermore, in this policy (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009), employers and public sector role players are made aware of the important role they may fulfil in the prevention of the pandemics. Additionally, the policy implies that intervention strategies can be extended to the community at large (Snell & Janney, 2000).
The Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB propagates respect and fair treatment towards those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS and also promotes gender equality in the workplace regardless of health status. It urges for safe work environments as a measure of contributing to the management of HIV/AIDS and TB. The emphasis falls on collaboration and cooperation, active involvement and participation in order to overcome dual infection and not discriminate against people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS and TB.

2.6.5.1 Purpose of the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB

The Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB consists of various components that can be understood as its objectives. These components, or objectives, are:

- prevention of HIV/AIDS and TB
- treatment, care and support
- human rights and access to justice, and
- research, monitoring and evaluation.

(Draft HIV/AIDS and TB management for the public service, 2009:24).

Under the component of prevention of HIV/AIDS and TB, the purpose is to reduce HIV infections in the public sector through health education and health promotion, among other measures. With treatment, care and support, the aim is to reduce mortality, and the impact of HIV/AIDS and TB in collaboration with interested parties. The human rights and access to justice component aims to improve people’s access to fairness when infected. Finally, the research monitoring and evaluation component aims to follow up on programmes that are implemented in managing HIV/AIDS and TB in the public sector (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009).

As the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB defines and states what the pandemics mean in their own separate rights and what their impact is on the lives of South Africans and in the workplace, the policy provides a “broad guide” to public service organisations in response to HIV/AIDS and TB (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009:5). It aims to inform public service providers about HIV/AIDS and TB management strategies and the implementation of recommendations. The policy also highlights the responsibilities of various role players within the workplace.

2.6.5.2 Relevance of the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB to community volunteers

Community volunteers in South Africa may play a central role in identifying symptoms of HIV/AIDS and TB among children at school and other members of the community, and in taking appropriate action that may prevent and/or intervene to stop the spread of the infections (Halperin & Epstein, 2007). Community volunteers may notice who needs treatment and thus accelerate access to those who require it (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009). This can be done during home visits by...
community volunteers, who can then identify families who may need support following interaction with learners and other members of the community (Halperin & Epstein, 2007; Grossman & Garry, 1997).

The importance of having knowledge about the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB to community volunteers, lies in the fact that these volunteers are positioned within communities where stigma and stereotyping about HIV/AIDS and TB may still takes its toll (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009). Knowledge about the content of the policy may equip community volunteers to limit this kind of behaviour and to educate fellow community members about pandemics and how to prevent them (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009). Knowledge about hygiene can be applied when working with people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS and/or TB. In turn, health and wellness can be promoted among children and those they interact with, including community volunteers.

### 2.6.6 Sexual Offences Act

The Sexual Offences Act provides information on sexual offences, guidelines on how to deal with such offences, and protection of complainants under the law. It sheds light on legal measures that can be taken in cases of sexual offences (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007).

According to the Sexual Offences Act, sexual offences imply unpleasant effects on the lives of people. Not only may these actions affect the physical functioning of a person, but also the emotional, social, mental and other important aspects that may disrupt one’s functioning. Sexual offences have the tendency of leaving people vulnerable; and causing “systemic dysfunctionality” in societies (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007:4). As people interact with others in a variety of systems and sub-systems, when sexual offences occur, chaos and mistrust will typically follow in societies at large (Donald et al., 2002).

In the Sexual Offences Act, sexual offensive actions are viewed as “social phenomena” which occur within systems where people function (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related matters] Amendment Act, 2007:4). Victims of such actions are said to experience feelings of pain and humiliation in an environment which they expected to be safe, or are offended by people they had trusted and hoped would protect them (Wasco, 2003). Sexual offensive actions will thus impair social relations and collective trust as people start feeling unsafe (Wasco, 2003).

The amended part of the Sexual Offences Act (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related matters] Amendment Act, 2007) implies that any public appearance that seems indecent (in terms of dressing and/or conduct) and disrupts public viewing can be considered as an offence. Basically, any type of behaviour and dress code that may appear unusual and
inviting to sexual intercourse to the spectators is regarded as offensive and should be charged. Rewards and earnings that are gained through intercourse are also regarded as offensive actions that should be charged. Even though the act defines a sexual offence in many ways, it relates a sexual act to non-consent, unlawful, coerced intercourse (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007).

2.6.6.1 Purpose of the Sexual Offences Act

The Sexual Offences Act highlights the social nature of sexual offences and the impact they may have on societies, as well as the insecurity and disruptiveness they may cause in societal and other living settings (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] amendment Act, 2007). This act aims to inform the public about the most affected groups (women and children) and why these groups are often targets and victims of sexual offences (Wasco, 2003). Women are stated to often become involved in prostitution, while children and women are more regularly exposed to sexual actions than men, such as being coerced to watch pornography and engaging in trafficking for sexual purposes (Criminal Law [sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007). In terms of the so-called “secondary victimisation and traumatisation”, the Act indicates some inadequacy and discriminatory ways of dealing with such offences as a concern (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007: 4).

The aim of the Sexual Offences Act is thus to inform people of their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual offences against them and how the law protects citizens in this regard (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007). Furthermore, the purpose of the Act extends to define and differentiate between the kinds of sexual activities which are regarded as offensive and therefore in violation of human rights. These offensive sexual offences are elaborated upon in terms of being committed against women, children and/or under-aged people, or people’s state of consenting to such actions.

2.6.6.2 Relevance of the Sexual Offences Act for community volunteers

Community volunteers need to be acquainted with the appropriate steps to follow when reporting sexual offences (Kalichman et al., 2007). They may need to develop and implement programmes that could assist victims to deal with traumatic experiences, or refer them to relevant professionals. For community volunteers to be able to engage with sexual offence victims, they may require training on how to deal with traumatic situations (Kalichman et al., 2007).

Community volunteers and other relevant and interested stakeholders may therefore support women and children who have been abused. Cooperation in reporting these offences may have a positive impact, but will require of community volunteers to be familiar with symptoms and other aspects related to sexual offences (Criminal Law [Sexual Offences and Related Matters] Amendment Act, 2007: 4).
As community volunteers’ work may be based in schools, their prevention and intervention strategies may also be based in schools with learners, who in turn may take the message into the respective communities (Kalichman et al., 2007). Where community volunteers are not adequately trained to deal with problems at hand, it is important for them to know who to refer people to and how.

2.6.7 **DIVORCE ACT**

The Divorce Act (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979) stipulates the procedures of legal separation, more specifically in terms of filing for a divorce. The act relates to the legal separation between two legally married parties, and their decision to stay apart and officialise their separation according to the Divorce Act. The Act also applies to the parting of two parties who do not have the intention of reconciling. Such parting should take into account the division of assets and the interest and safeguarding of children (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

In divorce cases where children are involved, the South African court has the right to decide what is best for the child subsequent to considering all necessary factors (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). The court does not want to disrupt the lives of children by moving them unless there is no other option. In the midst of such a process, the court can appoint a family advocate for mediation if necessary.

When married parties file for a divorce, the court may, however, refuse to grant the divorce based on religion, until the barrier to dissolve marriage is granted by the concerned spouse or by both parties (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). In the case of a physical disorder so severe that one party remains unconscious for a prolonged period of time, the court may grant a divorce if the other spouse filed for a divorce (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). Furthermore, a divorce can be granted if one of the spouses is admitted to a mental institution for mental illness (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

Other important aspects that the Divorce Act addresses include asset division and the custody of children. A written agreement between the two parting parties is required regarding division of assets (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). As stated, with regards to the custody of children, the court has the right to decide which spouse is suitable to take care of the children. The court can also grant the non-custodian parent visitation rights (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

2.6.7.1 **Purpose of the Divorce Act**

The purpose of the Divorce Act is to define related discourses which is utilised in the process of divorce. It alerts the public to the procedure of filing for divorce, the roles of the divorcer and divorcee, as well as that of the court and related parties. The act describes the process of determining the terms of divorce refusal and forfeiture of the decree of divorce. The purpose of the act is to furthermore determine the possible terms of contact between former
spouses especially in terms of custody and children’s visitation rights (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

As such, the Divorce Act aims to establish terms of separation between spouses who want to separate (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). It stipulates the manner of finalising and legalising a separation. The Act focuses on the legal credibility of a separation by considering relevant and crucial measures of divorce. Furthermore, the Act grants the court the authority to dissolve a marriage and determine the damages suffered, as well as any disbursement thereof (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

The implication of the Divorce Act lies in the responsibility to ensure that the dissolution of a marriage will not harm the interests of children (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979). The Act stipulates the responsibility of the court and the appointed family advocate to evaluate former spouses and establish a suitable meeting or visitation schedule on behalf of children, thereby acting in the best interest of the child (Divorce Act No.70 of 1979).

2.6.7.2 Relevance of the Divorce Act for community volunteers

An important aspect relating to the tasks of community volunteers in South Africa is that of ensuring children’s wellbeing during and after their parents’ divorce. As mentioned previously, community volunteers may be based in school settings, interacting with teachers and learners on a daily basis. They may thus be in a good position to identify learners’ changed or unusual behaviour and engage in conversations with them (Snell & Janney, 2000). While community volunteers are often not adequately trained to deal with learners’ emotional problems, they can refer learners to social workers or other professionals, depending on availability and access (Snell & Janney, 2000).

Community volunteers often reside in areas where access to information and resources are limited. Such residential conditions can increase the responsibility of community volunteers to be mediators between community members and the legal system or to provide access to information. Community volunteers may assist others by providing information and guidance where required. Where children are involved, community volunteers are in the position to assist parents in making decisions that may have an impact on their children, for example helping parents to make the right decisions and to act in the best interest of a child following a divorce.

For community volunteers, the relevance of the Divorce Act furthermore lies in the ability to assure children that they are wanted, appreciated and loved. Children may not understand the proceedings of a divorce yet they may be affected by their parents’ conflict, feeling for example unimportant and unwanted by their parents. Reassuring children that they are wanted, worthy and loved may be helpful in reducing negative thoughts and feelings (Wasco, 2003). Children may be confused and vulnerable during the process of divorce, or they may
be distracted at school, resulting in their performance dropping. Support by community volunteers and teachers in such incidences can be helpful.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ASSET-BASED APPROACH

In this section I discuss the theoretical framework that guided me in undertaking this study.

2.7.1 INTRODUCTION

The asset-based approach focuses on what people and communities can do to address and overcome challenges (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), the asset-based approach paralyses the perception of people and communities as unable to address their needs and the challenges they face.

2.7.2 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

The asset-based approach is concerned with identifying, mapping and mobilising resources in order to beat adversity. Sustainability of these resources plays an important role (Ryan, 2008). The potential of a community to make it through adverse circumstances is valued by this approach (Nelson et al., 2011), whereby communities are seen as able to recognise what they possess and make the most of it rather than to emphasise negative circumstances (Landsberg et al., 2005).

The asset-based approach engages communities in processes of development as they implement self-initiated ideas and strategies. This promotes joint knowledge construction and the taking back of power by those who often feel powerless and inadequate (Landsberg et al., 2005; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). Moreover, the asset-based approach is not only about assisting communities to identify available assets and resources, but also about identifying those assets that are not yet used but are available to the community (Ammerman & Parks, 1998).

The asset-based approach focuses on the capability of people as individuals and also as a collective, to solve problems, thus being what Ebersöhn and Eloff (2006:22) calls “internally focused”. According to Ebersöhn & Eloff (2006), an internal focus involves individuals and communities in defining what they are facing, in order for them to become aware of what they are experiencing and describe it in their own terms. It is important to note that as external influences may not have a direct impact on communities, these influences should not impose a definition of what the community is experiencing (Cameron, 2003). It is the internal responsibility of communities to know, acknowledge and define their experiences and decide on a direction towards overcoming these (Foot, 2012).

The asset-based approach views the glass as “half full” and enables individuals and communities to strengthen systems by mobilising existing capabilities, assets and strengths
Sustainable development, positive change and social connectedness can be realised as the asset-based approach focuses on available and accessible skills, resources and assets (Ryan, 2008).

The asset-based approach does not deny the existence of challenges in communities but rather focuses on what is available and making the most of this (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Donald et al., 2002). Not only is this approach about identifying assets and strengths, it also targets obtainable potential and points this “towards available opportunities” (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006:462). Forming sound partnerships with communities and reducing professional dominance are features of the approach (Ryan, 2008). Although problems are thus acknowledged, solving these and building relationships in the process remains the core (Ryan, 2008).

The asset-based approach allows reciprocal problem solving and promotes the possibility of sustaining the use of identified assets (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). The approach reduces reliance on external agents thus compelling community members to engage with one another for the development and execution of plans of action (Pinkett, 2000). This instils ownership and sustenance of intervention (and/or prevention) strategies among community members. The asset-based approach is useful in connecting the interests of community members and working together in fulfilling these, thus promoting community involvement and participation (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1998 as cited in Pinkett, 2000).

The asset-based approach does however not mean that external assistance is ignored and not taken into account (Foot, 2012). The combination of external assistance and internal resources may build a firm foundation for empowerment, mentoring, skills training and guidance (Wilke, 2006). In a study conducted by Arefi (2008), it was, for example, found that the knowledge of communities is as important and valuable as that of experts, further emphasising the importance of collaboration between researchers and participants.

Furthermore, the asset-based approach generates the desire and ability to lead, in the sense that the community is allowed to voice and share ideas, and take part in the realisation and implementation of these ideas. In this manner, expertise in asset identification, organisation and management, and other related skills is instilled and promoted. Interest in matters which affect the community and its residents is also increased. Due to the strong bond that the asset-based approach creates within communities, it is possible for these communities to discover assets together and to be less intimidated when capitalising on available assets and resources.

This study is in agreement with Ebersöhn’s Relationship-Resourced Resilience (RRR) theory in that I believed that being able to resolve community challenges is a collective act rather than dispersed individuals when I set out to undertake this study (Ebersöhn, 2012). For the purpose of the current study, community volunteers were thus encouraged to work as a team.
when intervening in schools and within the community. In this way, the participants applied Ebersöhn’s (2012:30) RRR theory by “flocking” together and forming relationships to “link resources” in developing school-community plans. By doing so, the very same schools and communities that the volunteers intervened in became protective resources in the challenges they face. Collaborative relationships among schools, communities and community volunteers were central to the initiatives (Ebersöhn, 2012).

In a study by Turner and Pinkett (2000:1) participants were considered as “active change agents” rather than as receivers of help. In this specific study, one of the aims was to “demonstrate how appropriate online tools could support asset-mapping and mobilisation within the designated community by strengthening its economic, human, and social capital”. In the current study, the asset-based approach is seen as a capacity approach, which is able to make participants aware of their skills, capabilities and talents (Turner & Pinkett, 2000). Therefore, for community members to utilise what they possess internally rather than relying on external help, is regarded as an advantage of applying the asset-based approach (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

2.7.3 PHASES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH

According to Ammerman and Parks (1998), the asset-based approach involves asset mapping, asset mobilisation and asset management. These components allow for meaningful community participation and empowerment which may promote sustainable community development and capacity building (Saidi & Karuri, 2006). In this regard, it is viewed as important for communities to be actively involved in planning and managing their own development (Saidi & Karuri, 2006).

Asset mapping takes place prior to determining interventions and programmes. This component informs community’s decisions about strategies to develop, making way for opportunities and capacities of the community (Fuller et al., 2002). Burke et al. (2009) view asset mapping as a component used to gather information and identify opportunities for project implementation. It is important to involve the members of a community during this phase as they are the ones who know and experience their circumstances first hand; in other words they are the experts of their situations (Maree, 2007). This step thus entails discernment of available assets and resources, that a community could use to its own benefit (Beaulieu, 2002; Fuller et al., 2002).

The second phase of the asset-based approach, asset mobilisation involves the conception and implementation of action plans (Roehlkepartain, 2005). Identified assets are being acted on during this phase, when action plans are formulated and implemented in terms of what could be done with discovered assets and resources to improve unpleasant circumstances (Macoloo, 2009). Strategies to utilise and leverage resources, assets and opportunities are
implemented and various projects may be initiated to address identified trials (Macoloo, 2009).

Lastly, asset management implies that ongoing attention is given to interventions and actions taken for the prolonged benefit of a community and its members (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). This step implies sustenance of initiated implementations. During this phase community members need to take responsibility and ownership of decision making and the action plans, projects and all other means that were developed for their improvement (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). At this stage, assets and resources are effectively operated and maintained. Engaging in what Saidi and Karuri (2006) call updating, asset mapping responds appropriately to evolving challenges, and accepts and acts on visible opportunities.

2.7.4 APPLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO THIS STUDY

The asset-based approach recognises the experiences and skills that are already possessed by individuals and communities. It allows people to utilise the resources they possess in order to improve their circumstances. In the current study, community volunteers could capitalise on existing assets in establishing and implementing supportive school-community plans. By implementing the SHEBA intervention with the volunteers, they were guided to identify assets, and then plan supportive initiatives during which these assets could be mobilised.

The asset-based approach allowed me to value the knowledge and skills of the participants and indirectly the community without imposing what I knew or what I thought was right on the participants (GCPH, 2012). Instead of delivering a service, the asset-based approach could potentially enable individuals/participants (and by implication, communities) to use what they have to serve themselves (GCPH, 2012).

In this regard, potential assets could be realised and utilised by community volunteers. These assets include internal assets, such as community volunteers possessing certain skills, as well as external assets in terms of what is available in the school and community that may add value to volunteering efforts. Pertaining to internal assets of community volunteers, volunteers typically display the willingness to serve without receiving remuneration (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006). Community volunteers also seemingly have the ability to establish and sustain working relationships among themselves and with other role players in the community (Wilke, 2006).

Community volunteers are generally able to nurture and care for children, they want to see children progressing and making the best of their lives. They also seem to have the potential of working collaboratively with teachers and members of school-communities (Metz et al., 2003). Community volunteers furthermore generally possess skills that could benefit supportive school-community plans, such as skills in knitting, sewing and gardening. Additionally, community volunteers are usually willing and in need of gaining new knowledge and learn new skills (Metz et al., 2003).
Assets that can typically be capitalised on within the school context in South Africa include schools’ abilities to care for and support learners, and the willingness of teachers and principals to work together with community volunteers (Russell et al., 2005). Some schools have vegetable gardens on their premises, where community volunteers can potentially assist and even sell certain products at school during break times in support of income-generation. Teachers, learners, school management teams and school governing bodies may also form part of the assets that could be mobilised when initiating supportive school-community plans (Russell et al., 2005).

The applicability of the asset-based approach in this study is evident in the fact that community volunteers were able to become aware of their skills and what they were capable of as part of their involvement. In doing this, they were able to notice the strengths and resources that they could capitalise on to support schools and the community (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2001). In identifying skills within themselves as individuals, community volunteers were also able to realise their potential as a group. Due to this realisation, others were subsequently given the opportunity to learn new skills from group members and external parties (Nelson et al., 2011), thereby establishing and maintaining relationships (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2001).

2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed volunteering, what the activities of volunteering in the South African context entails, and why people decide to engage in volunteer work. I differentiated between the benefits and challenges of volunteering and discussed the role of volunteers in different respects. Against the background of the SHEBA intervention, I then presented policy documents that were included during PRA-based discussions. I explained the guiding principles of the various policies and the potential meaning of the policies for volunteers working in the South African context supporting schools and communities. I concluded the chapter by presenting my chosen theoretical framework which is the asset-based approach.

In the next chapter, I discuss the methodological process of the study. I explain my selected paradigms, research design and data generation, documentation, analysis and interpretation procedures. I also reflect on my role as a researcher, and conclude the chapter with discussions of ethical considerations and the rigour of the study.

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CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, I discussed existing literature that is relevant to this study. I discussed volunteering in South Africa in terms of the meaning of the concept and the difference between formal and informal volunteering, as well as reasons for people’s decision to volunteer. I then unpacked the policy documents I discussed with the community volunteers who participated in this study during PRA-based workshops. I concluded the chapter with an explanation of the theoretical framework I relied on.

In this chapter, I discuss the research process. I explain the paradigmatic choices I made, the research design of the study and the data generation, documentation and analysis I completed. I also reflect on my role as researcher and conclude the chapter with a discussion of the ethical considerations and quality criteria applicable to this study.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

In this section, I discuss the selected methodological paradigm of the study, namely Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA), and the meta-theoretical paradigm being interpretivism.

3.2.1 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

I selected PRA as methodological approach. As a result, I utilised various data generation methods in an attempt to gain insight into the manner in which community volunteers planned and initiated school-community plans in support of vulnerable children and their families (Slocum et al., 1995). In accordance with the selected PRA approach, I regarded the participants as not functioning in isolation, but as requiring guidance to collectively recognise and address the challenges the community faced (Bhandari, 2003; White & Taket, 1997).

PRA aims to inform and “enable” researchers to “gain insight” into local conditions from local people (Chambers, 1994:94). This approach requires of local people (participants) to be active, share ideas and empower each other. PRA furthermore aims for researchers and participants to collaboratively formulate action plans, and for participants to collectively carry out these plans (Agyarko, 1998). All these aims to apply to the broader SHEBA project, of which this study forms part.

