CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3 I focused on the research methodology and strategies that I used in the study. I conducted research over a period of two years in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. I justified the choice of my research design and other methodological strategies by explaining why I found these to be suitable for addressing the research questions and purpose of the study.

The focus of chapter 4 is to report on the results of the study. I present the results in terms of three themes that emerged during thematic analysis, namely:

- The nature of power in participatory partnerships

- The role of agency in relation to power and partnerships

- Participants' understanding and meaning-making of power and partnerships.

Before discussing the various themes, I summarise the inclusion and exclusion indicators I used to identify themes, subthemes and categories. Each theme is then explained in detail, authenticated and enriched with participants' verbatim quotations from focus groups, interviews, visual data and extracts from my research journal. As an introduction, Table 4.1 provides an overview of the three identified themes, subthemes and categories.

Table 4.1:   Summary of themes, subthemes and categories

THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS	
SUBTHEMES	CATEGORIES
Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of power	Leadership
	Decision-making
	Empowerment
	Achieving personal goals
	Appropriating (owning) power
	Trust

THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS	
SUBTHEMES	**CATEGORIES**
Subtheme 1.2: Factors impeding power and partnerships	Time constraints
	Lack of commitment
	Work overload
	Limited confidence
	Lack of role clarification
Subtheme 1.3: Power dynamics	Trust and confidence
	Knowledge brings ability
THEME 2: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS	
Subtheme 2.1: Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	University researchers
	Peers
	Wider community
Subtheme 2.2: Establishing an enabling environment	Local level enablement
	National level enablement
THEME 3: THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP	
Subtheme 3.1: Agency	Capacity to empower others
	Capacity for leadership
	Taking action
Subtheme 3.2: Participants as agents of social transformation	Transferring knowledge
	Mobilising resources
	Creating community networks

4.2   THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS

The first theme I identified in the data relates to participants' expressing the factors that influenced power and partnership in a participatory project. Participants seemed to believe that in order to experience a sense of power and partnership, some factors could promote such feelings in a power-sharing participatory project. This theme focuses on data that reflected and addressed three research questions: (1) How do teachers conceptualise power and partnerships in participatory partnership? (2) What are the relations of power at play in the specific activities of the STAR intervention? and (3) Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in a research partnership? The theme is supported by subthemes related to the nature of power in participatory partnerships, namely 1) the characteristics of power, 2) factors influencing

power and partnerships, and 3) movement or shift of power. Table 4.2 summarises this theme and the related subthemes and categories, in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 4.2: **Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 1**

THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS		
Subthemes and categories	**Inclusion indicators**	**Exclusion indicators**
Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of power	This subtheme includes educators' definitions and characteristics of what power entails in a participatory partnership project. These characteristics of power are provision of leadership, decision-making, empowerment, achieving personal goals, appropriating (owning) power and trust.	
Category 1: Leadership	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as providing leadership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to the provision of leadership as a characteristic of power.
Category 2: Decision-making	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as being able to make decisions.	This category excludes references that do not refer to being able to make decisions as a characteristic of power.
Category 3: Empowerment	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as empowering others.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as empowering others as a characteristic of power.
Category 4: Achieving personal goals	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as being in a position to achieve personal goals.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as being in a position to achieve personal goals as a characteristic of power.
Category 5: Appropriating (owning) power	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as owning and having power.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as owning and having power as a characteristic of power.
Category 6: Trust	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as having trust.	This category excludes references that do not refer to the provision of having trust as a characteristic of power.
Subtheme 1.2: Factors impeding power and partnerships	This subtheme includes educators' nature of power in PR in terms of factors impeding power and partnerships. The factors that impede power and partnerships are time constraints, lack of commitment, work overload, lack of confidence and lack of role clarity.	
Category 1: Time constraints	This category includes data related to time constraints as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to time constraints as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
Category 2: Lack of commitment	This category includes data related to lack of commitment as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of commitment as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
Category 3: Work overload	This category includes data related to work overload as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to work overload as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.

| THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS		
Subthemes and categories	**Inclusion indicators**	**Exclusion indicators**
Category 4: Limited confidence	This category includes data related to lack of confidence as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of confidence as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
Category 5: Lack of role clarification	This category includes data related to lack of role clarification as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of role clarification as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
Subtheme 1.3: Power dynamics	This subtheme includes participants' experiences of the changes they underwent as they participated in the project, being the shift from a lack of trust and low self-confidence to ultimately reaching a stage of achieving trust and confidence. Participants also experienced power from having limited knowledge and being uncertain to ultimately experiencing a stage where they were knowledgeable.	
Category 1: Trust and confidence	This category includes data related to participants' shift of power from lack of trust and low self-confidence to achieving trust and confidence.	This category excludes references that do not refer to participants' shift of power from lack of trust and low self-confidence to achieving trust and confidence.
Category 2: Knowledge brings ability	This category includes data related to participants' shift of power from limited knowledge and uncertainty to a stage of being knowledgeable.	This category excludes references that do not refer to participants' shift of power from limited knowledge and uncertainty to a stage of being knowledgeable.

4.2.1   SUBTHEME 1.1: CHARACTERISTICS OF POWER

Participants seemingly defined and understood the concept and meaning of power in terms of a few descriptive characteristics. Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships could be understood by referring to activities that allowed them to act and be in charge of the project, hence allowing them to experience ownership of the project. Participants reported that various experiences in the PR project enabled them to explain and define power. This subtheme was common among all participants from both schools. The subtheme is supported by categories that are in line with descriptive words of power, namely a) leadership, b) decision-making, c) empowerment, d) achieving personal goals, e) appropriating (owning) power, and f) trust.

The following extract from my research journal attests to the evidence that power is a contested concept and that its definition will thus vary depending on context:

Characteristics of power indeed will always vary depending on your stand point…all these words are positive and very inclusive of other parties… I think my choice of using feminist standpoint as my epistemology is good…. from where you stand, only your lens could show you how the world operates… power contested but its meaning and understanding will come from your standpoint and experience of how the world is or ought to be (Research Journal, 1 February 2011).

In support, photographs 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate PRA visual images portraying participants' view of the meaning and understanding of the concept of power.
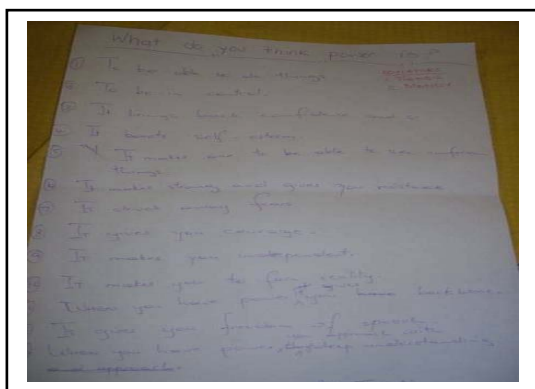
Photograph 4.1: Conceptualisation of the concept 'power', school 1: 18 March 2010
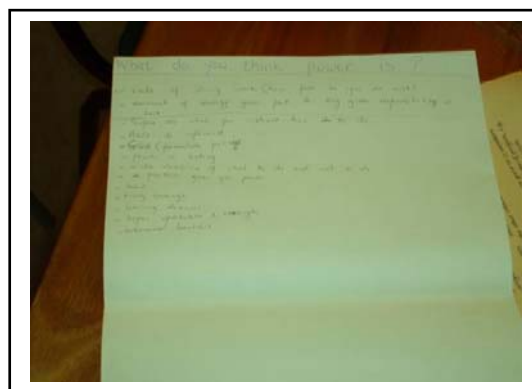
Photograph 4.2: Conceptualisation of the concept 'power', school 2: 15 November 2010

4.2.1.1 Category A: Leadership

Participants reported that they experienced power by taking initiative, implementing actions and empowering others. The following extracts illustrate this statement:

We were taking lead, mentoring others. Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard, and we decided on the project. We picked the area (activities to do within the project) and we divided ourselves in activities. We instructed them on what to do, even now people are living out of what we showed them (School 2, MP[2]: focus group and PRA visual activity on conceptualisation of power, p. 5).

Being able and capacity to lead, motivate, and persuade people in order to develop a person, community, country and world. If you have power, you become a leader who can reason (not boss) (School 1, EC[3]: PRA visual activity on conceptualisation of power, p. 17).

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[2] MP = Mpumalanga
[3] EC = Eastern Cape

4.2.1.2 Category B: Decision-making

For participants, their definition and the character of power entailed the ability to make independent decisions. Participants reported experienced power due to their ability to decide on what they wanted to do, live their dreams and achieve their vision for the project. To be in a position to decide and have a say, is what seemingly constituted power for them. Evidence to support this reported characteristic of power is shown in the following extracts:

What you think power is? Power is knowledge of knowing. How do you do it? You have to plan, when you have power you organise, take responsibility and must delegate, discuss and analyse. How? With power you must create better living and be passionate and pass it on to community-nation and country and the world. Where? Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 14).

We were acting because we sat with primary school participants and explained what we were doing and why we decided they should join… we the participants decided on what to on the project (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, p. 5).

4.2.1.3 Category C: Empowerment

Participants indicated that for them, power was about being in a position to share knowledge and reaching out to others, hence empowering others. Participants were seemingly empowered by the researchers as well as by extending what they had gained to others to benefit others and ultimately facilitate social change in communities. Evidence to support empowerment as a characteristic of power can be found in the following data:

The university researchers mentored us and we were able to lead the community member and lead them (School 2, MP: photo poster activity & formal discussion, p. 7).
You enlightened us. Thank you guys, we are now learners in the community of (xxx municipality), have gone far now. After informative meeting, we felt confident about issues affecting us for a long time (School 1, EC: photo poster activity, visual sun ray activity and focus group, p. 12).

4.2.1.4 Category D: Achieving personal goals

Participants reported that through their experience of being part of the project they realised their dreams and lived up to achieving their goals, which formed part of their set vision. Through achieving personal goals, participants indicated that they were able to gain power which could lead to transformative social change. Evidence in support of this characteristic of power is demonstrated by the following formal verbatim extracts:

Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you (School 1, EC: sun ray activity and focus group, p. 14).

Oh, dreams did come true we wanted to have a garden and we were able to have a garden… that is achieving dreams…. we acted according to what we wanted to do (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, p. 7).

4.2.1.5 Category E: Appropriating (owning) power

Participants remarked that the process of appropriating power was being able to soldier on, achieving their goals, creating more networks, and contributing to social transformation. They were further able to share and exchange experiences with other stakeholders. In this way, spaces of participation were created, enabling participants to appropriate power. This seemed to be the quintessential characteristic of participants' conception of power. The following verbatim extracts demonstrate this perception and experience:

We are now facilitators in this project-oh, wow greatest power we have …we felt power through these activities. We had more power, we adopted two schools (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and focus group, p. 15).

Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard (School 2, MP: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 5).

4.2.1.6 Category F: Trust

Participants emphasised the importance of establishing and building loyalty, in order to achieve common goals in participatory partnerships. To them, this was based on trust and respect (teachers and researchers). In the participants' view, trust added to equitable and

mutually beneficial power-sharing partnerships. Participants further indicated that trust could ensure that power-sharing partnerships result in continuous flexibility, thus strengthening community capacity. Trust reportedly allowed for an opportunity to create spaces for participation that was co-empowering and resulted in a sense of ownership in the project. Evidence in support of the characteristic of trust is shown in the following excerpts:

That is when we felt more powerful and trusting them…..the bond began to be stronger (School 1, EC: visual PRA activity, photo poster activity and formal discussion, p. 20).

OK, trust was very, very strong (School 2, MP: clouds activity and focus group, p. 5).

4.2.2 SUBTHEME 1.2: FACTORS IMPEDING POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS

Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships could be understood by referring to stumbling blocks and challenges that might result in poor execution of the project. Participants reported that various factors in the PR project could impede the nature of power and partnerships, namely a) time constraints, b) lack of commitment, c) work overload, d) lack of confidence, and e) lack of role clarity.

4.2.2.1 Category A: Time constraints

Participants reported that certain factors such as time constraints could be an impeding factor for experiencing positive partnerships and gaining power. Time is a critical element of management in terms of achieving one's goals and objectives. Participants reported that they had to split their already tight time allowance to include the activities of the STAR project. Additionally, participants reported that they had to use time over weekends in order to cater for the needs of the project, which were usually scheduled for family time. The following verbatim extracts support these perceptions:

Okay, a major barrier is time. We have to teach and also attend to learners and use weekend time for family to attend to programme activities. It's a lot of work, but we love it (School 1, EC: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 12).

As a group, we do share ideas, but the problem is we don't have enough time. Time is not on our side. We have to use our family time to do activities (School 2, EC: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 9).

4.2.2.2   Category B: Lack of commitment

Another impeding factor that participants shared was lack of commitment to the project. Participants reported that some colleagues (fellow participants) were not committed to the project and were not showing willingness to attend to project meetings or stick to agreed activities. This could result in delays in executing the agreed activities. Evidence to support this reported impeding factor is shown in the following extracts:

A problem is when educators do not show up for appointments or do the things they are supposed to do (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 17).

At times, some of us do not attend meetings as agreed and they only want to be part of travelling to different places that the university researchers usually invite us to (School 2, MP: interview, p. 9).

4.2.2.3   Category C: Work overload

Participants indicated that fear of work overload was an impeding factor for power and partnerships, which could potentially jeopardise participants' performance in both the project and at school. Participants indicated that they were already overwhelmed with teaching and attending to extracurricular school activities. Including STAR project activities in their workload therefore posed a challenge. The following verbatim extracts demonstrate this perception and experience:

We had fear of our teaching and extracurricular activities to be disturbed by additional work from the project. How will we do all these? (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 19).

We had to use more time to do activities, which at times increased our workload (School 2, MP: interview, p. 11).

### 4.2.2.4   Category D: Limited self-confidence

Participants furthermore reported that self-doubt and lack of confidence could be obstacles to experiencing power. Participants indicated that initially, that is at the beginning of the STAR project, they were uncertain about what they were expected to do by the researchers, thus doubting their capability. This perception is illustrated in the following excerpts:

Ooh, ooh, we had to make presentations in the large groups. It was a scary feeling, especially if you are not aaahh, used to present in a big group. First for me I was scared, meeting different people from different provinces - yaah I was scared, you power feel challenged... I think here 2008 we were a big group. Ja, u know, when you are in a big group it's not the same as in your small comfort groups where you are able to influence - But in a big group there are challenges. Sometimes you want to present, but are afraid that you will be asked questions left right centre... you know, I am thinking of of of — not being confident. It's a challenge- you you think what I will be saying to a group. You are afraid not being able to answer questions that you might be asked: what will people say when you speak - will I be able to give correct answers? (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 8).