My choice of PRA as a methodological paradigm aligns with the approach of the broader research project, not excluding any participants in solving the challenges they face (Tandon,
1988; Webber, 1995), but actively involving them in the research. As such, the solutions to problems, or in this case the school-community plans that the participants constructed had the aim of supporting the related schools and communities at large, in order to “facilitate the development process” (Versfeld, 1995:146).

PRA implies participation and collaboration, which allowed me to view community volunteers as knowledgeable about the environment and to be educated by them about the circumstances surrounding the challenges they faced (Walter, 2009). What attracted me as a researcher to this approach was that the knowledge of participants was valued and that I could view them as able to take ownership of the planning and implementation process of the school-community plans in support of vulnerable communities (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).

In addition, PRA coincides with the theoretical framework of this study, as both the asset-based approach and PRA focus on resources and strengths in addressing challenges, raising local communities’ awareness of the capabilities they possess that can help them overcome challenges (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). PRA did not compel me as researcher to enter or approach the research field as an expert attempting to inform participants what to do; but rather allowed me to facilitate certain processes while learning from participants (Webber, 1995).

One of the challenges implied when following a PRA approach is that some confusion may occur in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the various partners (Bhandari, 2003). This potential challenge did not pose a problem to me as the initial STAR participants (teachers) assisted with the facilitation of the PRA-based sessions with community volunteers, who conducted discussions in small groups. As the STAR participants have been exposed to this way of participation and collaboration since 2003, they could steer the process and guide community volunteers where needed, in terms of their roles and the attached expectations.

Furthermore, PRA assumes that participants are educated and well informed. This was however not the case with all community volunteers who participated (Grant & Shillito, 1998; Leeurs, 1996). The manner in which I overcame this potential challenge relates to the fact that community volunteers were willing to learn from each other and to develop their skills. They did not find it challenging when other people guided them in acquiring certain skills and they were also open to teach others what they knew and gained during the sessions.

3.2.2 Meta-theoretical paradigm

In attempting to understand the life worlds of the community volunteers and how they made meaning of the supportive school-community plans they developed and initiated, I relied on interpretivism. I therefore attempted to gain an understanding of the community volunteers’ perceptions and experiences (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).
In terms of interpretivism, different people perceive and interpret similar situations differently, and it is therefore important to consider people’s involvement for change to be effected (Carcary, 2009; Mack, 2010). According to Carcary (2009) and Mack (2010), interpretivist researchers do not observe situations objectively, or from the outside. As a researcher, I was subsequently part of the study in gaining an understanding of the phenomenon. The research process and my role as researcher were not two separate entities, but were intertwined throughout the study (Lor, 2011).

I selected interpretivism as I value participants’ construction of knowledge and meaning for their own reality. What I might have acquired about community volunteers’ perceptions could not be imposed on them, as I wanted them to derive their own meaning from what they were experiencing (Mack, 2010). Interpretivism also allowed me to understand community volunteers’ collective meaning-making during PRA-based discussions. Furthermore, this paradigmatic lens allowed me as researcher and the participants to interact meaningfully in order to gain insight into what was being studied (Lor, 2011; Cantrell, 2001).

Aligned with the purpose of the current study, which was to explore and gain insight into how community volunteers may collaborate with schools in developing and implementing supportive school-community plans, interpretivism enabled me to enter into the life-worlds of participants and understand how they construct meaning to the challenges they face. Interpretivism furthermore allowed me to be the co-creator of meaning as I did not observe from the outside. Throughout the study, as also suggested by PRA, I wanted to understand the way in which community volunteers initiated and implemented supportive school-community plans, viewing them as experts of their own context. Therefore, by relying on interpretivism, I believed that community volunteers are capable of answering their own questions.

A potential challenge of interpretivism relates to the possibility that when community volunteers were observed while generating data, their behaviour could potentially be modified based on my presence and involvement. This challenge was however not experienced as most of the facilitators of the PRA-based workshops were people the participants knew and interacted with regularly. In addition, we communicated in the language of the participants (Xhosa), permitting them to feel comfortable and at ease. Interpretivism therefore allowed community volunteers to construct meaning of their experiences in a language of their choice.

Another potential challenge relates to the possibility of various meanings being voiced within groups (Broom & Willis, 2007). This possibility was addressed by acknowledging and appreciating that each individual would experience his/her situation differently (Broom & Willis, 2007). It was thus important for the participating community volunteers to formulate individual, as well as collective meaning-making of situations, and not be coerced to follow another person’s understanding of a situation.
3.3 RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

In this section, I discuss the research process in terms of the selected research design, selection of participants as well as data generation, documentation and analysis strategies. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the research process.

**Figure 3.1: Research process**
3.3.1 Research Design

I utilised an instrumental case study design (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This design allowed me to explore the way in which community volunteers developed supportive school-community plans while relying on local resources and their own skills and abilities (Ferreira, 2006). In terms of an instrumental case study design, my primary aim was to gain an understanding of the plans developed by community volunteers and how these could potentially facilitate positive change within the school-community (Stake, 1995).

A case study design requires an in-depth investigation of one or several cases, at a micro level, with a phenomenon taking place naturally (Zaidah, 2007). It involves observation as well as the recreation of a phenomenon, which means that a case study design can assist in explaining the progression and outcome of a study (Tellis, 1997).

I selected a case study design because it thus does not isolate the phenomenon from its context (Zaidah, 2003). It rather explores a case as it occurs in its unique context. Even though a case study design does not allow for findings to be generalised, this design assisted me in explaining the complexity of a real-life situation (Zaidah, 2007). Furthermore, a case study design allowed me to consider the participants as knowledgeable about their circumstances and how they interpret the circumstances they find themselves in (Yin, 2005; Stake, 2006). This research design aligns with the selected methodological paradigm, being PRA (Chambers, 2008), where participants are viewed as experts.

A case study design furthermore provided me with an opportunity to both generate data and examine what the data could mean (Stake, 1995). It highlighted one of PRA’s features namely the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants. As such, this design allowed me to be involved with community volunteers on a level which promoted collaboration in seeking suitable supportive interventions (Stake, 1995).

A challenge I experienced due to selecting a case study design relates to the fact that it is not possible to generalise the findings of this study. However, the aim of the current study is not to generalise, but rather to “particularise”, and to distinguish the uniqueness of the specific phenomenon being explored (Stake, 1995:8). To this end, I relied on crystalisation, using various methods to look at the phenomenon from different angles (Zaidah, 2007).

Another potential challenge of a case study design relates to the fact that case study research is often criticised for a lack of rigour. As mentioned before, I utilised various methods to ensure the current study’s rigour. I also attempted to limit any bias by recording my reflections in a researcher’s diary in order to ensure that these do not determine the findings of the study (Zaidah, 2007). By embracing my personal involvement as researcher in accordance with the chosen meta-theory, I attempted to overcome this possibility by being honest with the community volunteers and having regular reflexive discussions with my supervisors (Cohen et al., 2007).
3.3.2 SELECTION OF CASE AND PARTICIPANTS

The case was conveniently selected as my study forms part of the broader SHEBA project. I thus conducted research within a broad project, involving a previously selected case. Therefore the case was “easily and conveniently available” to me (Fairfax, 2012; Maree, 2007:177). At its core, convenience sampling entails the selection of reachable participants and cases (Marshall, 1996).

One challenge implied by convenience sampling is that the quality of the data may be poor (Marshall, 1996). However, the current study is based on an information-rich phenomenon which can potentially address this challenge (Ferreira, 2006). According to Fairfax (2012), another limitation of convenience sampling is that this type of sampling may lack accuracy by being limited in terms of relevant or truthful information about what the researcher is studying (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). However, I am confident about the probability of accuracy in this study as I have witnessed this type of sampling being used in the broader preceding STAR project since 2003 by several postgraduate students, with success.

Concerning the selection of participants, I purposefully selected 38 community volunteers to participate, as they were perceived to possess rich information on the phenomenon forming the focus of my research questions (Maree, 2007). My primary research question entails an understanding of supportive school-community plans that community volunteers developed while depending on limited resources in their community and schools, within the context of the SHEBA intervention. It was also important for me to understand which potential change these supportive plans could bring about in the school context and how community volunteers could in turn facilitate change in their own lives through volunteering and intervening at schools and the community at large (Maree, 2007). Photographs 3.1 and 3.2 depict the context where the study took place.

Photographs 3.1 & 3.2: The context where participating community volunteers assist (18.01.2013, 05.07.2012)

Therefore, purposeful sampling of participants led me to select community volunteers who could provide me with information relevant to my study (Maree, 2007). The 38 community
volunteers I selected were involved in the SHEBA project (2011-) and supported two schools and the broader community in the Eastern Cape region at the time of this study.

The following selection criteria applied:

- Participants had to be community volunteers participating in the SHEBA project
- Participants had to attend the SHEBA workshops
- Participants had to reside in the Eastern Cape region
- Participants had to be collaborating with a school in the area
- Participants had to provide informed consent to participate.

A potential limitation of purposive sampling is that a selected sample which is meant to be representative of a broader population, may be subjective when responding to certain research questions (Garfield, 2011). However, as the participants were involved in schools and the broader community, and based on the fact that SHEBA was co-facilitated by teachers of the community, I had the opportunity to also informally interact with teachers (facilitators of SHEBA intervention) to hear their views.

Another potential challenge relates to a possible premature focus of research activities that can be directed to participants’ single phenomenon experience and their understanding of this. This potential challenge did however not affect the current study as participants’ experiences and understanding of the phenomenon have been recognised through their participation in the broader SHEBA project. According to Cohen et al. (2007), purposive sampling may also not allow for generalisability of findings. Based on the interpretivist stance I took, my aim was not to generalise but rather to gain insight into the participants' life worlds and understand the phenomenon under study. This challenge did therefore not play a role in this study.

3.3.3 DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION

I relied on multiple data generation and documentation strategies. These are described in the sections that follow.

3.3.3.1 PRA-based workshops

I participated in three field visits of the SHEBA project during which I co-facilitated PRA-based workshops as part of block 2 (session 2, 3 and 4), as well as block 3 (session 1 and 2) of the intervention. Refer to Appendix H for the SHEBA intervention, and the objectives and activities of the various sessions. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the field visits I undertook.

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6 Charles Mosehle, Maria Mnguni, Willie Pietersen (fellow students), and Kholeka Nzuta, Lindelwa Zonyane, Lungiswa Speelman, Mandisa Mtshiselwa, Monicca Rweqana, Nomachini Ngumbela, Thandiwe Palamente, Thembi Dyasi, (SHEBA facilitators).
Table 3.1: Overview of field visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>PRA-sessions</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Primary purpose</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10 July 2012</td>
<td>Block 2, session 2, 3 and 4</td>
<td>36 Females and 2 Males</td>
<td>Discuss existing and relevant policies. Develop school-community plans.</td>
<td>+/- 5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 October 2012</td>
<td>Block 3, session 1 and 2</td>
<td>36 Females and 2 Males</td>
<td>Discuss progress of formulated school-community plans. Monitor planned action steps, make changes and plan a way forward. Reflect on implementation of relevant policies as part of school-community plans and discuss the Divorce Act as additional relevant policy.</td>
<td>+/- 6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 May 2013</td>
<td>Block 3, session 1 and 2</td>
<td>36 Females and 2 Males</td>
<td>Member-checking</td>
<td>+/- 1 hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field visit one followed on discussions that took place as part of Block 1, that focused on community volunteers becoming aware of existing needs, resources and potential resources in the community. During Block 2, focus fell on raising the participants’ awareness of existing policies that could be used by community volunteers in supporting schools and vulnerable communities. To this end, prior to allowing participants the chance to discuss the relevant policies in their small groups, I facilitated awareness among them about existing policy documents related to vulnerability.

The policies that formed part of the discussion were the Policy on Children’s Rights, the Sexual Offences Act, the Child Justice Act and the Policy on HIV/AIDS and TB, as well as the Policy on Inclusive Education (policies included in Appendix E). The decision to include these policies was based on the findings of a study preceding mine, where a fellow student (Cleopatra Chambati) explored potential content to be included in the SHEBA intervention, based on experiences and lessons learnt from the preceding STAR project. Photographs 3.3 and 3.4 capture participants discussing the said policies in small groups.

Photographs 3.3 & 3.4: Participants discussing policies (09.07.2012, 10.07.2012)
Following the discussion of policy documents and specifically how community volunteers could apply these when initiating school-community plans, the small groups reported to the large group of participants. These discussions focused on the implementation of the policies. In discussing the policies, participants also shared policies that already existed in their schools with others such as those captured in photographs 3.5 and 3.6.

Photograph 3.5: Existing school policy (05.07.2012)

Photograph 3.6: Existing school policy (05.07.2012)

Following the discussion of existing policies, participants worked in small groups to identify a few supportive school-community plans they would develop and initiate in the following months, up to the second field visit. To this end, they drew up action plans, being guided by the following questions:

- What do you want to accomplish in the partnership (what is your goal?)
- Who will be responsible in the group and in the schools for which goal?
- How will the responsible individuals reach the goals?
- When should the goals be reached (target dates?)
The session was concluded with presentations by the small groups to the larger group, indicating which supportive school-community plans they would set out to initiate. The objective of the second field visit (October 2012) was to assess and monitor the progress of the supportive school-community plans identified during the first field visit (July 2012). Participants first reflected on their implementation of the policies discussed during the previous visit, as part of initiating supportive school-community plans. In addition, they discussed the Divorce Act (Appendix F) based on their request during the previous visit to also include this act in discussions. Reflections and discussions occurred in small groups, after which the participants reported back to the larger group. Photographs 3.7 and 3.8 demonstrate how smaller groups reported on the supportive school-community plans they had initiated and how they had applied relevant policies to this end.

Photograph 3.7: Presentation on supportive plans by Group 1 (01.10.2012)

Photograph 3.8: Presentation on supportive plans by Group 3 (01.10.2012)

After completing their discussions on the progress of supportive school-community plans, the participants revised their action plans where needed and added additional steps as they saw fit. They presented their ideas to the larger group, indicating the proposed way forward with the supportive school-community plans.
The purpose of the third field visit (May 2013) was twofold, namely to (i) again assess and monitor the progress of the proposed supportive school-community plans; and (ii) conduct member-checking following my initial analysis of the data. First, the participants were requested to report on the projects they had initiated. Secondly, I conducted member-checking with the purpose of verifying my understanding of the data generated during the first two field visits. This was done through a process of reflection with the community volunteers in order to ensure that what they had conveyed correlated with what I found (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). During the member-checking session I presented the identified themes and sub-themes to the participants and requested them to correct misinterpretations or anything I might have omitted (Chambers, 2008). Photographs 3.9 and 3.10 provide evidence of the activities conducted during the third field visit.

**Photograph 3.9.** Small group discussions on progress of implementation of supportive plans (02.05.2013)

**Photograph 3.10:** Member-checking (02.05.2013)

I used PRA-based workshops to generate data, as this allowed community volunteers (participants) and the research team to collaborate and work towards achieving a common goal. This entailed the development of supportive school-community plans that could address the challenges that the schools and community volunteers themselves faced (Strydom,
and to then reflect on the implementation of these plans, with the aim of making adjustments where needed.

PRA-based workshops thus provided community volunteers with the opportunity to express themselves in a way that could enhance their knowledge and made them aware of the skills they possessed, for them to act on the challenges faced by the community (Chambers, 2008). As such, PRA-based workshops served an enabling purpose, involving community volunteers, and ensuring that their knowledge was considered and that they were viewed as informants to the research activities.

As a co-facilitator of the PRA-based workshops, I drew from this method’s advantage of actively and collaboratively working with community volunteers so as to gain a common understanding of the phenomenon under study, and to ensure that change was subsequently facilitated when they implemented the supportive plans they identified (Strydom, 2005). In this way I was able to gain insight into community volunteers’ experiences and the challenges they faced, as well as the strategies they identified to address these (Chambers, 2008).

A potential challenge related to PRA is that researchers may want to control the research process based on participants (and often researchers) not being used to participants taking the lead (Chambers, 2008). This challenge was not experienced in the current study as it was explained from the onset that each community volunteer was capable of leading the process and that the research process was meant to be driven by the involved parties (Chambers, 2008). Furthermore, as the SHEBA project followed on the STAR project, with both utilising PRA methodology, participants were used to this approach and taking the lead when I entered the research field.

3.3.3.2 Observation

I used observation-as-context-of-interaction while facilitating PRA-based workshops and group discussions. This implied that I developed “membership” into the “community” that I was studying (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000:678). My “membership role” granted me the opportunity to familiarise myself with community volunteers’ behaviour and to observe the dynamics taking place during the course of the study and the discussions they engaged in (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000).

Observation involves the studying of participants and their interactions as they take place in a natural setting (De Vos, 2002). Maree (2007:84) states that observation can provide researchers with an “insider perspective of the group dynamics and behaviours in different settings”. In this way, observation allowed me to enter the world of the participants in a non-verbal manner and as an observer of their interactions (Marshall, 2006).

I chose observation as one of the data generation techniques as it enabled me to obtain data on how the participants planned and initiated supportive school-community plans. It also
allowed me to obtain data on how they experienced their reality of functioning in a high-risk environment, yet with the purpose of supporting others and establishing supportive school-community partnerships (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011). Through observation, I hoped to strengthen relationships with the participants and harmoniously work with them during data generation. This approach aligns with my study forming part of a broader ongoing PRA-based project, which implied continuous observation of the interactions that were taking place, as well as joint data generation activities while continuously observing the process.

Observation implied the advantage of me experiencing the participants and their interactions first hand. It allowed me to record events (discussions) as they took place (Creswell, 2009). Another advantage of observation relates to me being able to observe while sharing in conversations and interacting with the participants (De Vos, 2002). This technique thus provided me with a broad perspective of the phenomenon I was studying and of the interactions between the participants, without me being intrusive (De Vos, 2002).

Some of the challenges of observation-as-context-of-interaction relates to the accuracy of the observations by the researcher and in recording these observations (James, 2007). In addressing this potential challenge I complemented observation-as-context-of-interaction with other data generation techniques, such as audio-visual recordings, PRA-based workshop sessions and field notes. Additionally, I worked alongside other researchers (fellow students) with whom I discussed my observations, together with our supervisors (Marshall, 2006). Another potential challenge related to observation-as-context-of-interaction is that the findings may not be generalised (De Vos, 2002). Generalisation was however not the intention of this study, focusing on a specific case and the experiences of a specific group of community volunteers.

3.3.3.3 Field notes

I relied on field notes to document my observations. This kind of recording helped me to capture the process of interactions between the participants and researchers (Mulhall, 2003), describe the interactions in my own words, interpret these and subsequently draw conclusions from the notes I made (Mulhall, 2003). My field notes also included my experiences, the questions I wanted to ask to broaden my knowledge of the experienced phenomenon, and what I was required to read more about. In this regard, Wolfinger (2002) points out that the beliefs of the researcher will influence what is noticed in the research field, and what the researcher chooses to pay attention to and write down as part of field notes.

According to Emerson et al. (2001), two strategies can be followed when compiling field notes. First, Emerson et al. (2001) state that salient hierarchy constitutes a strategy for field notes. In terms of salient hierarchy, the researcher chooses which features of the research are noticeable and worth taking note of (Sanjek, 1990). The researcher further notes what stands out in the research field and this then becomes part of his/her field notes. However,
the researcher’s background knowledge plays an important role in this strategy, as it may influence the way in which notes are taken (Steinmetz, 1991). With this strategy, the researcher remains aware of the importance of participants’ relations. Secondly, Emerson et al. (2001) describe a comprehensive way of taking field notes. With the comprehensive strategy, a researcher records everything that takes place in the research field (Emerson et al., 2001).

A researcher reconstructs the occurrences of the research field by describing what happened. During the current study, I employed the salient hierarchy strategy of making field notes (Emerson et al., 2001). This was due to the fact that I primarily took down what I noticed as standing out and worth taking note of. I did not describe every event in the research field but rather focused on what I thought was important, against the background of my research questions. Furthermore I took the interactions and relations of participants into account.

One advantage of field notes is that field notes can capture open-ended ideas (James, 2007). Field notes are also available to the researcher at any time following research activities in the field (Creswell, 2009). On the other hand, a challenge related to field notes concerns the possibility of researcher bias and subjectivity influencing the notes that are made. I guarded against this potential challenge by discussing data generation sessions and my observations with my supervisors and co-researchers following all sessions (James, 2007).

3.3.3.4 Visual and audio-visual data generation and documentation strategies

Visual and audio-visual data provide evidence of occurrences (Creswell, 2009). Visual and audio-visual data for this study include PRA-posters compiled by the community volunteers, photographs, and video and voice recordings. Documenting data in this form allowed me to revisit interactions between the participants, and the activities that had been conducted, which resulted in certain realisations, and also provided insight into how participants (community volunteers) went about planning school-community partnerships and school-based support projects.

Visual and audio-visual strategies created the opportunity for participants to share their realities, and assisted me as researcher to capture what had happened during the research process without being distracted by constant note taking (Whiting, 2008). In this regard, an advantage I drew from while using visual and audio-visual methods is that I could interact with participants freely and could provide my undivided attention during the PRA-based workshops (Whiting, 2008).