Ja, you know prior to the project I was reserved, a bit conservative, kept to myself, I had lots of thought but kept them to myself (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and formal discussion, p. 12).

4.2.2.5 Category E: Lack of role clarity

Participants reported that they were initially unsure of their roles and expectations in the project. The latter plausibly indicate initial mistrust and confusion on the side of participants, which could signify impeding factors in PR partnership. Photograph 4.3 illustrates the use of a photo poster through which participants indicated their lack of power as a result of limited role clarification.
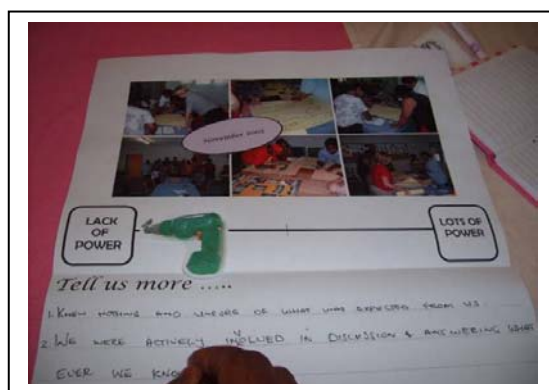
Photograph 4.3: An activity illustrating participants' ideas around limited role clarification as an impeding factor in PR, school 1: 19 March 2010

4.2.3 SUBTHEME 1.3: POWER DYNAMICS

Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships was, inter alia, experienced through the shift in power over the course of their engagement in the project. Participants felt that, as a collective and relational phenomenon, power changed over time. Participants saw themselves gradually changing to become members of a community of practice, eventually trusting one another and gaining more confidence. Initially, participants stated that they lacked trust and experienced low self-confidence as they doubted their skills, knowledge and assets. Participants described the shift in power in the participatory project as synonymous with 'handing over the stick'. Participants ultimately experienced a sense of ownership in the participatory partnership. Participants felt that, as their knowledge changed in terms of the participatory project, they became emancipated from their perceived limited levels of knowledge to being more knowledgeable.

Photographs 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate participants involved in a PRA visual activity illustrating clouds as obstacles in terms of their initially perceived lack of trust, limited knowledge and low self-confidence. The photographs also show the use of sun rays to indicate the perceived power they possessed, which allowed them to share knowledge and information with parents. This shift demonstrates a move from clouds to sunrays (also included in Appendix C), which indicates the movement of power from challenges to achievements.

Photograph 4.4: Participants using drawings of clouds and sun rays to indicate movement/shift in power, school 1: 19 March 2010

Photograph 4.5: Participants using drawings of clouds and sun rays to indicate movement/shift in power, school 1: 15 November 2010

4.2.3.1 Category A: Trust

Participants reported that at the onset of the participatory project, they did not trust the researchers. Participants were not comfortable with their relationship between them and the

researchers and the role they were supposed to play. However, over time, power shifted. Participants began to open up and trust the university researchers due to their prolonged engagement in schools. As a result, participants reportedly felt confident about the partnership. The following extracts provide evidence for these statements:

OK, in 2003, we fear of changes, especially meeting new people more especially the white ones. The fears of overloading of work on top of the one we already have and then we asked ourselves, what were they coming to us for? May be they want to expose us the area, community, why a done in a black schools instead of white schools; there are lots of white schools but they chose this one, why? Doing this as a ladder for their own benefit? After the introduction of the programme, we began to trust and open up more to R and L. They also on the other hand trusted us and had confidence on us, because they kept on visiting us and updating us (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and focus group, p. 20).

Were afraid because we were not confident, very scared … We asked ourselves, why our school, what do they want, may be they want to expose our school, why, why, why us. Aaahh, I can say it was strong commitment, as much as the people of Pretoria, we could see that they were committed to the project, they did not look into us only. They came kept checking the progress of the project, visited a lot here (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 7).

4.2.3.2   Category B: Knowledge brings ability

Participants reported that initially, they did not possess sufficient knowledge about psychosocial challenges in their communities, nor ways of providing assistance. However, participants reported that the more they interacted with the university researchers and participated in the project, the more they experienced a shift in power. They felt that they became more knowledgeable about the challenges they faced and how to address and solve these. As a result, participants felt knowledgeable and certain about their actions. Participants explained that power dynamics meant that they became active members in a community of practice who were knowledgeable and able to participate in the project. The following extracts attest to these statements:

We were not sure of what was expected of us… but we were wondering why the two white ladies we here for? So! we thought that may be what we would say will be

wrong. At first we did not know what is it they wanted from us? What was it that they expected from us? I thought it was a one time off visiting, I did not know that it would last long. After that they kept on coming; now we own the project and we know a lot of thing (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 23).

We knew nothing and we were not sure of what was expected of us at first. We were able to claim back that we can. We were decision makers - we love that. We were confident because it was us who were actively involved as we know the problem facing the community we work in (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 20).

The following extracts from my research journal further support the idea of the nature of power in participatory partnerships shifting, so that participants ultimately experienced ownership of the project and that they were equal partners who could influence the direction, focus and scope of the project.

The pictures that I see in chronological order from 2003-2010 attest to the fact that there is shift in power with time, and participants claiming that power and space of participation. Both parties are equal partners, but participants are really in charge on the direction of the project (Research journal, 19 May 2010).

From limited knowledge to becoming more knowledgeable, from lack of trust to more trust and loyalty… participants are community leaders and they empower others, that's a true essence of participatory research… locals having a sense of ownership… spaces of participation are open… I have witnessed what Chambers calls 'handing over the stick' in my data analysis. I think achieving the state of power-sharing partnerships is a journey (Research journal, 15 February 2011).

I think I have represented the participants well. This member checking activity proved that well, the participants voices were clearly articulated from their standpoint (Research journal, 16 July 2011).

4.3   THEME 2: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS

The second theme of this study relates to participants' own understanding and meaning-making of power and partnership. Participants explained their construction, meaning-making

and understanding of what 'power' meant in relation to their experiences and participation in a participatory project. The participants conceptualised power as both a way in which their working environment enabled them to do what they wanted to do, and also as a personal space where they felt capable and had initiative to coordinate project activities.

Theme 2 focuses on data that reflected and addressed the following research questions: (1) How do teachers conceptualise the partnership in participatory partnership? (2) How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations? and (3) Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in research partnership? Participants indicated that, based on their experience and interaction during the project, they were able to construct meaning and an understanding of 'partnership'. They conceptualised partnership by emphasising the need to forge equal and beneficial relationships with other partners involved in the project.

It follows that the two subthemes that emerged regarding teachers' understanding and meaning-making of power and partnerships include 1) forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships, and 2) establishing an enabling environment. Table 4.3 summaries Theme 2 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion indicators of the relevant subthemes and categories.

Table 4.3:   Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 2

THEME 2 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS		
Subthemes and categories	**Inclusion indicators**	**Exclusion indicators**
Subtheme 2.1: Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	This subtheme includes participants' forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with partners who participated in the project. Equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships were established with researchers, peers and the wider community.	
Category 1: University Researchers	This category includes data related to participants working with researchers, resulting in partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with researchers.
Category 2: Peers	This category includes data related to participants working with peers, in this case fellow participants, hence creating partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with peers.

THEME 2 PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS		
Subthemes and categories	**Inclusion indicators**	**Exclusion indicators**
Category 3: Wider community	This category includes data related to participants working with the wider community, hence creating partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with the wider community.
Subtheme 2.2: Establishing an enabling environment	This subtheme includes establishing an enabling environment in which participating participants could work and freely do what they wanted to do. The enabling environment includes the local and national level.	
Category 1: Local level enablement	This category includes data related to an enabling environment at local level.	This category excludes data that do not refer to an enabling environment at the local level.
Category 1: National level enablement	This category includes data related to an enabling environment at national level.	This category excludes data that do not refer to an enabling environment at the national level.

4.3.1 SUBTHEME 2.1: FORGING EQUITABLE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The forging of equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships was explained at multiple levels in terms of three categories, namely a) university researchers, b) peers, and c) the wider community. The following verbatim quotations from focus group and photo poster attest to this subtheme.

It means, let's say in production, if you are working together, you share ideas, if one fail, then you all fail. Partnership is about what you both want to achieve-achievement. Partnership is about achieving and having common goals. What we want to achieve. It's about commitment (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 1 & 2).

Partnership is working as a group, share knowledge and ideas together, to share to agree, to be actively involved both parties there must be mature respect needed, consultation and decision-making done by partners, not individual or certain groups. To us partnership we mean to work together closely, aah, share ideas information as partnerships, you become brothers, when it comes to decision-making, you are on the same level. No one is beyond others, it's becoming one minded as you share information and exchange. Learn from each other (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 14).

Both parties are highly involved. You work together. Reach agreement. Good relationship - will enhance. It broadens awareness. There must be trust and transparency. Both parties must be humble and knowledgeable. They must have confidentiality and loyalty (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 18).

Participants expressed their understanding of partnerships as created and nurtured through equity and respect, as well as working together harmoniously, resulting in both partners achieving fruitful results. Participants indicated that partnerships should benefit both parties so that all have equal voice and participation in decision-making. Dedication, passion and commitment to achieve a common goal were emphasised. Photographs 4.6 and 4.7 further demonstrate the view of participants in explaining the meaning and understanding of partnership as forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Photograph 4.6: Conceptualisation of the concept of partnership, school 1: 18 March 2010
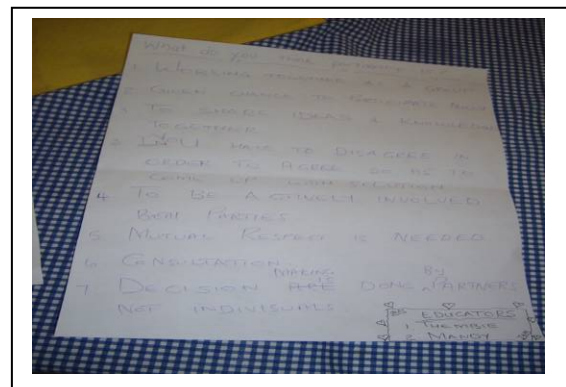
Photograph 4.7: Conceptualisation of the concept of partnership, school 2: 15 November 2010

4.3.1.1 Category A: University researchers

Participants referred to partnerships as the process of coming together and building long-lasting relationships with researchers based on trust and respect, and strengthened by mutual benefits. Participants seemed to view partnership as a process of working together with university researchers to achieve common goals. A partnership with researchers was viewed as a form of power within which both parties had a common interest. Interest in working together was reportedly based on collective strength, alliance building and commitment to continuing the project. Evidence of this category is shown in the following extracts from focus group transcripts and visual data:

Mmm, there was cooperation, we worked together as a team, and we had a common goal - to, to to, to -what can I say, to say to help reduce problems of HIV and AIDS and help the learners who are affected and infected (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 4).

We have powerful relationships with the University of Pretoria (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 21).

Aaahh, I can say it was strong commitment, as much as the people of Pretoria, we could see that they were committed to the project, they did not look into us only. They kept checking the progress of the project, visited a lot here...you know when we produced our beads in the project, we took our products and gave them to the university people to sell on our behalf. We trusted them, however by giving them our beads, we didn't know if they will come back again or what would happen to our products. But they did sell the products and gave us our money to the school. That was the building of trust. To believe that you can give someone your things and get what you ask for. For us trust was built through such experiences (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 7).

After the introduction of the programme, we began to trust and open up more to R and L [UP researchers]. They also on the other hand trusted us and had confidence on us, because they kept on visiting us and updating us... The relationships are from time to time strengthened as they further introduced other researchers to the project. More participants joined the group after seeing how well it is and how we interacted with researchers (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 20).

Photograph 4.8 captures beaded underwear produced by teachers of school 2 and given to university researchers to sell, indicating a firm relationship of trust between the two partners. Participants thus entrusted researchers with the products, seemingly believing in this joint venture as a result of an established partnership.

Photograph 4.8: Participants gave beaded products to university researchers to sell on their behalf, school 2: 15 November 2010

The following extracts from my research journal (see Appendix J) support participants' perception of mutual and beneficial relationships forged between participants and researchers:

I am anxious, I don't know what to expect from the teachers. We will be meeting for the first. I have to establish rapport (that's a rule of thumb) to get it right the first time (Research Journal, 1 March 2009).

From the very time when I met with participants, they gave me a special African welcome, they treated me like one of their own, as if we have known each other for a long time… indeed there is trust and loyalty when working with them, they show that to R & L as well (Research Journal, 19 March 2010).

4.3.1.2 Category B: Peers (fellow participants)

Participants viewed partnerships as enhanced relational networks with fellow peers that created not only a deepened appreciation for each other as colleagues, but also commitment to the project, and lastly mutual support. Participants reported that they built several partnerships with other participants because of their participation in the project, particularly with school management (principals). Participants also indicated that the partnerships that they had established with peers were mutual and beneficial for achieving the vision and goals of the project. They indicated that equitable relationships resulted from joining the project and involving more participants. The following extracts from the data support this category:

We were supported by management. More participants joined the group after seeing how good it is and how we interacted with the researchers from UP (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 19).

Now we have increased. It started with two groups, now it is four or more groups, the partners are many. We were joined by eight to ten people in this group (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 8 & 9).

We felt more powerful when we went to a seminar in Amanzingwe with other participants, universities, researchers. There we shared our different experiences, learnt from others and others gained from us. We gained more relationships with other participants from other provinces. We confidently made presentations in front of an entire audience we have mentioned above. We felt very honoured. We had courage to talk to other people (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 21).

Photograph 4.9 illustrates participants meeting with peers from different schools at a seminar[4]. The meeting with peers illustrates how these relationships were forged with others.

Photograph 4.9: Participants at a group seminar in Amanzingwe where they met fellow teachers, who participated in the project from different schools, viz. school 1 & 2: 3 March 2009

4.3.1.3 Category C: Wider community

Participants reported that partnerships imply the ability to build long-lasting relationships that allowed greater participation at different levels with the broader community. The wider community includes the business community, service providers in the community and parents.