On the other hand, a potential challenge related to visual and audio-visual techniques is that participants may modify their behaviour in the presence of a photographer or researcher/field worker taking a video or making a recording. However, participants gave their full consent
and seemed comfortable with this technique being used, as it had been done as part of the broader SHEBA project prior to my data generation activities (Creswell, 2009).

In addition to posters and recordings, I utilised photographs as a data generation and documentation strategy. Photographs enabled me to capture the planning of supportive plans by community volunteers, so that the context where these occurred could be documented (Mason, 2005). Photographs also assisted me in supplementing the rest of the data, capturing what had happened in the field and collecting evidence of this (Creswell, 2009). This assisted me to gain insight into the life worlds of the community volunteers and the way in which they planned supportive initiatives (Chambers, 2004).

Even though I faced the potential challenge of misinterpreting my observations, I discussed my analysis and interpretations with my supervisors and the participants, during member-checking, in addressing this challenge (Creswell, 2009). On the other hand, I had the advantage of revisiting the research site through photographs and video recordings that had captured the events that took place (Creswell, 2009). This assisted me during data analysis, which I discuss in the next section.

### 3.3.3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

I completed inductive thematic analysis for this study. As such, I implemented a method to recognise, analyse, and report patterns, in the form of themes, within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Inductive thematic analysis allowed me to put data in order and describe it in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I could also interpret the various aspects of my research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I namely reported meanings, experiences and the perceptions of the participants, as well as their views on how these impacted on occurrences in their environment (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Furthermore, inductive thematic analysis assisted me in understanding how participants define and make sense of their environments (Koch, 1994).

My choice of inductive thematic analysis relates to the purpose of this study, according to which I attempted to reach conclusions on the participants’ efforts in supporting others. During the PRA-based sessions, participants were namely requested to compile supportive school-community plans that could assist in addressing challenges faced in their communities, and then to implement these over a period of three months. After the three months, participants reflected and gave feedback on their implementation of the supportive school-community plans. Additional strategies and supportive projects were also formulated at this stage. A further six months of implementation lapsed before I returned to conduct member-checking with the participants, at which stage they once again reflected on their progress with the projects, as part of monitoring and evaluation.

In analysing the plans and reports I received, I was able to identify dominant themes and develop conceptualisations of potential correlations between the different groups' ideas and
intervention plans (Thorne, 2000). The themes that I identified capture important trends in the data in relation to the research questions, and thus represent some level of “patterned” response, presentation and planning by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006:82). This method of analysis assisted me in organising and richly describing the data that were generated (Patton, 2002).

In thematically analysing the transcripts, visual data and my field notes, I followed the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, I familiarised myself with the data by reading and rereading the data and noting initial ideas. Secondly, I generated initial codes based on features of the data in a logical manner across the entire data set using color codes (Appendix A). Thirdly, I searched for themes by pulling together codes into potential themes using numbers (Appendix B). Next, I reviewed themes by checking whether or not identified possibilities are in relation to the coded extracts (step 1) and the entire data set (step 2) while I extract codes to relevant themes (Appendix C). I then defined and named themes to refine the specifics of each theme by adding sub-themes, and generating clear definitions and names for each theme and sub-theme (Appendix D). The processes of data analysis were done in discussion with my supervisors, in an attempt to limit potential bias (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

By organising the data according to patterns and themes, I was able to systematise and summarise the data in an understandable way, which makes verification of the findings less complicated (Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The process of verification of preliminary findings by means of member-checking, whereby I presented preliminary themes and sub-themes to the community volunteers to create an opportunity for them to confirm themes, as well as sub-themes, gave clarity where necessary and allowed them to correct me where required (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002).

Thematic analysis implies certain advantages and challenges. One advantage is that it is a flexible way of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis therefore allowed me to determine themes and sub-themes by myself in discussion with my supervisors, as they appeared. Another advantage of thematic analysis is that it highlights differences and similarities in collected data. This method also provided me with insight that was not anticipated (Thorne, 2000).

On the other hand, thematic analysis implies the challenge of labour intensiveness. Its flexibility can be another challenge in the sense that it may require focus and clear thinking to categorise data correctly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These challenges required of me as researcher to allocate enough time in planning and transcribing the data. Listening attentively and reflecting on my research notes assisted me in categorising the data.
3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the study, I adhered to the relevant ethical considerations when conducting research with human participants. To this end, I employed the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee’s guidelines (Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, 2009). As the current study formed part of the broader SHEBA project, permission to conduct research, in the form of ethical clearance, was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria prior to me entering the research field. In terms of my involvement, I obtained clearance to be part of the project in 2012, prior to me participating in any data generation activities.

3.4.1 INFORMED CONSENT AND THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Informed consent implies that participants are aware of what their participation in a study entails, what the study is about and what the consequences might be (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Participants need to be provided with sufficient information on a study they are involved in, how data will be generated, what the aim of the study is and what the possible outcomes entail (De Vos, 2002). Participants should also be informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so (Breakwell et al., 1995, De Vos, 2002). After participants have been informed of or provided with “adequate information” about a study, they need to get an opportunity to ask questions in order to broaden their understanding and make an informed decision about their possible participation (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

As part of the broader SHEBA project, informed consent (Appendix G) of community volunteers had already been obtained for their participation, when I entered the research field. Community volunteers were, however, again informed of the nature of my part of the study (Creswell, 2009). Community volunteers were provided with this information to allow them to make an informed decision regarding their participation or not, in activities related to this study.

Community volunteers were also reminded that they were involved in the study voluntarily. If they chose to withdraw from the study, they could do so at any time. Community volunteers thus had the right to withdraw the consent they had given previously, at the conception of this study (Breakwell et al., 1995).

3.4.2 PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

During participation in a study, participants may expect that identified information be kept private and that discussions are treated confidentially. Participants always have the right to decide to whom their information may be revealed and in what way (De Vos, 2002). Participants’ privacy entails not revealing their personal identities while confidentiality implies the handling of information in a way that nothing is disclosed. Anonymity requires that
information may not be revealed and that the way in which a study will progress will not reveal participants’ identities (De Vos, 2002).

I respected the privacy of the participants and treated all information as confidential. I did not disclose the participants’ identities (names) and data that were generated are kept safe for a period of 15 years at the University of Pretoria, as stipulated by the Ethics Committee, University of Pretoria (http://www.ais.up.ac.za/research/docs/code_ethics.pdf; Breakwell et al., 1995).

Participants in this study however gave permission that their identities be revealed. Even though I do not include any names in this dissertation of limited scope, I did not conceal any faces in photographs, based on the permission provided by the participants. In addition, I sustained a trusting relationship with the participating community volunteers, implying that they could discuss their thoughts with me and knew that I would deal with sensitive information in a confidential manner.

I also requested the community volunteers to adhere to the principle of confidentiality when sharing information among themselves. This supported trusting relationships among the community volunteers. With respect to the data that were generated, only my supervisors and I have access to the data. As already indicated, in using photographs in this dissertation of limited scope, community volunteers gave permission for their faces to be shown. However, if this was not the case, I would have concealed their faces (Orb et al., 2000).

3.4.3 PROTECTING THE WELFARE OF PARTICIPANTS

Protecting the welfare of participants implies that the researcher, as well as a study may not inflict any harm upon participants. The researcher needs to be aware of any possible harm a study may inflict and find means to guard against this. If harm is inflicted during the course of a study, a researcher needs to handle such a situation professionally and with caution (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Additionally, if the possibility of any kind of harm exists, the researcher is obliged to declare this from the start, in order to give participants the opportunity to consent or decline participation. Protecting participants’ welfare is also emphasised in the fact that a researcher needs to inform participants about potential risks a study may imply (De Vos, 2002).

The current study did not imply any physical or mental harm to participants. However, I limited potential emotional or psychological harm to not exceed the harm implied by normal circumstances. If harm was inflicted, it would have been dealt with in a professional and confidential manner, taking reasonable steps to resolve it (Breakwell et al., 1995), by debriefing the participants and then referring them for professional support.

Furthermore, to limit the possibility of community volunteers being potentially harmed by data analysis and the results of the study, I conducted member-checking in order to verify the
trustworthiness of the findings. Participants’ wellbeing was taken into cognisance as no derogative terms were used. They were granted equal turns and opportunities during the course of the study and they were equally respected (Orb et al., 2000).

3.4.4 TRUST AND AVOIDING DECEPTION

Deceiving participants occurs when they are not provided with information about the true nature of a study and what its potential consequences may be. This can happen when a researcher is not honest with participants in order to secure their participation. Deception of participants is also possible when a researcher withholds information from participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

In this study, the participating community volunteers were not misled concerning the kind of data required from them, as well as the contents and purpose of the study. No information about the study was withheld from the participants (Breakwell et al., 1995). As I entered the research field a few months after the SHEBA project had commenced, relationships of trust between the participants and researchers of the broader project had already been established. Relationships of trust between participants and myself naturally followed.

3.5 RIGOUR OF THE STUDY

In attempting to complete a rigorous study, I adhered to quality criteria relevant to qualitative research. I discuss the strategies I employed in the sections that follow.

3.5.1 CREDIBILITY

Credibility implies that sufficient demonstration of the construction of findings on a phenomenon under study is provided by the researcher (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Credibility thus entails the extent to which findings are truthful (Seale, 2000). It refers to the soundness of qualitative research findings (Seale, 2000). According to Creswell (1998) and Patton (2002), the implications of credibility is that as researcher, my observations and interpretations, as well as conclusions are supported by raw data and correlate with the participating community volunteers’ views. Taking into account the interpretivist paradigm I relied on, I was actively involved in attempting to understand and explain the supportive plans identified and planned by the participants. This role, as well as that of observer and co-facilitator of PRA-based workshops, allowed me to obtain credible findings.

The credibility of this study was further strengthened by the member-checking session I included (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Member-checking assisted me in validating that the way in which I represent the generated and analysed data correlates with the views of the participating community volunteers (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Furthermore, I observed the research process throughout and was involved in the study for two years, first as a field worker (for STAR) and then as researcher (for SHEBA).
The credibility of the current study was also enhanced by my choice not to rely on a single data generation method but rather on multiple methods (Maree, 2007). I worked alongside “peer researchers”, further enhancing the credibility of this study (Maree, 2007:80). Having peer researchers and using multiple data generation methods assisted me in viewing the phenomenon under study from different perspectives, and as a situation that has the potential to change. As such, I implemented crystallisation (Maree, 2007).

3.5.2 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability relates to the possibility of research findings to be applied in another context (Connolly, 2003). It is equivalent to external validity in quantitative research (Seale, 2000). The transferability of data depends on its representativeness to the wider population (McMahon & Patton, 2000). As such, transferability indicates how the same process can be followed in different contexts and lead to different outcomes (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

In an attempt to ensure transferability, I provide detailed descriptions of the experiences of the community volunteers as developers and implementers of supportive school-community plans in this dissertation of limited scope. It is essential to note that generalisability of findings was not my goal (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). However, the reader can decide about the transferability of the findings to similar contexts, based on the detailed descriptions included (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I also include my analysis and interpretation documents (Appendix A to D) as a trail of evidence that may allow the reader to see how I reached the conclusions I came to (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

3.5.3 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability is the extent to which other readers can confirm research results, which are based on participants’ ideas and experiences (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). As such, confirmability relates to how research data, interpretations and findings are the result of the focus of inquiry and not the creations of the researcher (Mouton, 2001). It is comparable to objectivity in quantitative research (Patton, 2002). As much as researcher bias may be regarded as inevitable, it should be guarded against, in support of confirmability (Patton, 2002).

To this end, I aimed to ensure that findings are not elements of my biases and imaginations, but rather derivations from the data I obtained during the course of the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Even though it is difficult to remain objective in an interpretivist study, I attempted to provide findings that capture the experiences of the community volunteers who participated (Shenton, 2004). I reflected on possible biases and subjective meanings I may have had in my field notes and discussed these with my supervisors and co-researchers (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). I also made use of crystallisation to limit the possible impact of bias (Maree, 2007). I included direct quotations from community volunteers in support of my interpretations of the data and as a way of limiting my bias as researcher (Mertens, 1998).
3.5.4 Dependability

Dependability, which can be compared to reliability in quantitative research, focuses on the extent to which a researcher accurately reports the findings of a study (Merriam, 2002). Dependability therefore predicts whether or not the findings of another study will be similar if the study were to be repeated (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Dependability implies consistence of research results in terms of the collected data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

In striving towards dependability, I report this study in detail and employed rigorous research practices (Shenton, 2004). I had regular discussions with my supervisors in terms of decisions for data generation and documentation. Additionally, I relied on reflexivity and regular conversations with my supervisors and co-researchers throughout the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Conducting research from an interpretivist stance implied that research in an ever changing world, will lead to results that may be different if the same study were to be conducted again (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). However, I provide sufficient descriptions of the generation and documentation of the data, and the findings I obtained, in order to grant other researchers the prospect of reviewing these and deciding whether or not the study can be repeated in a similar context or with participants experiencing similar challenges and situations as the participants in this study (Patton, 2002).

3.5.5 Authenticity

Authenticity is witnessed when a researcher successfully captures various perspectives of participants (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Authenticity refers to fairness of the representation of different realities (Seale, 2000). In line with PRA, one form of authenticity (educative authenticity) implies the ability of a researcher to allow participants to freely express their points of view (Seale, 2000).

Another form, catalytic authenticity implies that the research empowers participants to take action and be mobilised in terms of addressing challenges (Seale, 2000). Catalytic authenticity relates to my selected theoretical framework, which is the asset-based approach. Ontological authenticity has to do with participants' understanding of their surroundings while becoming aware of their life worlds during and at the completion of a research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

In terms of authenticity, this study is evidence-based in the sense that data were generated with participants, on their attempts of addressing real-world challenges (Jones, 2013). The viewpoints of community volunteers were appreciated. They had their own voices in terms of their views of the study and the intervention strategies they wanted to implement (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In terms of authenticity they were thus not coerced into implementing what is believed to be right for their situation. Community volunteers were merely supported and
empowered to implement the strategies they discussed during workshops. The inclusion of member-checking was an attempt to enhance authenticity, as I wanted to know if I understood the participants' points of view correctly, as well as to enrich community volunteers’ views of their life worlds. I did this in an attempt to enhance ontological authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

I also included the perspectives of community volunteers as a measure of explaining their realities in an attempt to promote fairness (Tobin & Begley, 2004). I attempted to meet this criterion by having informal conversations with community volunteers so as to better understand their realities.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the research process of the study. I discussed the selected paradigms in terms of the methodological and meta-theoretical approaches followed. I then explained the research design, research process and selected methodological strategies for data generation, documentation and analysis. I stated the ethical considerations I adhered to during the course of the study, and concluded the chapter with a discussion of the quality criteria I strived to obtain in support of rigour.

In the following chapter, I present and discuss the results and findings of the study. I present the results in terms of the themes and sub-themes identified during thematic data analysis. I then discuss the findings of the study by situating the results against the background of existing literature, discussed in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the research process. I explained the selected methodological and meta-theoretical paradigms, and the research methodology in terms of the research design, selection of participants, data generation and documentation, as well as data analysis and interpretation strategies. After discussing the ethical guidelines for the study, I explained the quality criteria I adhered to ensuring a rigorous study.

The current chapter focuses on the results and findings of the study, presenting the results in terms of four themes and related sub-themes that emerged following thematic inductive analysis. In presenting the themes and sub-themes, I include excerpts and examples from the data sources, thereby substantiating my discussions. I then discuss the findings of the study against the background of existing literature.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

During data analysis, I identified four primary themes. First, community volunteers indicated their roles in school-community partnerships. Secondly, volunteers viewed themselves as partners who affiliate with school-community stakeholders to form school-community partnerships. Thirdly, the identified school-community partnerships implied certain phases to be followed. Finally, community volunteers referred to challenges they experienced as part of school-community partnerships. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the themes that emerged from the analysis.
Figure 4.1: Overview of themes and sub-themes

Underlying to the discussion on the identified themes and sub-themes, it is worth noting that community volunteers initiated several plans at schools and in the community as part of this study. These initiatives include projects that involve cleaning school facilities; introducing drum majorettes and traditional dance activities at school; providing after-school care for children; conducting awareness and recycling campaigns; starting vegetable gardens and soup kitchens; and presenting mosaic, beading, sewing and knitting classes to one another as community volunteers.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Roles of Volunteers in School-Community Partnerships

Community volunteers referred to four roles they played in school-community partnerships namely, the roles of prevention, intervention, capacity development, and income-generation. In identifying these sub-themes, I relied on the inclusion and exclusion criteria presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/sub-theme</th>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Role of volunteers in school-community partnerships</td>
<td>Data related to school-community partnerships where community volunteers played a role towards sustainable development.</td>
<td>Any data not related to the roles of volunteers in school-community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.1:</strong> Prevention role</td>
<td>Data that refer to efforts by community volunteers to avoid situations that may cause harm in schools or communities.</td>
<td>Data on efforts that do not reflect preventive measures for example intervention, shared development or generating income purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme/sub-theme</td>
<td>Inclusion criteria</td>
<td>Exclusion criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.2:</strong> Intervention role</td>
<td>Data that refer to mediation efforts by community volunteers to address challenges in schools or high-risk communities.</td>
<td>Data that do not relate to resolving existing challenges, such as the purposes of prevention, shared development or income-generating purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.3:</strong> Capacity development role</td>
<td>Data related to growing and developing together as a group of volunteers involved in school-community partnerships, and learning from one another.</td>
<td>Data on activities that do not reflect community volunteers’ growth and development, such as the purposes of prevention, intervention or income-generation purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1.4:</strong> Income-generation role</td>
<td>Data related to community volunteers developing new projects and sustaining existing ones for income purposes.</td>
<td>Data that do not relate to income-generation, such as the purposes of intervention, prevention or shared development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Prevention role**

This sub-theme relates to the role of community volunteers in preventing problems, both at schools and within school-communities. Reporting on ways to prevent potential problems within the school setting, one group of volunteers explained how they sold healthy food at school to prevent learners from eating fast foods or unhealthy meals, falling ill and as a result being absent from school. Within the community context, another group of participants reported that they attempted to fulfil this role by arranging awareness campaigns relating to drug abuse and other related issues. In this way, volunteers could share information with the community to help prevent such problems from occurring. Photograph 4.1 captures the idea of an awareness campaign as preventative measure that was presented during PRA session 1 by group 3.

Photograph 4.1: Reference to awareness campaign on drug abuse (01.10.2012)
In addition to this example, community volunteers mentioned that they used the HIV/AIDS policy introduced to them as part of the SHEBA intervention, to “educate children about HIV/AIDS” (PRA\(^7\) 1, Jul\(^8\), G\(^9\)4, page 2). In addition to educating children and community members on HIV/AIDS, the participants seemingly shared information with the purpose of assisting families affected by HIV-infection as they “educate the family on how to deal with a sick person” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). In discussing this information with others, community volunteers were allegedly aware of the importance of confidentiality as stipulated in the policy on HIV/AIDS and TB (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2009). This awareness is indicated in Photograph 4.2 which was taken when community volunteers presented their discussions on policies which were already available in the schools they were involved with (PRA 1, Jul, G1).

![Photograph 4.2: Participants highlighting the importance of confidentiality when discussing HIV/AIDS and related matters (09.07.2012)](image)

Community volunteers seemed aware of the importance of promoting health within schools and the community. They reportedly promoted this in various ways such as making the decision “to sell food for the kids at the school because there they sold junk food that made them sick and hyperactive” (PRA 3, Jan\(^10\), G3, page 20), and encouraging community members to have a “positive attitude” (FN\(^11\), Oct\(^12\), page 15) concerning their health. In schools, community volunteers apparently took the responsibility to “take learners to the clinic” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 6) when they became ill during school hours. In terms of health promotion in the workplace, they propagated for “HIV/AIDS and TB counselling treatment” (PRA 3, Jan, G2, page 21).

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\(^7\) Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA) session  
\(^8\) July 2012 – Date when the first PRA-based workshop took place  
\(^9\) Group  
\(^10\) January 2013 – Date when the third PRA session took place  
\(^11\) Field Notes  
\(^12\) October 2012 – Date when the second PRA session took place
4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Intervention role

This sub-theme relates to community volunteers taking measures to address challenges in school-communities. According to the data, community volunteers entered into some school-community partnerships for the sake of providing learner-targeted and structural intervention. In terms of learner-targeted intervention, participants mentioned that “we are there to act on behalf of children” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). Community volunteers reportedly assisted learners with homework and writing skills while learners waited to be fetched from school. While doing this, they apparently managed aftercare facilities where they were able to assist learners, as explained during a PRA-based workshop: “we managed the aftercare since we had seven children” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 14). This initiative is indicated in Photograph 4.3 below.

Participants elaborated by explaining that during aftercare and in the absence of the teacher during school hours, they would “assist the teacher in terms of assisting the learners, extended hand for teachers” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). Additionally, community volunteers communicated “with teachers about the child’s problem” (FN, Oct, page 16). This apparently resulted in teachers referring to community volunteers as “teacher aids” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). They reportedly also informed children about HIV/AIDS, and created opportunities for learners to participate in activities such as traditional dancing and drum majorettes at school. Furthermore, one group of community volunteers reported that they provided Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) with food.