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[4] A national seminar on partners in research was held in Amanzingwe in March 2009

Participants indicated that partnerships were created in an equitable manner as they were able to choose how and when to engage in different spaces in instances where they worked within the wider community. Partnerships with the broader community seemingly allowed them to draw on existing knowledge and share experiences with one another. Participants reported that they extended their relationships to join hands with the wider community as partners who seemed to matter and be of benefit. Evidence in support of this category is included in the following interview and focus group data:

Now we work with OVC, SASA, ABSA[5]…yes, 100%. We work hand in hand with community (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11 & 12).

Partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books (School 2, MP: interview, p. 4).

Partnerships created - Olive Leave Seed, H.A.C., ABSA… Created soup kitchen through Muslim. Have had health volunteers (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).

In further support, I noted the following in my research journal, referring to participants' working partnerships with the wider community:

There are food hampers and clothes donated by the business community (ABSA), this is a true reflection of forging equitable relationships with the business community which is beneficial to the wider community (learners and parents). Participants are creating different spaces for others to participate in the STAR project. The counselling centre is well furnished with furniture donated by the business community. Amazing! Real working partnerships. Everybody is benefiting here, very mutual beneficial partnerships indeed (Research journal, 18 March 2010).

4.3.2 SUBTHEME 2.2: ESTABLISHING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Participants seemingly experienced their environment as enabling at both local and national levels, which apparently promoted their ability to participate freely in the participatory project. An enabling environment appeared to be a key factor in engaging performance at the local level, where the school leaders (principals), colleagues at schools, and the wider

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[5] OVC=Orphaned and vulnerable children; SASA= South African social service; ABSA= a financial institution (bank) in South Africa; HAC= Health Advisory Committee

community served as catalyst for participants to participate in the project. Furthermore, in the broader community, participants reported that they were allowed to institute partnerships with other stakeholders. Participants thus indicated that the democratic organisational nature of the project permitted an enabling environment. They reported that fellow participants in the project brought in complementary and compatible interests and roles, thereby adding to an enabling environment where all could freely participate. The enabling environment is discussed in terms of two relevant categories, namely a) local level enablement, and b) national level enablement. The following excerpts from focus group and interview data serve as an introduction to the discussion of this subtheme:

Aaah, there is no stumbling block between us now because if we want something from you, we come straight to you and also the principal is a link between us and you. We work together with principal and you. It's easy now to work with you, it's easy for you to come to our school (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11).

Another factor is the people involved, enable you to do something, that vision of resources, enable you to have power, human resources, network as resource and also other factor is ability to carry out something, further mission, the vision and mission enable to carry you to have power (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).

4.3.2.1   Category A: Local level enablement

The local level denotes the participants' own school community. Participants reported that stakeholders were widely encouraged to become part of the project. This resulted in participants being able to plan, make decisions and implement their activities without difficulty, as the environment was experienced as enabling. An enabling environment meant that they were well positioned to willingly take on the initiative of implementing and leading the project. On local level, an enabling environment allowed for increased capacity and subsequently collective action. The following verbatim focus group extracts provide evidence of an enabling environment as experienced on local level:

Talking about HIV and AIDS was not part of our language, in those days but now it's gone. It was new and scared, all those things, but gone are those days, people come and ask for our help, the number of parents and learners who are interested have increased. I call it collaboration - it's like a three-legged pot. At school is learner and educator and parents but we add more, it's researchers, participants,

community, this three-legged pot is growing. It's no longer few people, that is, we are using many pots, we put more fire that means we are cooking, OK. We are what we are because of you. We are where we are because of you. Thank you (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 12).

Oh boy, you know in 2006, we felt we were powerful because through the project we managed to divide the activities within the project on our own and able to manage the project, we were able to influence the community. As you can see from the pictures, there were lots of community people participating, for instance some were doing bead work project. They we able to participate, even the garden. That is, I say we were in control with lots of power, we decided on our course of action (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

Photographs 4.10 and 4.11 further demonstrate an enabling environment through which teachers discussed issues of HIV and AIDS openly by establishing a resource centre and producing AIDS beaded ribbons. In photograph 4.10 participants of school 1 were able to establish an information centre, through which the local community could learn more about issues of HIV and AIDS. In photograph 4.11, participants of school 2 together with the local community, crafted bead work using the HIV and AIDS symbol, thus signifying their willingness to discuss issues of HIV and AIDS.

Photograph 4.10: Information Centre to discuss HIV and AIDS issues openly, school 1: 18 March 2010

Photograph 4.11: Beaded AIDS ribbons showing an enabling environment to discuss AIDS and HIV issues openly, school 2: 15 November 2010

4.3.2.2   Category B: National level enablement

National level enablement refers to activities conducted by the respective participants and their stakeholders outside their provinces. Participants reported that the nature of the project provided them with a platform to share their experiences, ideas and knowledge with partners

from other schools and provinces. This experience appeared, in turn, to allow participants to share and exchange notes and knowledge with others and as a result learn from others. In addition, participants apparently experienced access to other networks, as the inclusion of new actors implied that issues could be discussed openly in newly created public spaces.

Participants experienced the environment as enabling because they reported that the researchers allowed access to them at any time, provided them with mentoring, support and guidance, and most importantly, allowed their voices to be heard. This resulted in participants experiencing that they were in charge of the project. Therefore, an enabling environment gave participants the freedom to reach out to other participants or partners, particularly in other provinces, and share their experiences of participation in the project. Evidence of these experiences and perceptions is illustrated by the following excerpts:

They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteers are able to get us free books (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).

We were confident because it was us who were actively involved as we know the problem facing the community we work in… Through working with us as participants, we were able to identify our problems and how to address them… They were giving us chances to explore not to be stumbling block on what we know (experiences)… They were supportive and gave us strength in what we were doing all the time (School 1, EC: focus group and visual activity, p. 19).

Mmmmh, I think here is Amanzingwe - we met a group from Port Elizabeth and also a group from Pretoria, Shoshanguve and met more people from the university and us. Now we have increased. It started with two groups, now it is four or more groups, the partners are many (School 2, MP: focus group and photo poster activity, p. 8).

The following extract from my research journal further supports participants' experiences of an enabling environment that seemingly gave them the leverage to reach out, voice their experiences and strive to attain their vision and goals without hindrance:

Spaces and opportunities for interacting with other stakeholders are very open, participants have the freedom to reach out to whoever they want and share their

experiences. This participatory project is very enabling (Research journal, Amanzingwe, 3 March 2009).

These spaces of participation keep on increasing. I am impressed with the fact that, at the member checking session, teachers had the platform to share their experiences (progress report) with state officials from the ministry of education and an international academic expert (Research Journal, 16 July 2011).

In further support, photograph 4.12 illustrates participants at a national seminar where they shared their experiences of the project. This platform provided a network space for participation and information sharing between teachers from various provinces. The platform for participation was an indication of an enabling environment at national level.

Photograph 4.12: Participants sharing experiences at a national seminar, demonstrating the presence of enabling environment, schools 1 & 2: 3 March, 2009

4.4   THEME 3: THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP

Participants indicated that they experienced agency to act freely based on the perceived power they had gained and the partnerships they had established. Participants seemingly believed that they experienced power and partnership in terms of the capacity to act through the power they had gained, resulting in their empowering others, taking action and providing leadership. This theme focuses on data that reflect and address the following research questions: (1) How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations? (2) In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention?

The theme is supported by subthemes that relate to the role of agency in relation to power and partnerships, namely 1) agency, and 2) participants being agents of social transformation change. Table 4.4 summarises Theme 3 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion indicators for the related subthemes and categories.

Table 4.4:   Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 3

THEME 3 THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP		
Subthemes and categories	**Inclusion indicators**	**Exclusion indicators**
Subtheme 3.1: Agency	This subtheme includes participants as being able to take charge and act which shows their power in a partnership of participating in the project. This capacity to take charge and act includes capacity to empower others, capacity to assume leadership and take action by making decisions.	
Category 1: Capacity to empower others	This category includes data related to participants as a source of empowering others in the community because of the power they experienced in the participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants as a source of empowering others in the community through the power they experienced in the participatory partnership project.
Category 2: Capacity for leadership	This category includes data related to participants being able to assume leadership due to the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants being able to assume leadership due to the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.
Category 3: Taking action	This category includes data related to participants being able to make decisions that result in them creating spaces to initiate and take action as a result of the power experienced in a participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants being able to make decisions that result in their creating spaces to initiate and take action as a result of the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.
Subtheme 3.2: Teachers as agents of social transformation	This subtheme includes participants as agents of knowledge transfer and social change that participants brought to the community by participating in the project. These agents of knowledge transfer include transferring knowledge, providing resources and creating community networks.	
Category 1: Transferring knowledge	This category includes data related to participants as source of information and transferring knowledge to parents, schools and community hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to transfer of knowledge to parents, schools and community that could bring about transformative social change.
Category 2: Mobilising resources	This category includes data related to participants mobilising resources, hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to mobilising for resources that could bring about transformative social change.
Category 3: Creating community networks	This category includes data related to participants creating community networks, hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to creating community networks that could bring about transformative social change.

4.4.1   SUBTHEME 3.1: AGENCY

Participants reported that they experienced and understood power as an activity that required the capacity to initiate ideas and activities, make decisions and plans with a view to implement them, and subsequently act accordingly. Furthermore, participants viewed power as the ability to be aware, organise and mobilise assets based on their existing skills and strengths, in order to make decisions and act. Participants seemingly viewed themselves as initiating, mobilising and acting in all phases of the participatory project. They reported power as 'power to' and 'power with', which implies being capable of acting (to exercise agency) and have a voice to express their experience.

Participants reported that since they could voice their experiences, opportunities abounded for them to be taken seriously and to demonstrate how they made decisions. This allowed them to act in a way which mirrored how they perceived things. The ability to voice their experiences was also a result of the spaces of participation that were created in a power-sharing partnership. Participants viewed power as the capability of individuals to shape their own lives. They further indicated that free democratic participation in the participatory project resulted in an increase of their own confidence and their belief in what could be accomplished, particularly with the skills they had gained in a power-sharing partnership. The following extracts from interviews and focus groups support this theme.

What we wanted to do was achieved, we were able to achieve because power is about change, power is about making decision and we were able to influence. Our dream came to be because we wanted a garden and reaped what we sow (School 2, MP: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 5).

I will start at the school, we made decisions of having a counselling centre, we manage to influence other participants and they joined us. To be in charge of centre and help learners (School 2, MP: interview, p. 12).

We were facilitators that were ready to help other schools and communities around. We had more power- adopted two schools (School 1, EC: photo poster and formal discussion, p. 19 & 20).

The following extract from my research journal further attests to the evidence that participants experienced agency:

Today, as I transcribe data and look at the pictures of the photo posters, I began to have a sentimental feeling that teachers value their participation in the STAR project. They have gotten the power to be the change agents of their communities. They have planted the mustard seed and they nurture it with all their faculty and might. I think as I listen to the audio, the theme of empowerment, community leadership and action come to mind (Research journal, 25 May 2010).

In support, photograph 4.13 displays a photo poster activity of which participants indicated the power gained through being facilitators to other schools, sharing their knowledge, and thereby displaying their perceived power in action. Participants indicated 'lots of power' gained which enabled them to have the agency to empower others.
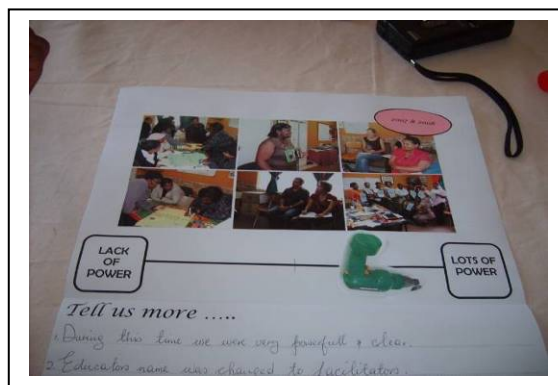
Photograph 4.13: Photo poster activity illuminating participants' perception of how they gained power, due to their perceived empowerment of others in their role as facilitators, school 1: 18 March 2010

Participants reported and conceptualised power as 'power with', which is the collective action in which they worked with others. To them, power meant individual capacity that could translate into new participatory spaces that resulted in gains. Participants indicated that power implied the ability to undertake complex, challenging initiatives which they did not think they could do. The following focus groups and formal discussion data demonstrate this perception:

Even if something is difficult on our side, with strength, power we will overcome - no matter how challenging situation. With power, we can achieve... We managed to act. We took initiative to influence our neighbouring school to join us (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 1 & 23).

We visited our baby schools to see if they had progress, we had interviews with them, we were pleased to see the programmes progressed that far (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 21).

4.4.1.1   Category A: Capacity to empower others

Participants explained 'power within' in terms of gaining a sense of self-identity, awareness and confidence which was viewed as a precondition for action that would allow them to empower others. Participants reported that they were able to go out and reach out to other schools by telling them about the project and the positive outcomes they had obtained. This ability to empower others was apparently made possible by the perception of participants that they could recognise their own sense of self-worth and self-knowledge, and then share with others. Such an occurrence translated into a form of so-called visible power. Participants apparently saw themselves as a source of hope in which they became the 'sun' that transmitted its sunrays to nourish other plants. Evidence in support of this category can be found in the following statements made during PRA visual activity and focus group discussions:

We were facilitators that were ready to help other schools and communities around. Became facilitators to two other high school and primary school (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 19).

In 2006, community members we able to do bead work through our initiative, items that we made we sold, these members' stress were overcome, because what they did would take them far… We had community members in 2006 that came here to join us in the project and we told them what to do and they complied. And they also took what they learnt here to their community (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 4).

Participants also reported that they had made others (schools and participants) aware of their potential to become experts of their lives and communities. Participants viewed themselves as potential tools to help others see and understand the realities of their communities. Evidence in support of this perception is captured in the following verbatim extracts:

In 2010, we went to the neighbour schools. We were acting because we sat with primary school participants and explained what we were doing and why we decided they should join the group. And again we managed to divide ourselves since are big

group now (language+ literacy, garden, career guidance and counselling, staff abilities) (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 5).

We managed to facilitate workshops with two high schools and one primary school of our community (on our own)… We were able to introduce L and R that we are working with (making appointments, leading in conversations with the schools) (School 1, EC: photo poster and focus group, p. 20).

Participants seemingly viewed themselves as human capital, possessing assets, resources and skills that in turn implied positive outcomes for community members. They reported that they gradually experienced a higher sense of empowerment and agency. They experienced power as they were reportedly able to use their skills to apply knowledge for effective negotiation with others. Evidence to attest to these statements is shown in the following focus group extracts:

We were able to share ideas. These community members stresses were overcome, because what they did would take them far, because of our knowledge (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

We have opened the resources centre. We had more power because we adopted two schools (School 1, EC: photo poster and focus group, p. 15).