In terms of structural intervention and support at school, community volunteers assisted with the cleaning of classrooms and school grounds. They explained: “…we clean classrooms and the school” (FN, Jul, page 15). Closely related, participants involved in one of the schools reported that they assisted with the pumping of water inside the school yard, saying that learners “…used to collect water with buckets but that changed” (FN, Jul, page 9). The water that was pumped by the parents was used for the toilets and cleaning classrooms. These
reports are captured in Photograph 4.4, taken when community volunteers reported on their progress during the second field visit in October 2012.

Photograph 4.4: Community volunteers’ progress report during second field visit (01.10.2012)

Community volunteers allegedly also networked with outsiders to promote services to schools, as captured in the following extract: “Community volunteers request Home Affairs people to visit schools so that learners could obtain birth certificates and identity documents especially for application and attainment of government social grants” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). Participants reportedly did this after identifying the needs of the school and community, and mobilising the resources that were available. Some mentioned a “one-stop centre” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 3) which was established in the community as part of their involvement in the school-community partnerships, where members of the community could access the services of lawyers, the South African Police Services, social workers and other public services.

4.2.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3: Capacity development role

Community volunteers indicated that their involvement in school-community partnerships enabled them to develop as a group. Participants seemingly regarded themselves as resources who could assist one another in addition to assisting teachers, learners and community members. They, for example, noted that they shared knowledge and skills, stating that they “gained a lot, especially beadwork” (FN, Jul, page 9). Photograph 4.5 supports this idea of volunteers developing and learning from one another.
Community volunteers specifically mentioned skills related to sewing, knitting and gardening. With regards to gardening, one group of community volunteers elaborated and explained that they would be receiving a “skills facilitation workshop on how to manage food gardening” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8). In furthering their gardening skills, the same group mentioned that “five people are for agricultural training” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8). Participants stated that while beading (part of the SHEBA intervention) they were “working together” (FN, Oct, page 9) and could therefore learn from one another. In addition to acquiring skills that are related to the SHEBA project, participants also “learned how people react in different circumstances” (FN, Oct, page 11), knowledge which seemingly further supported them in their own development.

4.2.1.4 Sub-theme 1.4: Income-generation role

This sub-theme relates to the ideas that community volunteers identified to generate income, by means of existing or new projects. In the process of assisting learners and the community, participating community volunteers identified several opportunities for potential income-generation and planned supportive projects accordingly. One of the projects they initiated that resulted in income-generation was a school-based vegetable garden, where vegetables were reportedly sold to community members to buy more seeds and equipment, and expand on the existing garden. In this regard, community volunteers mentioned that they arranged a “skills facilitation workshop on how to manage food gardening to generate income” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8). Participants reportedly also sold food at school: “We decided to sell food for the kids at the school” (PRA 3, Jan, G3, page 20).

One group of community volunteers explained that they knitted hats and scarves for the winter season which they sold at school and in the community, in order to generate an income to buy more material. They reported as follows: “We are crocheting hats and sell them to the community” (PRA 2, Oct, G4, page 13), and “We are to buy the material” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 16). Some of the products are captured in Photograph 4.6.
Another group of participants indicated that they sold chicken feet to teachers and community members for the purpose of generating an income in order to establish new projects and sustain existing ones. With the *imileqwa* (chicken feet) project, community volunteers had a specific aim and plan: “Our dream is to buy *imileqwa* with a price of R35… And we are going to sell them to teachers, community and volunteers” (PRA 2, Oct, G3, page 13). Community volunteers seemingly had the intention to continue with this project following my last field visit. They mentioned that “We are going to continue selling food at the school with the *imileqwa project*” (PRA 2, Oct, G2, page 17).

On Fridays, another group of community volunteers reportedly made hotdogs which they sold to learners and teachers at one of the schools. When planning this project, they said, “Every Friday we will sell hotdogs, it will be reasonable because it is at the primary grade R-7” (PRA 2, Oct, G3, page 17). This group of community volunteers apparently also planned to ask teachers for old clothes which they could auction to buy food for needy families. They reported: “We can contribute our clothes and ask for the teachers’ hand too and do an auction (sell) to the people in our community and others from other places, so that we can feed those who need food parcels” (PRA 2, Oct, G5, page 13). As time passed, community volunteers seemingly valued the progress they made in selling products, saying “Our selling project is really working” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 14). Towards the end of this study, participants indicated the intention to continue with other projects involving the selling of products, stating that “some of the things we want to sell are still ideas” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 14).

### 4.2.1.5 Findings on the roles of community volunteers in school-community partnerships

Theme 1 relates to the roles that community volunteers identified for their involvement in school-community partnerships. In this section I discuss the findings of this theme in terms of existing literature, highlighting correlations, contradictions and new insights gained.
(a) **Findings confirming existing literature on the role of community volunteers in school-community partnerships**

The findings of this study indicate that community volunteers firstly fulfilled a role of preventing certain problems from occurring by disseminating valuable information to community members through awareness campaigns. According to Chestnov (2012) and Joshua (2012), a crucial step in preventing problems involves the identification of gaps. This idea aligns with what the community volunteers did during the SHEBA project, as they identified what could potentially affect their schools and community, and then focused on preventing these.

The finding that community volunteers were eager to raise awareness among learners and community members, correlates with Chestnov’s (2012) acknowledgement that prevention measures are often used for raising awareness about a problem. Added to this sub-theme is the awareness that the magnitude and impact of the problem can be more damaging than just knowing that the problem exists (Chestnov, 2012).

In addition to the prevention role played by community volunteers, Grossman and Garry (1997) maintain that at times, children (as well as adults) need support, be it in a group setting or one-on-one, in terms of social, academic and various other aspects of their lives. In concurrence with Grossman and Garry (1997), I found that community volunteers in this study provided various kinds of support to learners, teachers and the community at large. For instance, volunteers helped community members to develop a positive attitude towards their health and supported teachers by taking learners to the clinic when they were sick.

As a way of dealing with the safety of children, I found that community volunteers watched over learners during the aftercare services they provided, and introduced them to different activities which they regarded as meaningful. This assisted in preventing learners from engaging in unhealthy behaviour, and as a way of ensuring their safety (Thürmann *et al.*, 2010). Lipsey *et al.* (2010) concur with this potential role of community volunteers, stating that intervention involves the monitoring of behaviour, and ensuring that good conduct is practised. These authors (Lipsey *et al.*, 2010:11) furthermore mention that the identification of potential interventions is important for facilitating “positive behavioural changes that will endure”.

In this study, I furthermore found that community volunteers learned skills from one another with the aim of enhancing the quality of their school-community plans. In view of these findings, George and Singer (2011) assert that volunteering can improve the quality of life as well as that of knowledge. In addition, the Department of Education and Skills in Sunderland, United Kingdom (2001) states that not only mutuality can be learnt, but that volunteers can also gain self-confidence, improved communication skills and a higher self-esteem through the act of volunteering.
(b) Contradicting findings on the roles of community volunteers in school-community partnerships

In their attempt to prevent challenges and intervene in schools and communities, community volunteers identified and mobilised relevant resources while developing school-community plans. They identified challenges as well as learners’ talents, and prevented and/or intervened accordingly. In contrast with this finding, Massachusetts (2012) perceives the school (especially teachers) as an entity that should liaise with external stakeholders who are established and have the potential to financially sponsor them. This apparent contradiction between literature pointing out that schools, specifically teachers, are role players in identifying needs and resources to address these needs, and this study indicating volunteers to be performing these functions, may perhaps be ascribed to teachers’ lack of time due to their workload, to pursue and establish partnerships. It may also be ascribed to community volunteers possibly knowing stakeholders better as they may have been interacting with them on different levels. These are however mere hypotheses, that require further investigation.

Community volunteers participating in this study, understood their purpose and role in school-community partnerships, they did not underestimate themselves when faced with difficult situations, and they did not blame themselves or feel inadequate. This finding is in contradiction with the view of Rehnborg et al. (2009) that volunteers will only want what the employer wants, with the aim of receiving money. On the contrary, I found that community volunteers in this study knew that the supportive plans they were developing were for the benefit of those they served, and not for them nor for the researchers. They thus planned and initiated projects according to the needs of their service recipients and not to what the researchers wanted.

This difference in findings may be related to the fact that many of the volunteers in this study had been fulfilling a role in the school-community for several years, or due to them feeling empowered to make a difference based on the asset-based philosophy underlying the SHEBA intervention. Further research is required in terms of these possibilities.

(c) New insights related to the roles of community volunteers in school-community partnerships

This theme adds new knowledge by highlighting intervention as important for promoting healthy development, as well as responding as early as possible to existing problems. This contributes to literature related to interventions being useful for meeting the daily needs of those receiving volunteer services (Duvenhage, 2009). For example, assisting community members and learners to acquire birth certificates and identity documents provided a way for community volunteers to address existing problems. Furthermore, assisting with the fixing of a water pump at a school, and mending a walkway are examples of ways in which community volunteers intervened and resolved problems in the community.
This theme further adds knowledge by indicating that learning to work in a team and managing relationships, are important skills gained through volunteering. This adds to existing theories on volunteering being viewed as a learning and development experience that may strengthen partnerships and facilitate shared growth (Abrahams & Matthews, 2011; Ryan, 2008). As they worked together, community volunteers developed confidence in themselves and in other people’s abilities, they learnt to listen to one another and respect other people’s views. In addition, when volunteers function as a group, service delivery can be improved, which in turn can promote group confidence and cooperation.

It was found that community volunteers did not always undertake projects close to where they lived and at times they needed to go to other places, for example to buy material and meet with potential sponsors. Thus, adding a new awareness for what potential income could be used for, they indicated that it was important that at least stipends be made available for transport, calling costs and food for volunteers. In this way, the findings of this study contribute to existing literature on the context and setting where volunteering activities may take place, for example in adverse areas where volunteers and community members tend to be dependent on one another, indicating that stipends would be useful for volunteers to support high-risk communities’ needs and challenges (Patel, 2005).

4.2.2 THEME 2: PARTNERS IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Three sub-themes form part of this theme, namely community volunteers as resources themselves, partners inside the school, and partners outside the school who collaborated with community volunteers to implement supportive plans. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of this theme and related sub-themes are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/sub-theme</th>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> Partners in school-community partnerships</td>
<td>Data related to current and potential stakeholders that can be approached for partnership purposes.</td>
<td>Data that do not relate to stakeholders that are perceived as beneficial to the community or school-community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 2.1:</strong> Community volunteers</td>
<td>Data related to community volunteers who have partnered with the school to develop and implement supportive plans.</td>
<td>Data related to partners within the school such as teachers and principals, and those outside the school such as government departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 2.2:</strong> Partners within the school</td>
<td>Data related to partners within the school setting that assist with the implementation of supportive plans.</td>
<td>Data that relate to people outside those in the school who partner with community volunteers for implementation of supportive plans, such as local companies or community volunteers themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sub-theme 2.3: Partners outside the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data related to stakeholders based outside the school context that hold the potential to sponsor and support community volunteers’ supportive plans.</td>
<td>Data that relate to people inside the school context that contribute to supportive plans, such as principals within the school, and community volunteers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Community volunteers as partners

Community volunteers seemingly perceived themselves as core partners in school-community partnerships as they fulfilled roles in networking, negotiating and acting on behalf of learners. According to their reports, they established and were involved in such partnerships in order to support schools and communities by means of supportive partnership plans. This allegedly ensured that they could become useful in the school as well as the community context.

At school level, community volunteers for example stated that they “…interacted with children at school…” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 6). Community volunteers were apparently “now used to teachers and they work well together” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). In terms of providing support on the school premises, community volunteers reported that they were involved in “construction of the walking path and the water tank” (PRA 2, Oct, G2, page 10).

Furthermore, community volunteers allegedly “assisted Grade R learners to write their names” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 5). They mentioned that they supported learners “after school even with subjects they struggle with” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 6). Community volunteers also reported that they “help learners with homework” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). According to the participants, if learners became sick during school hours, community volunteers would “take learners to the clinic when they are sick on behalf of the teacher” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 5), a support initiative also captured in Photograph 4.7.

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**Photograph 4.7:** Partnership with the school in support of children who needed medical care (10.07.2012)
At the community level, community volunteers allegedly provided information, physical and emotional support. They would reportedly “educate families on how to deal with a sick person” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). Furthermore, “for those bedridden community members, community volunteers get treatment from the clinic for them” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). Community volunteers were apparently concerned about the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its effects on the community, resulting in them developing a project on how to “communicate with a vulnerable child” (PRA 3, Jan, G2, page 21).

Reportedly, community volunteers also seemed concerned about children who did not attend schools, leading to the initiative where they would “interact with dropouts” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 6). It appears that community volunteers were furthermore concerned about OVCs as they stated that “we will go to the community and ask for their hand in old clothes, so that we can give to our OVCs” (PRA 2, Oct, G5, page 13).

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Partners within the school context

This sub-theme reports on partners inside the school context that community volunteers partnered with. Volunteers interacted with principals, teachers and members of the school governing body (SGB). In their partnerships with the school-community, the principal needed to be consulted beforehand: “at the same time go to the principal” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 16) for some projects. Community volunteers therefore allegedly developed supportive partnership plans which required of them to first “ask permission” (PRA 2, Oct, G2, page 17) from the school principal to implement such plans.

In addition to partnering with the principals, community volunteers stated that “we do according to channels like we do with meeting with the principal and SGB”. Thus, community volunteers secondly partnered with and assisted SGBs: “…the task team takes over and reports to the SGB later on” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 5). Prior to running the aftercare programme, community volunteers for example said that they had to “consult the SGB” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 7), and then “as soon as the agreement is reached from school management and SGB the aftercare can commence” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 7). Photograph 4.8 captures community volunteers’ declaration that they had to liaise with SGBs as partners in some of the supportive plans they initiated.
Community volunteers seemingly also partnered with teachers who in turn allegedly trusted them, as articulated in the following excerpt: “...liaise with the child’s environment so as to assist the teacher...” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). Collaboration between teachers and community volunteers as partners seemed evident, with teachers for example helping “community volunteers to identify OVCs at school” (PRA 1, Jul, G6, page 6). Community volunteers also assisted teachers in their classrooms, mentioning that they “help teachers in their classrooms when they are absent” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 5). Partnerships between teachers and community volunteers were apparently well established as community volunteers referred to themselves as “extended hands for teachers” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). In turn teachers called them “teacher aids” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5).

### 4.2.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Partners outside the school context

This sub-theme involves the partners outside the schools that the community volunteers partnered with. Volunteers formed such partnerships to mobilise available resources and improve community conditions. Community volunteers identified the following partners outside the school context: government departments (such as the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency [SASSA]), local clinics, the South African Police Service (SAPS), faith-based organisations (such as churches), as well as community members.

Community volunteers also mentioned a “one stop centre” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 3) involving professionals such as “police, social workers, doctors, prosecutors/NPA\(^{13}\) at the convenience of the community, open 24 hours” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 3), to which they would sometimes refer community members. In Photograph 4.9, a government department (the Department of Home Affairs) and a church are mentioned as partners with which the community volunteers collaborated.

\(^{13}\) National Prosecuting Authority – Institutes criminal proceedings on behalf of the State and carry out any necessary functions incidental to institution of criminal proceedings and discontinuation of such proceedings.
Community volunteers mentioned that they would “network according to the problem of the household” (FN, Oct, page 16). One group of community volunteers explained that at times they assisted to resolve conflict among family members, stating that they “give solutions to home conflicts” (PRA 1, Jul, G5, page 6), “hold a family conference to talk to the father and show him the impact of his behaviour in a non-judgemental manner” (PRA 1, Jul, G5, page 6). In these instances they thus partnered with individual family members, within the family system.

For learners to participate in activities such as drum majorettes, community volunteers reported that they had to “ask permission from parents” (PRA 3, Jan, G1 page 19). Similarly, the community volunteer who took responsibility for the aftercare project reportedly had to “call a meeting with parents and transport drivers, for parents to know that their children are safe and for drivers to know where to get the children” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 7).

Besides partnering with parents in the community, community volunteers engaged with various service providers and liaised with them in support of the community. These service providers include the Department of Home Affairs which the volunteers apparently arranged with to come to school so that the community could have easy access to the department’s services. For example, this network enabled community members to apply and obtain identity documents and birth certificates, after the volunteers took the initiative to: “request Home Affairs people to visit schools so that learners can obtain birth certificates and identity documents especially for application and attainment of government social grants” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5).

Local structures such as the SAPS therefore reportedly partnered with community volunteers, as in the following cases: “when the problem is out of our hands we involved local structures”
(PRA 1, Jul, G5, page 6). According to another group of community volunteers, in planning the awareness campaign against substance abuse they partnered with the “Department of Social Development, SANCA14 and social workers” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 8).

A group of community volunteers explained their partnership with the church. Reportedly, church officials created an opportunity for community volunteers to receive training from them: “community conference with reverend from St. Agnes…skills facilitation workshop on how to manage food gardening to generate income” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8). In this way, their own development was supported by the church they partnered with. Community volunteers were apparently also planning to engage international partners in future, as stated in the next excerpt: “exporting vegetables to Switzerland” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8).

4.2.2.4 Findings on partners in school-community partnerships

The current theme relates to partnerships that community volunteers formed, with the community itself and with different other role players such as local government departments, organisations, and faith-based groups. Participants namely partnered with other community volunteers, people in the school context, as well as people outside the school, taking hands with others in implementing school-community plans.

(a) Findings on partners confirming existing literature

Community volunteers seemingly played an important role in identifying the needs of learners and communities, as well as resources that could address these needs, and in mobilising and managing available resources and assets to fulfil the needs of the learners and the community. The findings of this study therefore indicate that community volunteers possess collaborative capacity to develop supportive school-community plans that may benefit learners, teachers and community members. This finding is in concurrence with PAVE’s (2011:39) statement that volunteers can help “strengthen individuals, communities” and schools, that they are a resource in themselves and that they add value in many different ways and at different levels in high-risk communities.

With their resourcefulness, community volunteers are able to identify gaps and creatively come up with solutions that can bring about change (PAVE, 2011). In the current study, this ability was evident in participating community volunteers supporting teachers by taking care of the classrooms when teachers were absent or busy. Other examples include assisting school governing bodies during emergencies.

In this study, it was found that community volunteers did not pursue their own interests while placing those of the people they were meant to serve as second priority. They did not expect any financial compensation for their services. This finding is in line with the view of Papadakis

14 South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – It is a non-governmental organisation whose major objectives are the prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug dependence.
et al. (2004) that a volunteer is someone who takes up an activity for no financial gain in order to benefit someone other than her/himself. In line with this view, I found that community volunteers gave up their time and effort to prevent problems and intervene during challenges faced by the bigger group. In further support of this finding, Now (2011) as well as Perpek (2012) state that by committing their time and effort, community volunteers can potentially benefit learners, teachers and other community members.

Chestnov (2012) confirms the finding that community volunteers partnered with various stakeholders for the development of supportive school-community plans, stating that partnerships are important as they highlight useful roles and different kinds of resources, such as human and financial resources. The roles fulfilled by the community volunteers and stakeholders in this study were to assist the school-communities in various ways, such as some learners receiving school uniforms and others receiving vegetables from the gardens, stemming from the participants’ collaboration with people such as sponsors and community members for obtaining school uniforms, and the church for distributing vegetables.

(b) Findings on partners that differ from existing literature

Community volunteers in this study worked collaboratively with the church and schools, but were not managed by these institutions as was the case in the Volunteering Development Plan (Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2009-2010), stating that some institutions may participate in the management of volunteers for better service delivery. As partners, community volunteers collaborated with these institutions with the aim of lending a hand where they could. A possible reason for this difference in findings could relate to the community volunteers in this study feeling confident about the services they could deliver based on them being a group supporting one another, therefore not requiring management by institutions. Another possibility is that the sound relationships that the volunteers had with partners may have resulted in schools and other partners trusting them. These are however mere hypotheses requiring further investigation.

With the current study, community volunteers were not paid (except for those receiving stipends from sponsors), however, they were trusted to support others in need, in the respective communities and schools. Community volunteers were for example trusted with tasks such as taking care of learners in the classrooms and handling difficult situations like resolving conflict in the community. However, in contrast with the finding on being trusted without remuneration, Rehnborg et al. (2009) found that some organisations may not want to work with volunteers due to the fact that, in addition to having to pay them, volunteers may lack skills and therefore cannot always be trusted. This contradictory finding could perhaps be ascribed to the volunteers in this study being familiar to the schools they supported, resulting in schools (and subsequently communities) more likely to trust them. Another possibility relates to the South African context, where the need of support in high-risk
communities is so high that any form of support is welcomed. These hypothetic reasons merit further research.

(c) **New insights on potential partners in school-community partnerships**

Regarding community volunteers’ potential role in the school context, this study indicates that volunteers can play an important role in assisting in classrooms, potentially reducing school failure and dropouts, and taking part in administrative tasks at schools. This finding contributes to existing literature on the specific tasks that volunteers may offer in school-communities (Simango, 2004).

Outside the school context, community volunteers in this study perceived the need to share valuable information with the community. They identified prevalent challenges and shared information through awareness campaigns. They did this by gathering community members and sharing information with them, on topics such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and the TB and HIV/AIDS pandemics. This finding adds to literature on the value of distributing information to the community in order to assist community members to adopt responsible behaviour and make informed decisions (Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service, 2009).

Besides sharing information that is needed by the community, community volunteers also saw it fit to address the challenge of documentation (community members obtaining identity documents and birth certificates) by inviting relevant government departments to assist learners and the community. In terms of this finding, the study indicates that community volunteers are resources that have the ability to instil moral rationales, as well as becoming effective actors of good conduct that can lead to responsible citizenship. Thus, this finding contributes to existing theory on volunteers fulfilling the role of mentors, being able to instil cultural, social, educative and economic values in children both inside and outside the school premises (United Way Worldwide, 2011).

This theme furthermore reveals that volunteers can play an important role in decision making in schools. Participating community volunteers liaised with SGBs and other role players in the schools to ensure that supportive school-community partnerships could be successful. Related to this finding is literature stating that volunteers can potentially influence the decisions of schools and positively become involved in decision-making processes, resulting in volunteers experiencing a sense of belonging (Crocoll, 2001; Konoé, 2011).

Finally, partnerships were not only established between community volunteers and people inside the school premises in the current study. Learners’ parents were also involved, which highlights parental involvement in school-related activities and meetings, as well as parents supporting their children’s learning and development, and assisting community volunteers in taking care of the school property and environment. While literature reveals limited parental involvement in high-risk school-communities, the use of volunteers can potentially improve
parental involvement as volunteers are often from the communities where parents reside and may therefore have easy access to the parents (Thürmann et al., 2010). This possibility however requires more research.

4.2.3 THEME 3: IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PLANS

Community volunteers seemingly followed certain phases in initiating and implementing school-community plans. Three sub-themes apply, namely the initiating phase (introduction of community volunteers to schools and community at large); implementation phase (community volunteers implementing supportive plans); and sustaining phase (community volunteers sustaining established partnerships and developed supportive plans). I summarise the inclusion and exclusion criteria I applied in identifying these sub-themes in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/sub-theme</th>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3:</td>
<td>Data related to the process of community volunteers initiating supportive plans and obtaining support from the community, gaining the community’s trust and ensuring the progress of initiatives.</td>
<td>Data that do not relate to procedures involved in starting supportive plans in the school/community. Any example of doing things that presents potential harm is also not included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 3.1: Initiating phase</td>
<td>Data related to the introduction of the involvement of community volunteers in supporting schools and communities.</td>
<td>Data that relate to implementation of supportive plans or to sustaining these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 3.2: Implementation phase</td>
<td>Data that relate to efforts and actions by community volunteers implementing and executing supportive plans.</td>
<td>Data that do not indicate community volunteers’ efforts to learn about and implement supportive plans, for example getting to know the community and its needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-theme 3.3: Sustaining phase</td>
<td>Data related to efforts to monitor the progress and ensure growth and expansion of partnership initiatives.</td>
<td>Data that do not refer to monitoring, growth and expansion of supportive plans, but that relate to the initiating and implementation phase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Initiating phase

This sub-theme entails community volunteers preparing and initiating supportive school-community plans. Community volunteers apparently experienced difficulty with trust in the community when initially attempting to support individuals and families. They mentioned that “…door-to-door activity was difficult since the community did not know the community volunteers” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). However, they seemingly overcame this challenge by creating name tags stating “who are you, where are you from, name of a group” (FN, Oct, page 17).
According to the community volunteers, they thus introduced themselves to the community, and built relationships with community members and schools as part of the initial contact phase. They mentioned that “overall good community partnership…with the passing of time community accepted community volunteers” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4). In addition to wearing name tags, they reportedly gained the trust of the community by showing respect during home visits, as captured in the following excerpt: “…win the community by respecting them and their culture” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 6).

It appears that teachers trusted community volunteers during the initiation of supportive plans. With regards to this relationship of trust, community volunteers stated that they “assist in the classroom during teachers’ absence” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). When learners seemed to experience challenges in school, teachers also seemed to trust volunteers in terms of them (volunteers) communicating “with teachers about child problem” (PRA 1, Jul, G6, page 7). Furthermore, as part of the initiating phase community volunteers identified at-risk learners, and the needs they displayed. During a PRA-session, they stated that they for example “identify learners without uniform” (PRA 1, Jul, G4, page 6).

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Implementation phase

After developing supportive plans for schools and the community, the participating community volunteers reportedly implemented their plans. During this phase, they had to first consult with the relevant partners as stakeholders. For example, when implementing a plan to sell food at school, they had to “ask permission from the principal, parents and SGB” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 7). For some projects, such as the aftercare project they explained that they also had to consult with parents as well as “…transport drivers…” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 7), as portrayed in Photograph 4.10.

After consultation with stakeholders and gaining permission to implement supportive plans, community volunteers had to execute the action plans they formulated as part of the SHEBA
project. Ensuring successful execution of their plans seemed to be of paramount importance during this phase, to ensure the good outcome of projects. For the gardening project, one group of community volunteers, for example, stated that they managed to attend a “skill facilitation workshop…” (PRA 1, Jul, G3, page 8) in support of their carrying out the formulated action plans. One of the reasons for implementing the vegetable garden was apparently to give back to at-risk families. Community volunteers mentioned that “the OVCs come to the centre to fetch the vegetables after school to take to their home for supper” (PRA 3, Jan, G2, page 19). This seemed to be the part where community volunteers extended the hand of partnership with the community at large.

During this phase, relevant policies were applied as community volunteers implemented their supportive plans. These policies include the Policy on Inclusive Education (Department of Education, 2001), Children’s Rights (Robinson, 2003), the Child Justice Act (Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, 2010), HIV/AIDS and TB Policy (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2009), Sexual Offences Act (Act No. 32 of 2007) and Divorce Act (Act 70 of 1979). Community volunteers seemingly viewed policies as able to “protect us and guide us” (FN, Jul, page 12). In their definition of policy they mentioned that it was a “constitution” (PRA 1, Jul, page 1) which is “important as it guides us in everything and everywhere” (PRA 1, Jul, G2, page 1). Community volunteers for example had operating policies in their schools and community prior to the SHEBA project although they stated that these policies were not formal. Community volunteers apparently had a safety policy where they took care of dangerous things around the school and had a first aid kit in case of emergency.

In implementing the Children’s Rights Policy (Robinson, 2003) one group of community volunteers explained that they were guided by the policy to “form OVCs support group” (PRA 3, Jan, G1, page 21). They also mentioned that they “worked with the community by teaching them how to take care of the children and how to communicate with the vulnerable children” (PRA 3, Jan, G2 page 21). In terms of the implementation of the HIV/AIDS and TB Policy, participants explained that they “provided prevention programmes and formed an HIV/AIDS and TB support group” (PRA 3, Jan, G1, page 21). Regarding the Child Justice Act (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2010) community volunteers mentioned that “we get together and find that person when we get him we call the police and arrest him. We don’t take law into our hands” (PRA 3, Jan, G2, page 21). Therefore, community volunteers seemed to understand and effectively make use of policies.

4.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3: Sustaining supportive initiatives

This phase involved growing, sustaining and promoting supportive initiatives, as well as monitoring the progress of the plans that had been implemented. In terms of growth and sustenance, a group of community volunteers reported that “our goal is to carry on with our work” (PRA 2, Oct, G4, page 13). With regards to sustaining their ongoing projects,
community volunteers mentioned that “we will continue with the aftercare” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 13). Another group furthermore mentioned that, “we are going to continue selling the food at the school” (PAR 2, Oct, G2, page 15).

Some projects were not yet completed at the time of data generation, such as sewing and beading. With regards to these projects, community volunteers mentioned that “we are to buy the material and borrow the sewing machine” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 16), and “we will also try to do beads” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 13). Community volunteers thus seemed committed to access the necessary means in seeing to it that their planned projects were successfully implemented and sustained. In terms of growth and promoting partnerships, community volunteers stated that “next year we are marketing ourselves to cater for SHEBA” (PRA 2, Oct, G2, page 13), indicating the possibility that community volunteers were ready for growth and expansion. Photograph 4.11 shows community volunteers’ willingness to take their projects forward.

![Photograph 4.11: Community volunteers marketing themselves (01.10.2012)](image)

4.2.3.4 Findings on the phases involved in supportive school-community plans

Theme 3 pertains to the procedures that community volunteers followed while developing, implementing and monitoring supportive school-community plans. In their approach, community volunteers kept in mind that they were not serving themselves, but learners and the rest of the community. They had to remain conscious of the differences between themselves and the people they serve, and needed to respect the people they served and partnered with. Most importantly, they had to be transparent with their plans in order to gain the trust of the community and their partners.

(a) Findings that confirm existing literature on the phases involved in supportive school-community plans

In line with the implementation phase of the supportive plans, I found that in applying relevant policies, community volunteers gained protection for themselves and for those they serve.
Additionally, these policies guided participating community volunteers to communicate with partners and clients without crossing boundaries. The application of these policies seemed useful as it allegedly facilitated cooperation between the partners involved in the school-community partnerships. These findings are supported by Massachusetts (2012) who states that communication and cooperation play an important role in the successful implementation of supportive plans as every partner’s contribution needs to be demonstrated. Furthermore, regarding these findings, policies were found to be seen as assets that community volunteers could consult for guidance and rely on when uncertain about something in the field.

I found that even after initiating and implementing supportive plans, community volunteers were eager to sustain the partnerships they formed, as well as the supportive plans they devised. In doing this they could also lure other community members and promote joint community participation. This finding is in agreement with Crocoll’s (2001) view that volunteering provides an effective way to influence public participation in governmental operations and decision-making processes.

During these phases, I furthermore found that community volunteers showed respect when conducting home visits and therefore promoted education and cooperation with families and other community members as part of the supportive school-community plans. In this way, community volunteers “flocked” together to their collective benefit (Ebersöhn, 2012). In support of this, Burke (2001:49) states that in most cases volunteers “improve citizenship” and serve as an efficient channel “to educate” individuals about the virtues of public service.

Finally, this study indicates that community volunteers were able to maintain established partnerships and monitor the supportive plans they had initiated. Molly et al. (1995) concur that the strengthening of partnerships will contribute to successful progress of action plans and monitoring of intervention strategies. Molly et al. (1995) furthermore confirm that collaboration can promote sustainable resources when partners notice positive outcomes regarding school and community challenges, and then continue with their efforts to address other challenges (Molly et al., 1995). Bernard and Bugoa (2010) agree that by sustaining supportive plans, partnerships will be strengthened and links between schools and community kept alive.

(b) Findings that contradict existing literature on the phases of school-community supportive plans

Community volunteers who participated in this study had to go to their communities, introduce themselves and interact with individuals before initiating supportive plans. During these times, community volunteers were seemingly able to easily communicate with the community members in their mother tongue. In contrast with this finding, the Volunteering Development Plan (2009-2010) found that language is generally an obstacle between volunteers and their service recipients. This contradiction in findings may perhaps be
ascribed to the fact that many of the volunteers in this study reside in the school-community (and language context) they work in. This hypothesis merits more research.

Another contradiction lies in the finding that the community volunteers in this study had to introduce themselves and build trusting relationships with community members, while findings of a study by Manero et al. (2010) indicate that volunteers are usually known to the community they work in. This difference in findings may be ascribed to the untrusting (at first) and unsupportive environment in which community volunteers often live, where fellow community members may be hard to trust. This could further be due to the level of trust that the community had, being seemingly hesitant to invite volunteers into their homes. However, further research is required on these hypotheses.

After establishing relationships of trust, community volunteers in this study however played a primary role in liaising with schools and the outside community, including parents. They are the ones who did home visits and reported back to the teachers about learners’ wellbeing. Furthermore, community volunteers were the ones who identified school and community needs and ways to address these. Contrary to this finding, Madison (2000) is of the perception that during school-community partnerships, teachers will play the principal role in terms of consultation with parents and other community members. I can therefore hypothesise that this contradiction may have resulted from the fact that community volunteers in this study were perceived as independent and in a better position to communicate with the outside community on behalf of teachers, given that teachers may have limited time or due to the size of their classes and the associated workload. This is a mere hypothesis which requires further investigation.

(c) New insights on the phases in school-community plans

I found that community members had some doubts about the authenticity of community volunteers and were therefore sceptical to allow them into their homes. This finding contributes to existing literature that community volunteers possess the potential to build communities characterised by trust, despite factors such as crime that may impair good relations and collective trust (Wasco, 2003).

Aligned with this and also new to this theory, is that prior to implementing supportive plans, people need to know who is responsible for the development of plans. In addition to this, a need first has to be identified so that intervention strategies can be planned accordingly. In support of community members wanting to know community volunteers, and in community volunteers recognising a need, it is imperative to know which people are affected and how they are affected. This finding relates to existing literature on volunteers’ role of support, and the associated relationships and actions of addressing needs (Hager & Brudney, 2004).

The findings of this study furthermore add new knowledge by revealing awareness that not everyone will take the leading role during the process of volunteering, yet that volunteers will
learn from one another, take note of mistakes and rectify these as projects progress. This relates to community volunteers respecting and supporting one another. This theme also highlights the importance of all partners being involved in order for them to take ownership of supportive plans and be more responsible for improving school and community circumstances, which is what community volunteers in this study set out to achieve. These findings thus contribute to existing theory on the role of collaboration and mutual support (Patel, 2005).

4.2.4 Theme 4: Challenges volunteers experienced in school-community partnerships

This study was conducted in a high-risk school-community facing a variety of contextual challenges in terms of available resources and support. Three categories of challenges were identified as sub-themes by the participants, while planning and implementing supportive school-community plans. These are namely: material constraints; lack of support by school-community stakeholders, and limited Special Needs Education (SNE). The inclusion and exclusion criteria I relied on are summarised in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/sub-theme</th>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4:</strong></td>
<td>Data related to difficulties experienced by community volunteers within school-</td>
<td>Data that do not relate to challenges experienced in the context of school-community partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>community partnerships.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sub-theme 4.1:</strong> Material constraints</td>
<td>Data related to a lack of physical provisions to allow smooth facilitation of</td>
<td>Data that relate to support or limited services as challenges experienced by community volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sub-theme 4.2:</strong> Lack of support by school-community stakeholders</td>
<td>Data related to lack of support by the community and potential partners.</td>
<td>Data that relate to physical constraints or limited services as challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sub-theme 4.3:</strong> Limited Special Needs Education</td>
<td>Data related to limited service provision in the context of SNE.</td>
<td>Data that refer to challenges of physical constraints or an unsupportive environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Material constraints

This sub-theme captures the challenges encountered by community volunteers when developing and implementing supportive school-community plans; specifically in terms of material constraints. Community volunteers reported a lack of sufficient equipment and material to work with in order to complete some of the supportive projects they envisioned. According to the participating community volunteers, specifically the gardening and sewing projects were affected. The community volunteers explained: “…there is space, but its full of
rocks and it is difficult to be used for gardening” (PRA 2, Oct, G1, page 14), and “a garden we didn’t get soil and equipment” (PRA 3, Jan, G5, page 21).

The soil where community volunteers thought they would plant seeds was apparently declared as infertile and allegedly delayed implementation of the gardening project as reported on: “we did not do the garden because of the soil problems” (PRA 2, G1, Oct, page 10). In terms of sewing, participants explained that they were “struggling with material like wool and needles” (FN, Jul, page 10), and that “we did not have the material; we did not have the machines” (PRA 2, Oct, G3, page 14). Photograph 4.12 captures this challenge that community volunteers encountered in initiating the sewing project.

![Photograph 4.12: Challenge with sewing project (09.07.2012)](image)

For some projects to be successful, community volunteers depended on the presence of learners. However, learner absenteeism seemed to be a prominent challenge experienced by the participants. Learners were reportedly absent because they, or family members, were ill. They explained: “community volunteers act on behalf of children especially those who are absent from school due to sick family members” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 5). Other learners were apparently absent because of adverse weather conditions: “classes being flooded after heavy rain and that will make the learners not to come to school the next day or the whole week because of water in the classes” (PRA 2, Oct, G4, page 15).

4.2.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Lack of support by school-community stakeholders

This sub-theme depicts the lack of support that community volunteers experienced from community stakeholders, in terms of sponsorships and financial assistance required for the proposed projects. Community volunteers reported a lack of support from community members, due to some mistrust from community members as they reportedly did not know the volunteers and their role in the school-community. The community seemed hesitant to open their homes to people they did not know and perceivably could not trust at that time.
Community volunteers reported that, “it was difficult at first since the community did not know the community volunteers” (PRA 1, Jul, G1, page 4).

Community volunteers also seemed to experience the challenge of theft of equipment, which inhibited successful implementation of the projects. They reported that they “…struggling with tools, there were tools that were stolen at school…” (FN, Jul, G3, page 10). The participants summarised this challenge as captured in Photograph 4.13.

Another challenge experienced by community volunteers was obtaining sponsorships to buy equipment. Community volunteers reported that they struggled to find sponsorships for their projects, mentioning that they had to “pop out from own pockets” (FN, Jul, page 9) for the success of supportive plans. Photograph 4.14 provides an indication of this challenge.

4.2.4.3 Sub-theme 4:3: Limited SNE

This sub-theme deals with difficulties concerning limited specialised service provision that learners could potentially benefit from. Community volunteers held the perception that all
learners have the right to be in a school regardless of their learning styles and pace. In cases where learners could potentially benefit from special school education, they were generally not referred as there was a reported lack of these schools in the area. The participants stated: “there is a lack special needs schools” (PRA 1, Jul, G5, page 4). In addition, limitations existed in terms of specialists in the area, such as psychologists and special needs teachers, with, “only one psychologist available” (PRA 1, Jul, G5, page 4).

4.2.4.4 Findings on challenges related to school-community partnerships

This theme is concerned with the challenges that community volunteers experienced when initiating school-community plans. Considering the fact that community volunteers reside in a high-risk area, they experienced several challenges that hindered the implementation and progress of supportive school-community plans. Some supportive plans could not be implemented because equipment was stolen, while the environment did not seem conducive for other projects. In some cases, certain services required to best serve learners, were lacking. However, community volunteers still did their best to ensure that the recipients of their services were satisfied despite perceived challenges. While some challenges were beyond community volunteers’ control, partners in and outside the schools assisted with the intervention processes.

(a) Findings on challenges confirming existing literature

It proved difficult for community volunteers to get projects off the ground where there was a shortage of equipment and insufficient material, often caused by lack of money and sponsorships. This finding is supported by Alexandra and Bakir (2010) indicating that apart from potential sponsors being sceptical about the success of volunteer-driven projects they are asked to fund, sponsorship and funding are generally limited in the South African context. Furthermore, a lack of collaboration with relevant partners may result in failure to attain goals and implement projects (Bodilly et al., 2004).

I found that community members initially mistrusted community volunteers in terms of their identity and doubted that they truly had the interest of the community at heart. This made the establishment of partnerships and the development of some of the projects hard. Black et al. (1999) agree that in a partnership characterised by a lack of trust, it will be difficult to get some things done and some goals achieved.

Another finding indicates that community volunteers found it difficult to establish and sustain some projects for example when their equipment was stolen. Dryfoos (2002) attests to the fact that, for a partnership between a school and the community to prosper, support from both sides is important. Closely aligned with the theft and mistrust experienced by the community volunteers in this study, O'Donoghue and Davies (2010) found that networking and being in constant communication with each other would prevent theft from occurring. As this study did
not explore the reasons and subsequent incidences of theft, further research in this area is required.

The last challenge mentioned by the participants involved learners’ absenteeism due to health issues of families or at times due to an obstructive teaching and learning environment owing to for example unfavourable weather conditions. In support of this finding, Black et al. (1999) state that the learning and teaching environment plays an important role in learners’ performance, and that a conducive learning and teaching environment will produce more positive academic outcomes. Additionally, Dyson et al. (2002) indicate that a conducive teaching and learning environment may guarantee a learning culture that will incorporate the school and the broader community and contribute to learners’ success.

(b) Findings on experienced challenges that differ from existing literature

Even though the community volunteers lacked financial means and sponsorships, they still managed to reach their planned goals. PAVE (2011:9) is of the idea that volunteering “demands secure and sustainable funding”, thereby contradicting the findings of this study. I hence hypothesise that, when sponsorships are provided, the implementation of supportive plans can potentially be improved and more people may benefit. However, this hypothesis requires further research.

As schools and the church provided infrastructure for the community volunteers to be productive and implement their supportive plans, some of them did not require additional facilities. According to the Volunteering Development Plan (2009-2010), established structures and at some point even provision from government departments, are basic requirements for volunteers to implement supportive plans. This contradicts the finding of this study that community volunteers struggled with equipment and material, and as a result had to raise funds for themselves at a certain point. This difference in findings could be due to the fact that participating community volunteers perceived themselves and the resources that existed in their school-communities as adequate for the projects they pursued. The difference could also be based on the fact that sponsorships are rare in the context where this study was undertaken. These are however, hypotheses that require further investigation.