Participants also reported that they experienced power in transformative learning environments as empowering since these opened up more spaces for greater community participation. They reported that the transformation was fulfilling the capacity to facilitate change through the initiatives they had started. The following interview extract demonstrates this perception:

Yes I can say that its power gained since project started, step by step we started here and now we are here. If someone can say relate to me, I know these steps. This environment and training has made me realise who I am, I can now know when I have forgotten something and go back to remind myself step by step, now I have lots of information and knowledge, am able to stand in front of people being confident and present. I believe in me, because of the dedication, commitment and being positive in power. I would like to keep on moving and start a new project in Ghongwane (near Mozambique) not very long, in fact during holidays I will talk to

some educator then I will inform R & L about way forward (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).

4.4.1.2   Category B: Capacity for leadership

Participants reportedly gained power by providing leadership. According to them, this enrichment became a determining catalyst for transforming communities. Participants reported that they took it upon themselves to expand their wings and initiate activities, thereby leading the way for others to follow in their footsteps. Participants further indicated that they believed that they experienced this leadership because of an enabling environment. Leadership, they reported, their positive feelings and incidences where they created opportunities for participation with others expanded partnerships with other stakeholders. Evidence attesting to this category is shown in the following focus group verbatim extracts:

Yes, yes, yes, 2006. We had community members in 2006 who came to here to join us in the project and we told them what to do and they complied. And they also took what they learnt here to their community (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 5).

We felt very powerful to introduce the programme to other schools. We ourselves decide on the schools we chose NOT the researchers. The bond is stronger than before, they just come and observe the progress We believe that they have faith in us to take this programme further (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 20).

We were taking lead, mentoring others. Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard, and we decided on the project. We picked the area (activities to do within the project) and we divided ourselves in activities (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 5).

Participants reported that their experienced sense of power as evident in their decision-making was characterised by negotiating openly, deciding on the agenda to create more partnerships and mentoring others. To the participants, the capacity for decision-making was characterised as agency. They further reported that agency made them feel empowered, which they felt also had a positive influence on their sense of self-worth, dignity and self-confidence. The following focus group verbatim extracts from the PRA visual activity demonstrates this idea:

What do you think power is? Power is knowledge of knowing. How do you do it. You have to plan, when you have power you organise, take responsibility and must delegate, discuss and analyse. How? With power you must create better living and be passionate and pass it on to community-nation and country and the world. Where? Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 14).

Cell buddies (learner to learner) - having volunteers and caregivers - great achievement, relief for us. They give us report, feedback that is wow! Excellent. We attended workshops naming of learning centre by deceased learners. Working extra mile; self-renewing school now. We overcame our fears. We felt power through these activities (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 16).

4.4.1.3 Category C: Taking action ('lighting the fire')

Participants reported a broader awareness of their environment based on their participation in the project. They reportedly relied on newly gained knowledge and skills to assist them with taking action through community mobilisation and organisation. Through their mobilisation and organising abilities, participants reported that they were able to contribute to social change. Evidence in support of these statements is provided in the following focus group and interview extracts:

We divided the project on how to manage it in order to influence the community - see- community members. They did a bead project here at school, participate. They participated in the garden, garden was blooming in 2006. We had lots of power in 2006... Oh! dreams did come true. We wanted to have a garden and we were able to make a garden that is achieving a dreaming. If you are able to dream about something and make it happen in reality, that's power (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 6). *The progress was unbelievable* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).

I would say more. I would say yes. I have changed a lot of people, other people are thinking differently. They also want to do more project, even my colleagues. Working together people can do more (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).

Photographs 4.14 shows a vegetable garden initiated by participants that took action after planning. Photograph 4.15 shows clothes items that were donated and vegetable produce, the fruits of taking action after planning support initiatives.

Photograph 4.14: Vegetable garden established by teachers taking action, school 1: 19 March, 2010

Photograph 4.15: Clothes donated and produce from vegetable garden, signifies participants' capacity to take action, school 1: 19 March, 2010

Participants also reported that in instances where they experienced community participation and reflexivity regarding the involvement, they perceived themselves as having the power to act (exercise agency). Participants indicated that they were able to create new partnerships and share ideas, plan and make independent decisions. Evidence to attest to these statements is captured in the following focus group contributions:

Success-formation of the working group, giving food hampers, feeding community with soup from Muslim. We have opened the resources centre, we are now facilitators in this protect. Oh, wow, it's the greatest power tool we have (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 15).

We visited our baby schools to see if they had progress, we had interviews with them, we were pleased to see the programmes progressed that far (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 21).

The following extracts from my research journal further support the idea of participants 'lighting the fire' (their way of referring to taking action) by means of the activities they were involved in.

Participants are busy in action, they decide and act on their words, this is very participatory, it is them who are bringing ideas based on the resources, skills and

knowledge that they have within themselves and amass these resources... I salute participants, they are true mobilisers... taking teaching and learning beyond the classroom... that's how I see it from them (Research journal, 19 March 2010).

I am excited about the data I am collecting from both MP and EC provinces. Teachers see themselves as the sun that brings light, hope to their communities (Research journal, 19 May 2010).

4.4.2 SUBTHEME 3.2: TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Participants seemingly perceived themselves as agents of social transformation. In their view, the change that they brought about was a result of the knowledge they had acquired. They appeared to regard themselves as agents that could unlock potential in order to facilitate social change in their communities. Participants' perception of themselves as agents of social transformation in their communities is supported by observations in my research journal:

A key unlocks doors, therefore I think participants see themselves as unlocking doors to bring community into this new opportunity and as a result it changes the communities' lives...they bring new life, new beginnings filled with hope. I am impressed (Research Journal, 19 March 2009).

Photograph 4.16 illustrates a drawing of a key by a group of participants from school 2. They visually depicted themselves as keys that could unlock the future to bring about social change. They used this metaphor at the Amanzingwe seminar to represent themselves and their role in the project.
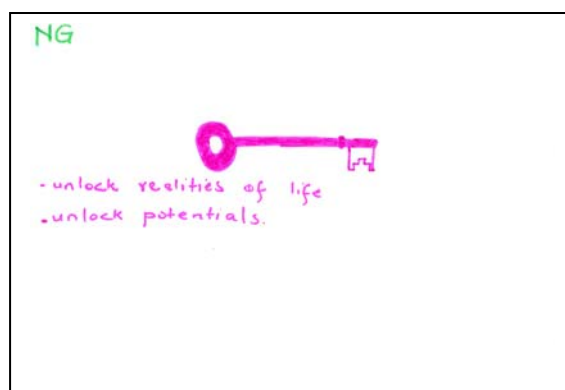
Photograph 4.16: Participants' view of themselves as keys unlocking realities and being agents of transformation, school 2: 3 March 2009

This subtheme is indicated by categories that are in line with issues relating to agents of social transformation, namely (a) transferring knowledge, (b) providing resources and (c) creating community networks.
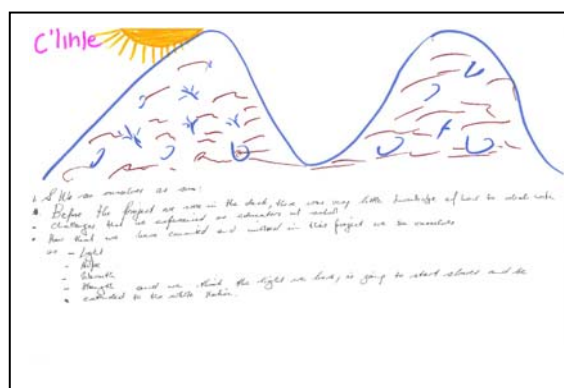
4.4.2.1 Category A: Transferring knowledge

As indicated, participants seemingly viewed themselves as agents that brought about social change. They expressed an understanding of themselves as sources of knowledge. They transferred their knowledge on community psychosocial issues to others. In this regard, participants reported that they possessed information, and then transferred and shared this knowledge with others, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

When you educate a woman, you educate a nation. We plough to the nation, all are women. We now have 5 babies (schools). We got big 'mabele lidhle' (Xhosa). Everyone can suck - got a long breast, we are cows now. Visiting the participants; it's our duty to inform (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 15).