White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001), that was incorporated into the discussions with community volunteers in this study, states that every learner can learn with support and whichever support the learner needs should be provided at the school where the learner is enrolled. The conditions of the schools where the community volunteers are involved could hardly support learners if the community volunteers did not offer their services. This statement by the White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) thus contradicts the conditions and environment of the schools in the area where community volunteers have been involved.
Trained special needs education teachers and facilities at schools are generally lacking in South Africa (Lewis et al., 2010). This difference in findings could relate to the fact that the community where this study was conducted is a high-risk area where services are limited and trained professionals are scarce. It may also be because inclusive education or the White Paper 6 has not been fully implemented in many high-risk school-communities. These hypotheses merit further research.

(c) New insights on challenges in school-community partnerships

This theme indicates that funders may be sceptical about funding volunteers’ efforts, as they may doubt the success of partnerships. This relates to sponsors lacking trust in terms of community volunteers’ capacity to succeed in their projects. To this end, the theme adds new insight by stating that if trust is lacking, cooperation will be prevented and one party may end up being detrimental to the other. This finding makes a contribution to existing literature (such as Alexandra & Bakir, 2010) indicating that funding is often lacking for volunteer efforts, especially in the South African context, due to issues such as poverty, and lack of trust in the success of projects, as well as a lack of trust in volunteers to handle financial resources.

Another new insight added by this study relates to the significance of community volunteers identifying assets that can be mobilised to assist them in initiating and sustaining projects. Identification of assets in the community and knowing who is willing to help out and how, can assist community volunteers in any context in successfully achieving their goals. In adding to existing literature, these findings highlight the fact that community volunteers can play a role in closing the gap between schools and communities by assisting with the identification, mobilising and managing of assets and resources, as well as the forming and maintaining of partnerships (Penner, 2002). The contribution made by this study therefore relates to the theory that school-communities and volunteers can work together to assist one another in addressing challenges (Ebersohn, 2012).

Due to an apparent lack of services, it was found that at times, learners with barriers did not consult specialists or ended up being misdiagnosed, often at a later stage when the challenge had escalated and could be more difficult to remediate. These findings indicate how mainstream school teachers are faced with challenges and need to fulfil multiple roles in supporting these learners. This theme further highlights the lack of support for learners who are in need of additional support.

Additionally, this theme also raises awareness that early identification can possibly lead to early prevention of some barriers. However, mainstream teachers are not trained to address special needs and may therefore lack the skills to identify barriers to learning. In contributing to existing literature, community volunteers can be viewed as useful resources to assist schools (and other organisations they are involved in) with the day-to-day running of the
organisation when human resources are limited, and that they may be trained and subsequently utilised as para-professionals (Hager & Brudney, 2004).

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented the results and findings of the study. I discussed the results in terms of the themes and sub-themes which emerged during thematic data analysis. In support of my discussion, I included verbatim quotations taken from the data sources. I subsequently discussed the findings of the study against the background of existing literature.

In the following and final chapter of this dissertation of limited scope, I come to conclusions by revisiting the research questions, I identify limitations of the current study and present the potential contributions of the study. Finally, I provide recommendations for future studies, training and practice.

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CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, I reported the results of the study and discussed the findings. I highlighted correlations and contradictions between the findings of this study and those captured in existing literature. I also identified new knowledge gained as a result of the study.

In this chapter, I provide a synopsis of the preceding chapters. I draw conclusions by revisiting the research questions formulated in Chapter 1. I reflect on the potential value of the study and identify the challenges encountered, as well as the limitations of the study. I then formulate recommendations for training, practice and future research.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study and stated my rationale and purpose for undertaking this study. In introducing the study I briefly explored current literature relating to the research topic. I formulated research questions and clarified concepts key to the study. I also introduced my chosen theoretical, epistemological and methodological stances. I concluded Chapter 1 by referring to the ethical guidelines I considered during the course of the study, my role as researcher, as well as the quality criteria I adhered to in attempting to complete a rigorous study.

Chapter 2 constituted a literature review. In this chapter, I explored existing literature related to the phenomenon I set out to explore. I firstly discussed the concept of volunteering in terms of its definition, meaning in the context of vulnerability as related to South Africa, and the role that community volunteers can potentially play in supporting high-risk communities and schools. I also discussed benefits and challenges that volunteers typically face.

Next, I explored the policies that were discussed with the community volunteers who participated in this study as part of the SHEBA intervention. I referred to definitions and the relevance of the policies to the work of community volunteers. In addition, I discussed selected policies that relate to the work of volunteers even though these policies are not included in the SHEBA intervention. I concluded the chapter by presenting my selected theoretical framework, being the asset-based approach.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the research design and methodology in detail. I explained PRA as selected methodological paradigm and interpretivism as the meta-theory I relied on. I elaborated on the case study research design I utilised, and explained how I selected the case and participants. I also discussed the data generation, documentation and analysis
strategies I employed. I concluded the chapter by explaining the ethical guidelines I adhered to and the strategies I employed to enhance the rigour of the study.

In Chapter 4, I reported the results of the study and discussed the findings in terms of existing literature. I presented the results in terms of the four themes I identified and their respective sub-themes. The main themes that emerged concern the roles of community volunteers in school-community partnerships, who they partnered with for the benefit of schools and the community, the phases of implementation of supportive plans, and the challenges typically faced by community volunteers. In presenting the results, I included verbatim quotations, referred to visual data and related my field notes to the discussions I presented. In presenting the findings of the study, I highlighted correlations, contradictions and new knowledge while situating the findings of this study within existing theory.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I draw conclusions in terms of the research questions formulated in Chapter 1. I first discuss the secondary research questions and then attend to the primary question.

5.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Which risks do community volunteers identify in high-risk school-communities that may require support?

Community volunteers identified risks on various levels where they could potentially provide support to children, teachers, the school and the community at large. In providing support to children, community volunteers were able to reach out to children within and outside the school premises. Inside the school premises, community volunteers identified certain health-related needs among learners and addressed these by for example taking learners to healthcare facilities when they were sick during school hours, or providing them with healthy meals, in an attempt to promote a healthy lifestyle among learners. In addition, community volunteers identified the risk of learners’ safety and as a result developed an aftercare programme and assisted learners with homework. As part of ensuring that learners felt safe, community volunteers directed younger learners to their classrooms when they seemed lost.

Community volunteers also identified the risk of latecomers negatively effecting the functioning of the school, and in support, they contributed to maintaining order in the schools where they worked. In further support of the functioning of the schools where they provided their services, community volunteers developed school-based plans. These included cleaning of school facilities, establishing vegetable gardens and soup kitchens for high-risk learners, and addressing material needs, as well as providing aftercare to learners to address the potential need for safety. They also identified and addressed material needs by providing some learners with school uniforms and jerseys, after networking with community members and stakeholders to obtain these uniforms.
Outside the school premises, community volunteers identified the risk of the children’s safety and guarded them when they played in public spaces. After identifying the risk of community members not accessing support services, community volunteers assisted them to address this risk by helping community members obtain birth certificates and identity documents, as well as assisting some with applications for social grants. In this way, they supported community members to address the financial risk faced by some. Closely related, some community members were supported with accessing medical treatment from health facilities, in cases where community volunteers identified and thus addressed health-related risks.

Given these findings, I can conclude that community volunteers who participated in the SHEBA intervention were able to identify risks and areas for potential support in the school-communities, and then plan and implement supportive initiatives. This conclusion applies to them supporting learners, teachers (schools) and community members. I posit that such efforts of community volunteers may potentially have a positive effect on the functioning of schools and subsequently the performance of learners, by amongst other things, supporting lesson presentation and discipline in class.

Where they identified a risk, community volunteers in this study were able to collaborate and mobilise existing resources to support teachers and learners to overcome challenges. For example, by becoming involved in establishing vegetable gardens and initiating related projects, community volunteers in this study found a way of generating income to initiate and sustain other supportive projects that could address the material risk in the community. I thus argue that an intervention based on the asset-based approach can equip volunteers to be able to identify risks and needs in the contexts where they work, and then address these by mobilising assets and resources in the environment.

5.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2
How can community volunteers assist teachers to provide support in high-risk school-communities?

The findings of this study indicate that community volunteers were able to identify various ways of supporting teachers to serve the school-community where they worked. Community volunteers namely started assisting teachers in the day-to-day running of the school. Even though the participating volunteers were reportedly initially viewed by teachers as people who could potentially take over their role, teachers soon realised that the community volunteers intended to help. Community volunteers assisted teachers in their classrooms by, for example, managing and assisting sick learners to receive medical attention. In this way, teachers could focus on presenting lessons.

Community volunteers furthermore assisted teachers and the functioning of the school by providing aftercare for learners and ensuring that learners reached their classes on time and trouble-free, thereby attending to the safety of learners during and after school hours. In the
classrooms, community volunteers assisted to maintain order at times when teachers could not be in class or were busy. They ensured that learners behaved and did not disrupt the functioning of the school. In terms of school work, community volunteers assisted some of the Grade R learners in learning how to write their names, thereby lessening the load of teachers, specifically in large classes were it was difficult for one teacher to provide individual attention to every learner. I postulate that this resulted in teachers subsequently calling community volunteers teachers’ aids.

Community volunteers also liaised with stakeholders in the environment, for example learners’ families, in order to provide teachers with the relevant information required to support learners. Community volunteers did this because teachers did not have time to visit learners’ homes to obtain the information themselves. The ultimate aim was to support learners in the best possible way. In this regard, I argue that community volunteers were assets themselves, in addition to learners’ families, in collaboratively addressing needs and supporting the learning and development of learners.

In further supporting teachers to experience and provide a conducive teaching and learning environment, community volunteers assisted with the cleaning of classrooms and the school premises. They also helped with fixing a water pump that is used by one of the schools, and rebuilt the walkway where learners and teachers walk to avoid mud when it rains. I therefore posit that community volunteers in this study were able to mobilise existing resources to assist teachers on various levels, thereby supporting them and making it easier for them to fulfil their role in the school.

5.3.3 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

Which school-community plans can community volunteers develop as part of an asset-based intervention to assist teachers to provide support in high-risk school contexts?

Community volunteers in this study collaborated with teachers and the relevant school-communities in developing supportive school-community partnership projects. These include projects focusing on school and classroom support, maintenance of school premises, income-generation, socio-economic support, aftercare provision to learners, psycho-educational support, as well as extracurricular activities.

In terms of school and classroom support, community volunteers supported teachers by attending to discipline and managing learners in teachers’ absence. Community volunteers started this initiative after realising that teachers were often burdened by heavy workloads in terms of teaching the curriculum, as well as attending to additional responsibilities. Community volunteers assisted by directing learners who arrived late at school to their classrooms, thereby regulating late-coming. Community volunteers developed these supportive plans as a way of promoting order and enhancing the general functioning of the
school. The successful implementation of the supportive plans resulted in the school-community starting to call the community volunteers “teacher aids”.

Next, the community volunteers in this study identified the need for a conducive teaching environment and started to assist with maintenance of the school premises by assisting for example with cleaning the school facilities and school grounds. They also assisted learners to clean their classrooms and toilets, and helped with other maintenance tasks at the school, such as fixing the water pump and the walkway.

Community volunteers furthermore initiated various income-generating projects to raise money so that they could establish more projects and sustain existing ones. One of the projects entailed creating products through sewing, knitting and beading, such as scarves, hats and beaded jewellery, to sell to the community. Starting vegetable gardens was another way of generating income, as the produce could be sold to the community. Another project focused on selling healthy food at school, and was initiated when community volunteers realised that learners’ hyperactivity and lack of concentration could be reduced due to junk food intake. Selling healthy food to learners could potentially promote healthy eating habits and a healthy lifestyle, while also raising funds for other projects. Furthermore, some community volunteers started imilexwa (chicken feet) project, which entailed the selling of chicken feet to the community with the aim of generating income to start new projects and sustain existing ones, such as buying more healthy food to sell at school.

The projects initiated by the community volunteers also served as socio-economic support to high-risk learners. For example, through establishing vegetable gardens and starting soup kitchen projects, community volunteers could provide high-risk learners with healthy food, as well as giving some of the vegetables to learners to provide for their families. The sewing and knitting activities helped to provide high-risk learners with school jerseys and other much needed clothing. These supportive plans aimed to address the risks associated with poverty in the community.

Through the aftercare project, community volunteers looked after learners while they waited for transport, thereby addressing the risk of safety. During this time, community volunteers also assisted learners with homework, and taught some of the Grade R learners how to write their names. Community volunteers furthermore developed psycho-educational support projects since problems such as crime, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as teenage pregnancy, are prevalent in the school-communities where they work. Such psycho-educational support projects included an awareness campaign to inform learners about the dangers of substance abuse, and referring those who abused substances such as drugs and alcohol to a rehabilitation centre. In addition, community volunteers joined hands with the community at large to help them overcome these challenges.
In terms of projects focusing on extracurricular activities, community volunteers engaged learners in activities such as drum majorettes and traditional dancing, with the aim of keeping them off the streets and preventing them from becoming involved in crime or other forms of misconduct.

In conclusion, I posit that community volunteers are in a position and possess the necessary skills to formulate and develop supportive school-community plans that are relevant to the needs of schools, families and the community at large. They are able to identify, mobilise and manage existing assets at their disposal and in this sense they can become resources to their school-communities. As community volunteers were mapping resources in this study, they identified the needs of learners and community members and then mobilised available resources to fulfil the identified needs.

Community volunteers furthermore managed the recognised resources to sustain school and community development. I thus conclude that community volunteers collaboratively constructed knowledge, and provided direction to the projects they initiated with partners, ensuring that those who needed help received it. Community volunteers in this study therefore linked available resources and worked together with teachers and the community at large in developing supportive school-community plans.

5.4 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The potential contribution of this study is threefold. It adds to existing theory on volunteering and the potential role of volunteers in school-community contexts, more specifically in terms of the skills involved in volunteering, and how community volunteers can apply the asset-based approach in school-community partnerships, to support schools and communities. In addition, the study makes a practical contribution in terms of the establishment and sustenance of partnerships. Lastly, the findings add to existing theory on the asset-based approach.

Existing theory on volunteering is characterised by various descriptions of the concept, as perceived by a range of authors in different circumstances. This study elaborates on existing definitions by describing community volunteers as resources in both school and community contexts, where volunteers can establish trusting relationships with school-communities and partners outside the school context in order to support others in need. This study thus situates the definition of community volunteers within the theory of the asset-based approach by defining community volunteers as resources that are driven by collaboration and a willingness to identify, mobilise and manage assets available to the community in order to use these for addressing prevailing challenges.

Closely related, this study informs theory on the process of volunteering by showing how volunteers can rely on relevant policies to plan and facilitate supportive work and protect those they serve, as well as themselves, specifically in the South African context. In this way,
policies relied on by community volunteers served as resources to be used when supporting others or addressing prevailing challenges, hence relating to the collective construction of knowledge and plans when addressing challenges, as the asset-based approach suggests. Community volunteers can do this by identifying the kind of information or resources that are lacking in school-communities and then utilising these to provide for the needs they identify.

In terms of the practical contribution of the study, the findings indicate potential ways in which volunteers can establish school-community plans to the benefit of high-risk school-communities. Community volunteers namely gained skills such as beading, knitting and sewing, as well as gardening during the course of this study. They gained problem solving skills and could subsequently resolve problems when they arose without the help of facilitators. Furthermore, they built and maintained relationships with community stakeholders and learnt how other people behaved in certain situations, as background to the role they could fulfil in supporting school-communities.

The asset-based approach deems relationships as imperative when dealing with adversities. In this way, assets and resources can be linked to construct informed and relevant supportive plans, with community volunteers working as a team with school-communities, as well as external stakeholders to ensure development. In turn, community volunteers in this study also gained skills. These skills allowed them to gain insight into how to generate income in order to initiate and sustain identified school-community plans, subsequently supporting people in high-risk contexts. As the community volunteers in this study were able to share information with people while being involved in the study, they will be able to use what they have learnt when informing other people in similar situations in future.

Further value regarding the practice of volunteering, relates to the process followed by community volunteers in approaching school-community partnerships. The findings from the study highlight a certain phases for establishing and implementing school-community partnerships and supportive plans. This process implies some skills development by community volunteers. More specifically, it is important for volunteers to not only enter into partnerships, but to also have a plan on how to approach and continue with partnerships serving schools and communities. This is what the asset-based approach views as beneficial for advancing and promoting sustainable development. In applying the findings of this study, professionals in the field of Educational Psychology or related helping professions may find the description of such practice valuable, in the work of volunteers.

As indicated throughout, this study adds to existing theory on the asset-based approach. As the community where this study was conducted is a high-risk community, the community volunteers had to be innovative in getting their interventions off the ground. Knowledge of the asset-based approach seemingly enabled them to identify and utilise existing skills and resources among themselves as individuals and as a group.
In addition to community volunteers being assets themselves, the asset-based approach also supported them in identifying and utilising existing resources and services to serve learners, teachers and the community at large. Community volunteers in turn innovated interventions that were useful and relevant, thus empowering themselves to equip other volunteers with the skills they had gained. Furthermore, the asset-based approach assisted them in establishing partnerships and working relationships with various stakeholders, which in turn strengthened their supportive school-community plans.

5.5 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, generalisability of the findings cannot be assumed. However, it was not my intention to generalise, based on the selected meta-theoretical paradigm of interpretivism, stating that knowledge creation involves a process of interaction, with the aim of gaining insight into unique context-specific experiences. In line with the selected research design (case study), I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon so that I could provide rich descriptions of the operation of community volunteers in a specific context (school-community context). The decision lies with the reader how transferable the findings are to similar studies and contexts, based on the information provided in this dissertation of limited scope.

Next, the susceptibility of subjectivity as a qualitative researcher implies a potential limitation. However, I did not strive for objectivity in the study, but rather aimed at gaining insight into the way in which community volunteers developed supportive school-community plans by interacting with them. Throughout, I guarded against bias and regularly reflected on my role as researcher by having regular discussions with my supervisors and co-researchers.

Another challenge I encountered relates to the fact that I concluded member-checking after a lengthy period of time following data generation. This was potentially due to the time consumed by the data analysis process, as I had to analyse a large amount of data. However, ultimately I regard this as a valuable experience as it contributed to my development as qualitative researcher.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, I make recommendations for training, practice and future research in this section.

5.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING

The findings of this study may be beneficial to future community volunteer training programmes. I recommend that such training opportunities include information on policy documents that apply to volunteers as information captured in policy documents may assist volunteers to protect themselves and those they interact with.
Secondly, community volunteers who are involved in schools may benefit from gaining knowledge on how a school and the education system functions. At times, community volunteers may, for example, find themselves assisting with classroom management in the absence of teachers. If they are familiar with the basic principles of classroom management, they may find this task easier than if they had limited knowledge. Furthermore, if volunteers who assist teachers have been trained on how the school system operates, learners’ parents, teachers and principals may feel more at ease when volunteers fulfil this task.

Thirdly, I recommend that volunteers are trained in the field of partnerships. Such training can focus on what partnerships involve, and how partnerships are formed and sustained. I regard this aspect as important, as such knowledge may equip community volunteers with skills to approach potential partners and establish lasting working relationships.

The asset-based approach guided community volunteers in this study. I therefore recommend that volunteers receive training in the principles of the asset-based approach, guiding them to focus on resources and networks when fulfilling their tasks in the school-communities they support. Training on these principles may enhance volunteers’ capacity to identify and mobilise resources in support of vulnerable individuals and communities.

Next, I recommend that teachers receive training in partnering with volunteers. This may provide teachers with knowledge on what teacher-volunteer partnerships may entail and how volunteers can assist inside and outside classrooms and the school context. Teachers who need assistance in their classrooms, such as those with large classes, may benefit from working with volunteers when volunteers for example assist them in handling high number of learners.

Finally, I recommend that students in helping professions, enrolled for teaching programmes at tertiary institutions be trained in terms of the concept of volunteering and what it involves. Such training holds the potential that students may become involved in volunteering or be able to collaborate with volunteers when pursuing a career in assisting people in high-risk contexts.

5.6.2 **Recommendations for Practice**

By considering the findings of this study, school-communities can benefit from the potential support that community volunteers may provide. Community volunteers can provide support in and outside classrooms, as well as liaise with external partners on behalf of school principals and teachers. In terms of supporting learners, community volunteers can identify at-risk learners and focus on pursuing resources to address their social, health, scholastic and other related needs. To this end, schools, teachers and vulnerable communities can potentially identify specific needs and then partner with volunteers to meet these needs.
The findings of this study can furthermore be useful for practice in terms of community volunteers’ capability to plan and develop supportive school-community plans. In school-community contexts, such insight can be valuable as prevailing challenges may then be approached with a view of identifying opportunities for members of the community to work together. The approach of community members collaboratively addressing challenges may assist them in identifying resources and assets within themselves and in their communities, in addressing the needs of the community.

Knowledge on relevant policies can be used by volunteers for their protection and the protection of those they serve. This can be particularly useful when volunteers find themselves in compelling situations. Being acquainted with relevant policies will also help community volunteers to align their interventions with policies so as not to harm their service recipients in any way.

5.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further studies related to the development of supportive school-community plans may include:

- Case studies on how community volunteers from high-risk areas can help to improve communities’ standards of living, against the reality of limited resources.
- Explanatory studies on the sustainability of established partnerships and implemented supportive plans.
- Case studies on the accomplishment of improved community lifestyles utilising the phases of the asset-based approach namely asset mapping, asset mobilisation and asset management.
- Case studies on communities’ perceptions of community volunteers as sources of support and mediators between the community and other stakeholders.
- Descriptive studies on how community volunteers may serve different purposes, becoming confident about their abilities and enhancing parents’ involvement in their children’s learning and development, being supported by community volunteers.
- Case studies on the support by volunteers in schools, and enhancing and strengthening resilience in individuals’ lives, as well as in schools and communities.
- Exploratory studies on high-risk school-communities and their acceptance of support from external sources.
- Comparative studies on whether volunteers live up to expectations of their employers or strive to meet the needs of those that they are meant to serve.
- A comparative study on the effectiveness of supportive school-community plans when developed and implemented by teachers instead of volunteers.
- A case study on community volunteers being managed by various institutions and those institutions providing them with the necessary resources.
• Exploratory studies on organisations trusting volunteers’ abilities and loyalty even if there is no financial remuneration involved.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this study was to describe the development of supportive school-community plans by community volunteers, in collaboration with teachers and other community members within the broader SHEBA project. As I proceeded with the study, I found that participants fulfilled a distinct role in the school-community partnerships they became involved in, being partners themselves and collaborating with partners inside and outside the school. They went through certain phases in establishing these partnerships, relying on the skills they gained while using policies to guide them and following the principles of the asset-based approach. However, they also experienced some challenges when developing supportive plans, although these did not hinder community volunteers but rather provided them with opportunities to reflect on how they could implement these plans differently and gather the necessary resources as they continued with other projects.

Reflecting on the findings of the study, I can conclude that community volunteers experienced their involvement in school-community partnerships as beneficial, learning from the project, as well as from one another. They collaboratively identified, mobilised and managed available resources and assets while developing supportive school-community plans. I therefore posit that the participating community volunteers had a clear idea of their purpose in the school and community contexts, and that they strived to reach that purpose.

As a result, community volunteers were able to develop and initiate supportive projects in the schools and communities they function in, by mobilising available resources in themselves, the school and community. The knowledge and skills the community volunteers possess regarding the community and schools they are involved in and the information discussed during PRA-based workshops, allowed for the formation of partnerships, which is a distinct feature of the asset-based approach. Within the context of this study, community volunteers could thus rely on the asset-based approach to utilise their skills, knowledge, experiences and available resources in assisting high-risk communities.

I can further conclude that community volunteers found existing policies to be valuable in protecting themselves and the people they serve. Nevertheless, community volunteers required additional support (which they received) in terms of skills development in order for them to serve schools and communities more effectively. Overall, community volunteers’ involvement in school-communities did not only benefit the schools and the community at large, but also themselves. Throughout, they could instil the importance of collaboration and partnerships in these school-communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A-D
Data Analyses

Appendix A
Initial codes using colour codes

Appendix B
Pulling together codes into potential themes using numbers

Appendix C
Extracting codes to relevant themes

Appendix D
Correct naming of themes and sub-themes

Appendix E
Policy Documents

Appendix F
Divorce Act

Appendix G
Informed Consent

Appendix H
SHEBA Intervention, Objectives and Activities Manual

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Appendix A-D – Data Analyses

The analysis that is attached as hardcopy is only for the data generated in July 2012, the rest of the data analyses (including field notes) is included on the compact disk. However Appendix D includes the rest of the data analysed.

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Appendix A – Initial codes using colour codes

JULY 2012
Monday, 09 July, Session 2 (Morning of day 1) DISCUSSING POLICIES

Transcripts and Policy discussion Posters

The purpose of the policy documents discussion was to assist community volunteers in their role in the community and in schools and also to address vulnerability. The purpose was also to get an idea of how community volunteers interpret and implement the discussed policies.

Kholi – What is the meaning of vulnerability?
- Needy
- Unprotected/Neglected
- Abused
- Hurt easily

Policy
- Constitution
- Set of rules
- Methods
- Procedures

That Protect us and Guide us

POLICIES CURRENTLY USED BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Group 1: Cebelihle/Masizakheni
- HIV policy
  1. Confidentiality
  2. Support
  3. Counseling
- Safety policy
  1. Dangerous things (nails, broken glass)-around the school
  2. Fire extinguisher – in terms of unexpected fire
  3. Alarm
  4. First aid box

Group 2:
1. Constitution –it is important as it guides us in everything and everywhere
2. Education policy/ Children`s act- some parents do not know the importance of education thus need to be educated about this importance
3. Safety and security- in case of abused children
4. HIV/AIDS policy
5. Sexual protection act
6. Maintenance policy

Group 3:
SASSA grant
1. Constitution
2. Confidentiality
3. Moral support
4. Safety and security (SMT and SGB)
5. Social worker

Rape (Sexual abuse policy)
1. Constitution
2. Confidentiality
3. Counseling
4. Neutral
5. Medication (Doctor’s observation)-Dr will see the damage
6. Police

Comment: lessons about what to do in case of fire

- Educating one another about what they understand about vulnerability
- Awareness of policy benefits/importance
- Stigma and stereotype awareness
- Intervention and promotion of wellbeing
- Vigilance of unsafe environment
- Awareness of policy importance
- Mindfulness of current circumstances and knowledge sharing/addressing hampering circumstances
- Protection of those who are vulnerable
- Networking-to bring services to the community
- Relationship and trust among community volunteers and members
- Collaboration
- Trust
- Health and positive attitude promotion
- Health promotion
- Networking/resources
- Information sharing
Group 4:

1. Social worker- they are dealing with abused, e.g. child act unprotected and neglected children by taking them to a place of safety.
2. Police- they serve the community by taking the robbery, raping to lock them away from the community. Even the children who doing drugs and alcohol abuse, **you go and tell police**.

**Question**: it is understandable that abused children are taken to social workers but as a community volunteer, what do you do when you are confronted with such a situation before or in the process of referring to the social worker?

**Response**: there will be a session where such matters are discussed in depth; the purpose of now was just to identify policies that can work better/familiar policies.

**Summary**: groups have mentioned something about educational policy and other policies directing an educational policy and guiding education. Safety and security was also mentioned frequently whereby most of the schools have a safety plan which provide first aid etc. sexual protection others talk about abuse, delinquency.

After the discussion of the policies that community volunteers were familiar with, the discussion about policy on Children’s Rights, Sexual Offence Act, Child Justice Act, policy on HIV/AIDS and TB and policy on inclusive education followed and the implementation of these policies in future as community volunteers. Community volunteers were requested to read one policy document each group, discuss their understanding and the manner in which to implement the policy as community volunteers. These discussions were summarized by community volunteers and feedback was presented to the big group.

**Session 3 (Afternoon of Day 1): Getting to know more about policies**

**Transcripts and posters on how community volunteers understand existing policies**

**Group 1: Children’s rights**

- A child have a right to **education**
- Personal autonomy
- A right to a **name** and nationality form birth

**Family right of a child**
- Family care
- Alternative care

**Socioeconomic rights**
- Nutrition
- Shelter
- Health
- Social care

**Economic rights to administering justice**

- Limitations of rights
  - Justifiable
  - Reasonable
  - Sanction by law

**Group 2: Sexual Offence Act**

- Understanding of the social worker role
- Will for safety and protection
- Concern about crime in community
- Teaching about HIV/AIDS and early intervention
- Lack of information/inadequate training/confidence to deal with matters of concern
- Deviation from topic/question
- Setting for what is easily doable/setting participants at ease
- Importance of knowledge impartation
- Concern or awareness of the environment they live in and the protection of children

**Importance of knowledge impartation**

**Importance of identity and recognition**

**Belonging/protection**

**Social recognition, participation and belonging**

**Economic participation and fair treatment**
1. Rape - when somebody does not want sex but is forced for sex, when somebody is forcing you to get sex from you
2. Sexual assault - when somebody is forcing you for sex and they are beating you, or maybe gunpoint for sex
3. Sodomy (gay and lesbian) - done by guys in prison
4. Sexual grooming of children - when children are mental and are forced for sex, is an offence
5. Services relating to victims relating to post exposure prophylaxis and compulsory HIV testing for alleged sex offences - when someone is rape they are taken to the hospital for tests such as HIV
6. Confidentiality of HIV test results obtained
7. Human and animal sex
8. Prostitutes
9. Using children for or benefiting from child pornography (making sense movies) - when a man have sex with children and takes photos of them, that is ugly

Comment: explanation of access to PEP at uNceto one stop center where there are police, social workers, doctors, prosecutors/NPA at the convenience of the community, open 24 hours

Another comment: one does not have to be raped to obtain PEP but even if the partner is HIV positive and a mistake happens, for example condom brakes during intercourse then PEP can be obtained to protect one from getting infected

Comment: sexual grooming of children - in families living in shacks or one room houses it is possible for children to notice what their parents are doing and thus do it at school or with their friends, in other words lack of privacy contributes to sexual grooming of children.

**Group 3: Child justice Act**

*Background to the child justice act*

It is important to recognize the nearly 15 years development process since during that time

*The context and vision of the act*

The act places a focus on how children are managed in the appropriate period of time

*Priorities of the act*

1. Building capacity in the sector
   - the implementation of the act requires capacity building within the child justice system
2. Ensuring the assessment of children
   - the act provides that every child alleged to have committed an offence must be assessed within prescribed time
3. Preliminary inquiries
4. Sentencing
5. Provision of diversion and alternative sentencing service
6. Establishment of child and youth care centers
7. Establishment of one stop child justice centers
8. Resources and budgets
9. Public education and communications
10. Roles and responsibilities

**Group 4: HIV/AIDS and TB policy**

HIV/AIDS is a major challenge facing SA. Out of 48 Million estimated by census 5, 700 00 estimated to be HIV infected. SA is one of the 22 high burden countries that contribute approximately 80% of the total
global burden of all TB carers
- Respect for human rights and dignity
  The rights and dignity of employees infected by HIV/AIDS should be respected and upheld
- Gender equality
  The gender dimension of HIV/AIDS including TB and disability should be recognized.
- Health and safe work environment
  Health and safe work environments should be created as much as practically to prevent occupational exposure and transmission of HIV and TB
- Confidentiality and protection of employees personal data
  No employee will be expected to disclose HIV-related personal information

Group 5: Inclusive education
Special needs in education <-- inclusion means
- It means that if you are a slow learner you have a right for education- the terms such as the child is “dom” demotivates children
- They must be accepted with their different learning areas.
- The teaching method should suit their learning styles.
- They must be respected in their status
- They must not be discriminated because of their learning problem
- Focus on their strength
- Curriculum should be set so that learners that have barriers must benefit in the curriculum

Comment: why inclusion? Government did not want to pay they just created remedial classes within mainstream schools, there is lack of special needs schools. Not all educators have remedial education without any support. There is a tendency of children not supported at the early grade and end up dropping out of high school. However, these children have strengths that could be nourished but the challenge is that teachers still do not have knowledge or training to do so. The challenge is also crowded classrooms as these children need individual attention, which makes it impossible to grant them that as it is a lot of them in class. There is only one psychologist available. It is a pity because some learners suffer unnecessarily, you might find that the learner is mistaken to have a learning problem while it is something else such as a hearing problem, this happens because teachers are not qualified to identify learning challenges.

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Tuesday, 10 July Session 4 (Morning of Day 2): Developing a supportive school-community partnership plan
CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY
Transcripts and Posters
Group One (Cebelihle)
Community
It was difficult at first since the community did not know the community volunteers
1. Overall good community partnership but door to door activity was difficult since the community did not know the community volunteers, had to introduce themselves to them for corporation (between community volunteers, teacher and the community) with the passing of time community accepted community volunteers

- Consideration
- Promotion of workplaces favoring health and wellbeing/productivity
- Respect, choice granting
- Societal perspectives
- Requirement for creative teaching strategies
- Possible hindrance to school achievement
- Academic failure
- Building on what the child has, assets mapping and mobilization
- Consideration, inclusion
- Dissatisfaction
- Barrier to academic achievement
- Lack of teachers’ skills
- Absence of early intervention
- Ideas of school as pointless
- Asset mapping and mobilization
- Lack of individualized attention
- Lack of specialist and resources
- Misdiagnosis
- Gratitude
- Appreciation and acknowledgement
- Benefits of good service
- Barrier to establish partnerships, skeptical to trust community volunteers
- Process of establishing partnerships
- Reluctant to trust community
2. Before helping those who cannot help themselves, community volunteers first educate the family on how to deal with a sick person. Community volunteers do not do but assist/facilitate/educate families on how to treat their sick family members.

3. For those bedridden community members, community volunteers get treatment from the clinic for them.

4. Community volunteers request Home Affairs people to visit schools so that learners can obtain birth certificates and identity documents especially for application and attainment of government social grants.

5. Community volunteers act on behalf of children, especially those who are absent from school due to sick family members. They talk to the principal so that children can go back to school.

6. Identify OVCs.

7. Assist with homework.

8. Awareness campaign: educate the community about any health methods they can get to.

9. Liaise with the child’s environment so as to assist the teacher in terms of assisting the learner, extended hand for teachers. Now they are used to teachers and they work well together. Teachers call community volunteers teacher aids.

10. Assist in classrooms in the teacher’s absence.

---

**Group Two (Masizakheni)**

**Community**

1. Help community to get over the stigma.

2. Home visits to educate about the sickness (HIV/AIDS?).

3. Assist bedridden patients by bathing them and cleaning their houses.


**School**

5. Community volunteers help children with homework.

6. Help in classrooms in the absence of the teacher.

7. Take learners to the clinic when they are sick on behalf of the teacher.

---

**Group Three (Charles Duna)**

**School**

1. Control late coming.

2. Gardening of the school.

3. Helping teachers in their classrooms when they are absent.

4. Helping the secretary with office work.

5. Task team: to assist the SGB in instances whereby SGB members are busy or not available in cases of emergency, the task team takes over and reports to the SGB later on. It is also responsible for identifying learners who are not good with available school sports and encourage them to join majorettes or something else.

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**Volunteers**

- Good relations and acceptance
- Target groups/focus of community volunteers’ interventions
- Impart knowledge
- Target groups/focus of community volunteers’ interventions
- Mediate and avail services/network
- Services provided
- Role played by community volunteers
- Reason for absenteeism
- Role played by community volunteers/network, communicate, liaise
- Reason for communicating with the principal
- Target group/focus of community volunteers’ interventions
- Role played by community volunteers

**Identity and role of community volunteers**

- Impart knowledge
- Network
- Good partnership
- Identity and role of community volunteers

**Role played by community volunteers**

- Role played by community volunteers
- Network
- Impart knowledge
- Target group and usefulness
- Network and identification of resources needed

**Usefulness**

- Role played by community volunteers
- Role played by community volunteers
### After care
Look after learners when transport is late, also protect the name of the school since crime might occur when other community members realize that the child is left by themselves and try to take advantage of the child.

### Community
7. Try to manage children at the playground—especially at the park because thieves used to sit at the corner to scare children off, the park was also not clean, community volunteers helped with the cleaning, picking up papers.
8. Try to manage abandoned houses—they serve as an opportunity for crime to be committed as people may be pulled and raped in there, so community volunteers are keeping a close look on them.
9. Try to manage the closing down of taverns on time to prevent crime.
10. Home visits: to these community volunteers the school and the community are one entity, so they go to learners’ homes to observe what is happening.
11. Education—assist Grade R with writing their names, one to ten just to prepare them for Grade one, also take learners who cannot perform in sport for other activities such as singing and dancing and play cards with them to improve their mathematics skills.

### Group Four (Church)

#### Community
1. Home and school visits to introduce ourselves, community volunteers also do home visits after they have interacted with the child at school and notice that the child is behaving in a certain way.
2. Community volunteers do home visits and win the community by respecting them and their culture.
3. Identify the vulnerability of the households—strengths of the family are observed, activities such as having dinner together, taking pictures together are things that the child can remember as good times. In instance where the father is abusing alcohol, community volunteers hold a family conference to talk to the father and show him the impact of his behavior in a non-judgmental manner, with respect and awareness of customs, in this way community volunteers win over the family or the father.
4. Networking according to the problem of the households for example birth certificates.
5. Refer relevant matters to Home Affairs.
6. Visit schools to check the performance of the learners and explain the situation of the child to the teacher and if there are household problems concerning the child, the teachers are also informed—community volunteers help children after school even with subjects learners struggle with.
7. Children are observed when community volunteers have programs with them, the strength of the child and of the family is also observed," belonging, independence, generosity\(\rightarrow\) circle of courage.
8. Ensure that the child’s circle of courage is not broken.
9. Identify learners without uniform—community volunteers look for sponsorship on behalf of the learners without uniform.
10. Refer sick parents to the Masizakheni home based care.
11. Have HIV/AIDS, psychosocial (abuse and grieving\(\rightarrow\) family members do a memory box of the deceased), after school care programs, interact with dropouts, donate food parcels to at least 10 households each month community volunteers take.

### Role/activities
- Role/activities
- Role played by community volunteers
- Role played by community volunteers
- Supportive initiative and availability and willingness
- Ability/talent identification
- Supportive and protective measure/initiative
- Protection
- Shield and uplift the school’s name
- Protection
- Usefulness
- Care for property
- Care and protection
- Discouragement of alcohol-related acts/misbehavior
- Network
- Cooperation
- Impart knowledge
- Strength/talent identification
- Network
- Observant
- Knowledge of context and expectations/requirements to access families
- Network, communication
- Respect
- Network
- Services required
- Links community with resources
- Network
- Network
- Network
- Role and helpfulness

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these parcels from the woman at St. Chapel
12. Have holiday camps, outings for children

**Group Five**
**Community**
1. Taking treatment
2. HIV/AIDS and TB / table it / we give hope educate the affected and infected
3. We do awareness campaign involve them educate as well
4. Making them understand an HIV/AIDS person
5. Give solution to home conflicts
6. Organize SASSA for those who want a grant and food parcels for OVCs and child headed households
7. When the problem is out of our hands we involved local structures — for example in cases where children beat their parents

**School**
8. We are helping the teachers at the school by guiding the children to their classes, after school community volunteers help children with homework and take the sick ones to the clinic
9. Community volunteers help with cleaning the classrooms and toilet. Community volunteers interact with children in sports, music and dance and also have soul buddies
10. Community volunteers also apply for birth certificates at Home Affairs for children who do not have parents or someone to help them. Community volunteers also help parents to apply for identity documents

**Group Six**
**Community**
1. Good communication during home visit
2. Encourage the community to visit the clinic and hospital
3. Encourage community to make vegetable gardens
4. Link with government offices through volunteers

**School**
5. Communicate with teachers about child problem
6. By helping to clean the school
7. Teachers help community volunteers to identify OVCs at school
8. Helping in classes during staff meetings

**DEVELOPMENT OF (NEW) SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

**GUIDELINES:**
1. What do you want to do in the partnership (what is your goal)?
2. Who will be responsible in the group and in the schools for which goal?
3. How will the responsible individuals reach the goal?
4. When must the goal be reached (target dates)?

**Transcripts and Posters**
**Group One**
**What**
1. Drum Majorettes

**Who**
1. Kuki (Charles Duna group)

**How**
1. Ask permission from parents/SGB {1-c}
2. Identification of learners: age
3. Coach and venue for practice
4. Sponsors (equipment) — drums, boots, uniforms etc

- Target group
- Link community with resources
- Network
- Order and safety
- Role and helpfulness
- Supportive role
- Services required
- Respect, good relations, network
- Promote wellbeing
- Available resources
- Healthy eating/income generation
- Link community with resources
- Network
- Role and helpfulness

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5. Marketing (performance)-weddings, funerals
   When
   1. End of July 2012

**Group Two**

**What**
1. After care

**Who**
1. Careworkers - Sylvia

**How**
1. Consulting the school management/SGB
2. Call a meeting with parents and transport drivers - for parents to know that their children are safe afterschool and drivers to know where to get the children
   - As soon the agreement is reached from school management and SGB the aftercare can commence
   - Thembi suggests that community volunteers to assist children with home-work while in aftercare

**When**
1. September 2012

**Group Three (Church/Siyabakha)**

**What**
1. Food garden

**Who**
1. Siyabakha, Team leader and St. Agnes from Southern Hemisphere in Switzerland

**How**
1. Community conference with reverend from St. Agnes. He will contribute three containers stay with community volunteers, 1- keep tools, 1-for the office), gardening tools, five people are for agriculture training
2. Skills facilitation workshop on how to manage food gardening to generate income
3. Employ children heading families and community members-troubled children, prone to commit crime children (on a voluntary basis)- Thembi-children/workers will have agricultural and other skills
4. Export vegetables to Switzerland

**When**
1. August 2012

**Group Four**

**What**
1. Awareness campaign, community experience crime, early pregnancy and abuse

**Who**
1. Community volunteers, Department of social justice, SANCA and social workers

**How**
1. Go to Narina house to report the matter to the person dealing with the situation
2. For early pregnancy, sit down with the social worker and explain the situation

**When**
1. Mid July 2012

**IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS IN TERMS OF SUPPORT AND SUCCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLANS BY THEMBI**

**Community**

- Collaboration, target group
- Role
- Respect
- Process of selection
- Resources needed/challenge
- Expansion and promotion of the initiative
- Collaboration
- Network
- Safe
- Collaboration
- Trust
- Helpfulness
- Healthy eating/job creation/income generation
- Counselors
- Churches
- Social workers
- SAPS
- Psychologists
- Traditional healers
- Nurses and doctors
- NGOs
- Political parties
- Government offices/officials

**School**
- Principal
- Teachers
- School Based Management Team (SBMT)
- School Government Body (SGB)
- Learners

- International exposure
- Network
- Skills acquisition/lack/addressing challenge
- Income generation
- Job creation
- International exposure
- Addressing challenges
- Partnership
## Appendix B – Pulling together codes into potential themes using numbers

### JULY 2012
Monday, 09 July, Session 2 (Morning of day 1) DISCUSSING POLICIES

**Transcripts and Policy discussion Posters**
The purpose of the policy documents discussion was to assist community volunteers in their role in the community and in schools and also to address vulnerability. The purpose was also to get an idea of how community volunteers interpret and implement the discussed policies.

**Kholi** – What is the **meaning of vulnerability**?
- Needy
- Unprotected/Neglected
- Abused
- Hurt easily

**Policy**
- Constitution
- Set of rules
- Methods
- Procedures

**That protect us and Guide us**

### POLICIES CURRENTLY USED BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

#### Group 1: Cebelihle/Masizakheni
- HIV policy
  4. Confidentiality
  5. Support
  6. Counseling
- Safety policy
  5. Dangerous things (nails, broken glass)-around the school
  6. Fire extinguisher – in terms of unexpected fire
  7. Alarm
  8. First aid box

#### Group 2:
7. Constitution – it is important as it guides us in everything and everywhere
8. Education policy/ Children`s act- some parents do not know the importance of education thus need to be educated about this importance
9. Safety and security - in case of abused children
10. HIV/AIDS policy
11. Sexual protection act
12. Maintenance policy

#### Group 3: SASSA grant
6. Constitution
7. Confidentiality
8. Moral support
9. Safety and security (SMT and SGB)
10. Social worker

#### Rape (Sexual abuse policy)
7. Constitution
8. Confidentiality
9. Counseling
10. Neutral
11. Medication (Doctor’s observation)-Dr will see the damage

- Educating one another about what they understand about vulnerability
- Awareness of policy benefits/importance
- Stigma and stereotype awareness
- Intervention and promotion of wellbeing
- Vigilance of unsafe environment
- Awareness of policy importance
- Mindfulness of current circumstances and knowledge sharing/addressing hampering circumstances
- Protection of those who are vulnerable
- Networking – to bring services to the community
- Relationship and trust among community volunteers and members
- Collaboration
- Trust
- Health and positive attitude promotion
- Health promotion
- Networking/resources
12. Police
Comment: lessons about what to do in case of fire

Group 4:

4. Social worker- they are dealing with abused, e.g. child act unprotected and neglected by taking them to a place of safety
5. Police- they serve the community by taking the robbery, raping to lock them away from the community. Even the children who doing drugs and alcohol abuse. You go and tell police
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Question: it is understandable that abused children are taken to social workers but as a community volunteer, what do you do when you are confronted with such a situation before or in the process of referring to the social worker?

Response: there will be a session where such matters are discussed in depth; the purpose of now was just to identify policies that can work better/familiar policies.

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**Group 2: Sexual Offence Act**

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9. Public education and communications
10. Roles and responsibilities

**Group 4: HIV/AIDS and TB policy**

- Unacceptable conduct
- Threatening, humiliating conduct
- Upbringing and socialization of children
- Trust 4
- Imitation and possibility of displayed behavior by learners
- Responsible behavior
- Caution about the treatment of children
- Enhancement of capacity
- Better/improved serving of children
- Fair and adequate decision making in terms of charging child offenders
- Prevention and/or limitation of the child’s contact with legal/justice system
- Support and resources for youth offenders 1
- Convenient support/resource 1
- Barrier to wellbeing 7
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14. Community volunteers request Home Affairs people to visit schools so that learners can obtain birth certificates and identity documents especially for application and attainment of government social grants.

School

15. Community volunteers act on behalf of children especially those who are absent from school due to sick family members, they talk to the principal so that children can go back to school.

16. Identify OVCs.

Group Two (Masizakheni)

Community

8. Help community to get over the stigma.
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10. Assist bedridden patients by bathing them and cleaning their houses.

School

13. Help in classrooms in the absence of the teacher.
14. Take learners to the clinic when they are sick on behalf of the teacher.

Group Three (Charles Duna)

School

12. Control late coming.
14. Help teachers in their classrooms when they are absent.
15. Help the secretary with office work.
16. Task team: to assist the SGB in instances whereby SGB members are busy or not available in cases of emergency, the task team takes over and reports to the SGB later on. It is also responsible for identifying learners who are not good with available school sports and encourage them to join majorettes or something else.

Target groups/focus of community volunteers' interventions

- Impart knowledge 2
- Reason for absenteeism
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Network 3
- Identity and role of community volunteers 2
- Good partnership
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Network 3
- Identity and role of community volunteers 2
- Importance
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Network 3
- Identification of resources needed

Role played by community volunteers 2
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Usefulness
- Role/activities 2
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Role played by community volunteers 2
- Supportive initiative 5 and availability and willingness
- Ability/talent identification 5
- Supportive and protective measure/initiative 5
- Protection 5
17. **After care** - look after learners when transport is late, also protect the name of the school since crime might occur when other community members realize that the child is left by themselves and try to take advantage of the child.

**Community**

18. Try to **manage children** at the playground-especially at the park because thieves used to sit at the corner to scare children off, the park was also not clean, community volunteers helped with the cleaning, picking up papers.

19. Try to **manage abandoned houses**-they serve as an opportunity for crime to be committed as people may be pulled and raped in there, so community volunteers are keeping a close look on them.

20. Try to **manage the closing down of taverns on time**-to prevent crime.

21. Home visits - to these community volunteers the school and the community are one entity, so they go to learners’ homes to observe what is happening.

22. Education – assist Grade R with **writing their names**, one to ten just to prepare them for Grade one, also take learners who **cannot perform in sport** for other activities such as singing and dancing and play cards with them to improve their mathematics skills.

**Group Four (Church)**

**Community**

13. **Home and school visits** to introduce ourselves, community volunteers also do home visits after they have interacted with the child at school and notice that the child is behaving in a certain way.

14. Community volunteers do home visits and win the community by respecting them and their culture.

15. Identify the vulnerability of the households – strengths of the family are observed, activities such as having dinner together, taking pictures together are things that the child can remember as good times. In instance where the father is abusing alcohol, community volunteers hold a **family conference** to talk to the father and show him the impact of his behavior in a non-judgmental manner, with respect and awareness of customs, in this way community volunteers win over the family or the father.

16. **Networking** according to the problem of the households for example birth certificates.

17. Refer relevant matters to **Home Affairs**.

18. Visit schools to check the performance of the learners and explain the situation of the child to the teacher and if there are household problems concerning the child, the teachers are also informed – community volunteers help children after school even with subjects learners struggle with.

19. Children are observed when community volunteers have programs with them, the strength of the child and of the family is also observed, “belonging, independence, generosity” ➔ circle of courage.

20. Ensure that the child’s circle of courage is not broken.

21. Identify learners without uniform - community volunteers look for sponsorship on behalf of the learners without uniform.

22. Refer sick parents to the Masizakheni home based care.

23. Have HIV/AIDS, psychosocial (abuse and grieving ➔ family members do a memory box of the deceased), after school care programs, interact with dropouts, donate food parcels to at least 10 households each month community volunteers take these parcels from the woman at St. Chapel.

24. Have holiday camps, outings for children.
Group Five
Community
11. Taking treatment
12. HIV/AIDS and TB; table it/we give hope educate the affected and infected
13. We do awareness campaign involve them educate as well
14. Making them understand an HIV/AIDS person
15. Give solution to home conflicts
Organize SASSA for those who want a grant and food parcels for OVCs and child headed households
17. When the problem is out of our hands we involved local structures for example in cases where children beat their parents

School
18. We are helping the teachers at the school by guiding the children to their classes, after school community volunteers help children with homework and take the sick ones to the clinic
19. Community volunteers help with cleaning the classrooms and toilets. Community volunteers interact with children in sports, music and dance and also have soul buddies
20. Community volunteers also apply for birth certificates at Home Affairs for children who do not have parents or someone to help them. Community volunteers also help parents to apply for identity documents

Group Six
Community
9. Good communication during home visit
10. Encourage the community to visit the clinic and hospital
11. Encourage community to make vegetable garden
12. Link with government offices through volunteers

School
13. Communicate with teachers about child problem
14. By helping to clean the school
15. Teachers help community volunteers to identify OVC at school
16. Helping in classes during staff meetings

DEVELOPMENT OF (NEW) SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

GUIDELINES:
- What do you want to do in the partnership (what is your goal)?
- Who will be responsible in the group and in the schools for which goal?
- How will the responsible individuals reach the goal?
- When must the goal be reached (target dates)?

Transcripts and Posters
Group One

What
2. Drum Majorettes

Who
2. Kuki (Charles Duna group)

How
6. Ask permission from parents/SGB {1-c}
7. Identification of learners-age
8. Coach and venue for practice
9. Sponsors (equipment)-drums, boots, uniform etc
10. Marketing (performance)-weddings, funerals

When

- Care and support 5
- Impart knowledge 1
- Address stigma and stereotype 5
- Impart knowledge 1
- Network 3, services needed, target group 5
- Network 3
- Order and safety
- Role and helpfulness 2
- Role and helpfulness 2
- Supportive role 2
- Services required
- Supportive role 2
- Respect, good relations, network 3
- Promote wellbeing 5, available resources
- Healthy eating/income generation 5
- Network 3, link community with resources
- Network 3
- Role and helpfulness 2
- Collaboration 6, target group 5
- Role 2
- Collaboration 6
- Respect 2
- Process of selection
- Resources needed/challenge
- Expansion and promotion of the initiative

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### Group Two

**What**

2. After care

**Who**

2. Careworkers- Sylvia

**How**

3. **Consulting the school management/SGB**

4. Call a meeting with parents and transport drivers for parents to know that their children are safe afterschool and drivers to know where to get the children.

- As soon the agreement is reached from school management and SGB the aftercare can commence.

- Thembi suggests that community volunteers to assist children with home-work while in aftercare.

**When**

2. September 2012

### Group Three (Church/Siyabakha)

**What**

2. Food garden

**Who**

2. Siyabakha, Team leader and St. Agnes from Southern Hemisphere in Switzerland

**How**

5. **Community conference** with reverend from St. Agnes. He will contribute three containers stay with community volunteers, 1- keep tools, 1-for the office), gardening tools, five people are for agriculture training.

6. Skills facilitation workshop on how to **manage food gardening to generate income**.

7. **Employ** children heading families and community members- troubled children, prone to commit crime children (on a voluntary basis)- Thembi-children/workers will have agricultural and other skills.

8. **Export** vegetables to Switzerland

**When**

2. August 2012

### Group Four

**What**

2. **Awareness campaign**, community experience crime, early pregnancy and abuse

**Who**

2. Community volunteers, Department of social justice, SANCA and social workers

**How**

3. **Go to Narina house** to report the matter to the person dealing with the situation.

4. For early pregnancy, sit down with the social worker and explain the situation.

**When**

2. Mid July 2012

### IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS IN TERMS OF SUPPORT AND SUCCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLANS BY THEMBI

**Community**

- Counselors
- Churches
- Social workers
- SAPS

- Safe
- Collaboration 6
- Trust 4
- Helpfulness 2

- Healthy eating/job creation/income generation 5
- International exposure
- Network 3
- Skills acquisition/lack/addressing challenge 5
- Income generation 5
- Job creation 5
- International exposure
- Addressing challenges 5
- Partnership 6
- Network 3
- Addressing challenges 5
- Partnership 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychologists</th>
<th>Partnership 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional healers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses and doctors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government offices/officials</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**School**

| Principal                     |               |
| Teachers                      |               |
| School Based Management Team (SBMT) |           |
| School Government Body (SGB)  |               |
| Learners                      |               |
Appendix C – Extracting codes to relevant themes

July 2012

Red 7 – challenges

- Concern about crime in community
- Lack of information/inadequate training/confidence to deal with matters of concern
- Barrier to wellbeing
- Influence wellbeing/people’s functioning
- Possible hindrance to school achievement
- Academic failure
- Barrier to academic achievement
- Lack of teachers’ skills
- Lack of individualized attention
- Lack of specialist and resources
- Misdiagnosis
- Barrier to establish partnerships, skeptical to trust community volunteers
- Reluctant to trust community volunteers
- Resources needed/challenge
- Lack

Brown 1 – information sharing

- Educating one another about what they understand about vulnerability
- Stigma and stereotype awareness
- Protection of those who are vulnerable
- Health and positive attitude promotion
- Health promotion
- Networking/resources
- Information sharing
- Support and resources for youth offenders
- Convenient support/resource
- assets mapping and mobilization
- Impart knowledge
- Impart knowledge

Purpose 5 – Roles

- Supportive initiative
- Ability/talent identification
- Supportive and protective measure/initiative
- Protection
- Protection
- Strength/talent identification
- Care and support
- Address stigma and stereotype
- target group
- Promote wellbeing
- Healthy eating/income generation
- target group
• Healthy eating/job creation/income generation
• Addressing challenge
• Income generation
• Job creation
• Addressing challenges
• Addressing challenges
• Sharing ideas

**Pink 3 & Yellow 6 – Partners in the partnership**

• Networking-to bring services to the community
• Network
• Network
• Network
• Network
• Network
• Network, communication
• Network
• Network
• Network
• Link community with resources
• Link community with resources
• Intervention measures
• Network
• Network
• Respect, good relations, network
• Network
• Collaboration
• Collaboration
• Network
• Collaboration
• Network
• Partnership
• Network
• Partnership
• Facilitators assisting community volunteers
• Collaboration

**Dark green 1 – Supportive roles played by partners**

• Awareness of policy benefits/importance
• Awareness of policy importance
• Importance of knowledge impartation
• Importance of knowledge impartation
• Impart knowledge
• Role played by community volunteers
• Role played by community volunteers
• Role played by community volunteers
• Impart knowledge
• Role of community volunteers
• Role of community volunteers
• Role played by community volunteers
• Impart knowledge
• Role played by community volunteers
• Role played by community volunteers
• Role/activities
• Role played by community volunteers
• Role played by community volunteers
• Impart knowledge
• Role and helpfulness
• Role and helpfulness
• Supportive role
• Supportive role
• Role and helpfulness
• Role
• Respect
• Helpfulness
• Attentive

**Lime 4 – Phases of implementation**

• Trust
• Trust
• Trust
• Trust
Appendix D – Correct naming of themes and sub-themes

Theme and Subthemes

1. Roles of volunteers in the school-community partnership
   a. Prevention role
      • Sharing information with the community through awareness campaigns
         ▪ HIV/AIDS
         ▪ Crime
         ▪ Drugs
      • Promote health
         ▪ Visit Clinics
         ▪ Positive attitude
   b. Intervention role
      • Learner-targeted intervention
         ▪ Assist learners with homework
         ▪ Educating children about HIV/AIDS and teaching them to write their names
         ▪ Expose learners to various activities such as dancing and drum majorettes
         ▪ Providing OVCs with food
         ▪ Teaching children cultural skills
      • Structural intervention
         ▪ Help with cleaning classrooms and schools
         ▪ Managing aftercare
         ▪ Identify and mobilize resources (One stop centre)
   c. Shared development role
      • Becoming resources themselves
      • Educating one another
   d. Income generation role
      • Establishment of vegetable gardens
      • Knitting and sewing
      • Selling food at the school
2. Partners in the school-community partnership

3. Implementation phases of the school-community plans
   a. Initiating phase
      - Identifying vulnerable community members and their needs and supporting them
      - Community volunteers initially introduce themselves to the community
      - Building relationships with the community and schools
      - Gaining trust from the community and schools
      - Role differentiation and purpose of having community volunteers
      - Showing respect during home visits
   b. Implementation phase
      - Introducing policies to community volunteers
      - Ensuring successful execution of plans
   c. Sustaining phase
      - Growing expanding and promoting partnership initiatives
      - Monitoring progress
4. Challenges volunteers experience in school-community partnerships

a. Material constraints
   - Lack of material and equipment (to complete sewing project)
   - Infertility of the soil

b. Lack of support by school-community stakeholders
   - Gaining community’s trust
   - Equipment theft
   - Struggling to find sponsorships
   - Learners’ absenteeism
     - Ill
     - Ill family members
     - Flooded classrooms

c. Limited SNE
   - Lack of special schools
   - Lack of specialists
   - Lack of teachers’ skills
Appendix E – Policy Documents

- Children’s Rights in the South African Constitution
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amended Act
- Draft HIV/AIDS and TB Management Policy for the Public Service
- Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education

These documents are attached on the compact disk (CD).
Appendix F – Divorce Act

Attached on the compact disk (CD)
Appendix G – Informed Consent
Appendix H – SHEBA Intervention, Objectives and Activities Manual

The complete SHEBA Intervention, Objectives and Activities Manual is attached on the compact disk (CD), only the sessions that I participated in are attached as hardcopies.
SESSION 4 (MORNING OF DAY 2):

DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

Guiding questions for this session:

☞ How are communities currently partnering with schools to be supportive?
☞ How can you be a resource in establishing partnerships between schools and communities to be supportive of vulnerable individuals/families?

Objectives for this session:

☞ To determine the nature of current partnerships between schools and communities in providing a supportive environment.
☞ To develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a supportive school-community partnership plan.

Proposed length of the session:

±3 hours.

Materials required:

☞ Early morning refreshments.
☞ Mid-morning refreshments.
☞ Refreshments for a light lunch.
☞ 12 x large (A2) cardboards (2 per group).
☞ 18 x coloured pens (3 per group).
☞ Prestik.

Activities:

☞ Start with early morning refreshments (±25 minutes). During this time, allow everyone to re-connect and divide into their groups.
Facilitate a workshop activity (±30 minutes). Request each group of participants to discuss and summarise (on a cardboard) how communities and schools are currently partnering and working together to support vulnerable individuals/families. Provide feedback within the bigger group (±30 minutes).

Take a comfort break for tea and refreshments (±20 minutes).

Facilitate a second workshop activity (±45 minutes). Request each group to develop a supportive school-community partnership plan, and summarise their plans by writing down action plans and strategies to reach their goals. Action plans need to be specific and address the following questions:

- What do you want to do in the partnership (what is your goal)?
- Who will be responsible in the group and in the schools for which goal?
- How will the responsible individuals reach the goal?
- When must the goal be reached (target dates)?

Allow each group to present their action plans to the rest of the group, who may ask questions, give feedback and elaborate (±30 minutes).

Conclude the session by requesting the groups to implement the partnership plans by September 2012, by putting their formulated plans into action.

Discuss the September dates and conclude with a light lunch.

Examples of activities:

To be added…
SESSON 1 (MORNING OF DAY 1):
REPORTING ON THE PROGRESS OF INITIATIVES AND
DISCUSSING RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

Guiding questions for this session:

☞ How have the formulated supportive school-community partnership plans been implemented since our last workshop?
☞ How have relevant policies been implemented as part of these supportive school-community partnership plans?
☞ How can relevant policies be incorporated even more?
☞ How have the planned action steps for other projects been implemented?
☞ How have the projects been progressing?

Objectives for this session:

☞ To facilitate a discussion on the progress of the formulated supportive school-community partnership plans and other initiated projects.
☞ To reflect on the implementation of relevant policies as part of supportive school-community partnership plans.
☞ To discuss the Divorce Act and related issues such as domestic violence and abuse, child care and child maintenance.
☞ To continue the discussion on implementing relevant policies as part of supportive school-community partnership plans.
☞ To monitor planned action steps in terms of the successful completion thereof (or not).

Proposed length of the session:

± 4 hours.
Materials required:

- Early morning refreshments.
- 6 x posters of supportive school-community partnership plans formulated during the previous block of sessions.
- 6 x posters of action plans for projects formulated during the first block of sessions.
- 6 x large (A2) cardboards (1 per group).
- 18 x coloured pens (3 per group).
- Prestik.

Activities:

- Start with early morning refreshments (±30 minutes). During this time, allow everyone to re-connect and divide into their groups.
- Reflect on the previous series of workshops and briefly introduce the sessions that will follow over the next three days (±10 minutes).
- Facilitate a PRA-discussion (±45 minutes). Request each task team to report on the implementation and progress of:
  - their supportive school-community partnership plans
  - the action plans and progress of the other projects they initiated.
- Use two page summaries to revise the following policies that were discussed during the previous block (±30 minutes):
  - Policy on Children’s Rights
  - Sexual Offence Act
  - Criminality of a Youth Offender Act
  - Policy on HIV&AIDS and TB
- Take a comfort break for tea and refreshments (±20 minutes).
- Facilitate a discussion on the Divorce Act by providing the participants with the relevant policy documents (Appendix D) and requesting them to work in their task teams. Ask each group to read the policy documents (±30 minutes), discuss their understanding of the documents and then discuss the manner in which they can incorporate this policy in their supportive school-community partnership plans or in future as community volunteers (±30 minutes). Ask them to summarise their discussions on cardboards and give feedback in the bigger group (±30 minutes).
- Break for lunch. During this time, allow for informal interaction.