We are seeing our self as a key that can unlock realities of life to the community. And we are also unlocking their potential. They did things they never thought of doing before (School 2, MP: PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 1).

In support of these contributions, photograph 4.17 illustrates participants' depiction of themselves as the sun. For them the rays could emit light, hope and warmth to transfer knowledge and ultimately bring about social change.

Photograph 4.17: Drawing of the sun that emits light and hope as source of knowledge transfer to the community, school 1: 3 March, 2009

(a)   Transferring knowledge to parents

Having knowledge and information about the problems faced by the community, participants seemingly tended to rely on collective agency to sensitise parents about the psychosocial issues learners faced and ways to resolve these. Participants reported that they had the power to influence the lives of parents by means of, inter alia, knowledge sharing. As a result, parents were able to exercise their voices and capacity to learn about psychosocial problems that learners encountered, particularly on HIV and AIDS. As such, participants indicated that they perceived themselves as agents whose actions could transform society and impart knowledge that is useful to parents. This idea is captured in the following verbatim quotations.

Learners and community are suckling from us as well as members in our school… as you see we are fat and we have big udder (School 2, MP: focus group and PRA visual activity, p. 23).

Ja, I would say starting from the 'snakes and knobkerries' enabled to think about challenges of community and how to solve them. It has helped us to come up with ideas, it help to open us up, broaden my wings (School 2, MP: interview, p. 8).

Addressing OVC problems, life skills programme. Able to visit child headed families. Able to form working groups (information, support, and garden) (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).

Also being able to visit with learners homes, going to municipality (grants, RDP⁶ houses) grant they qualify for. We have volunteers and caregivers - visit learners give report (School 1, EC: focus group, pg11).

Photographs 4.18 and 4.19 illustrate participants of schools 1 and 2, where they are busy with a PRA activity using sun rays to indicate their perceived power in the project. They related sun rays to the ability to share knowledge and information with parents.

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⁶ RDP=Rural Development Projects

Photograph 4.18: Using PRA visual activity of sun rays as an indication of having the power to give light to parents, school 1: 19 March 2010

Photograph 4.19: Using PRA visual activity of sun rays as an indication of having the power to give light to parents, school 2: 15 November 2010

In support, the following extract from my research journal further captures participants' perceived sense of being agents of knowledge transfer and information sharing with parents:

Be the change you want to see. These are great participants, they have realised the importance and benefit of reaching out to the parents if their goal is to see change. Change can only happen when we share with others the realities of what we know. This important lesson for me to learn… share, share, share=informed people=informed decisions and choices within us if we reach out. This is a humbling experience… to knock into parents' doors and bring light… very humbling (Research journal, 20 May 2010).

Participants reportedly used dialogue and reflection to transfer knowledge to parents. Reciprocally, this sharing of knowledge enhanced further understanding of the type of assistance parents needed for social change. Participants' experience of social transformation repeatedly opened up spaces for knowledge sharing with parents inside and outside the classroom, as evident in the following statement:

Not all but there are parents who are willing to learn and help. We help parents to know about problems and explain HIV (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).

(b)   Transferring knowledge to schools

Participants shared their discovered knowledge and understanding of the psychosocial problems faced by the community with other schools. Participants thus seemingly experienced a sense of power, allowing them to contribute their gained knowledge to their

neighbouring schools. The following verbatim PRA activity, focus group and interview excerpts provide evidence that participants seemingly perceived themselves as transmitters of knowledge to other schools:

Mmm, maybe in first place we were able to influence participants; before they were not able to see our vision and goals but we managed to talk to them and explain; on how school will benefit in project. School benefit, if all of us are part of the project (School 2, MP: PRA activity and focus group, p. 9).

We now have 5 babies (schools). We got big 'mabele lidhle' (Xhosa). Everyone can suck - got a long breast, we are cows now. Visiting the participants, it's our duty to inform (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 15).

This environment and training has made me realise who I am; now I have lots of information and knowledge, am able to stand in front of people being confident and present. I believe in me, because of the dedication, commitment and being positive in power. I would like to keep on moving and start a new project in Ghongwane school (near Mozambique border) not very long, in fact during holidays I will talk to some participants then I will inform R & L about the way forward (School 2, MP: Interview, p. 4).

Participants, in their role as agents of change, thus appeared to transfer knowledge which could benefit other schools by raising awareness. Participants perceived themselves as rays of the sun transmitting sunlight, thus bringing about light. The following verbatim focus group contributions demonstrate these statements:

In 2009-10 we joined by more participants here in school. Before we were only four (4), now joined by 8-10 people in this group (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 9).

We have facilitated workshops, we managed to plough back e,g. (xxx primary school, xxy senior school). We have babies, we have big 'mabele'- community can suck from our breast. We are cows (School 2, EC: focus group, p. 11).

Now that I have power you can make decision and lead other people to follow you when you request them. If you are in power, other people will follow instructions. I think power has influence, what we training them, they do, and they have managed.

Moving from this point to higher level because they present to us and explain steps that they took (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

Secondly, being able to influence our neighbour primary. We are going to train them - this project not only is in our school/area (XXX), but start in neighbouring schools. I think now we are in power (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 10).

Building on these contributions, photograph 4.20 is a drawing of an umbrella by participants from school 2 to indicate sharing knowledge with others. The umbrella depicts how different stakeholders were brought together and relationships maintained.
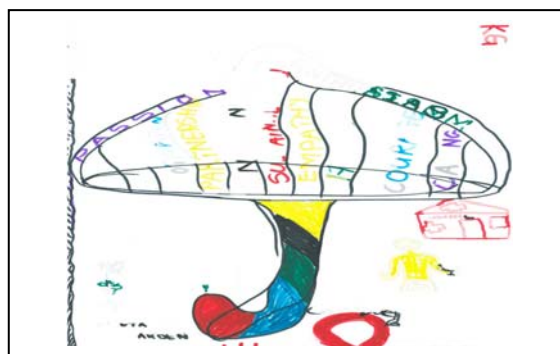
Photograph 4.20: Umbrella that depicts bringing the community together, school 2: 3 March 2009

(c)   Transferring knowledge to the wider community

Participants reported that to them, being part of a participatory project meant that they could express power because of the knowledge they had gained on issues affecting learners. They used this power and knowledge by sharing it with the wider community (e.g. social services, NGOs, service providers, businesses) as a way to sensitise others about challenges in the community. Participants indicated that, through sensitising the wider community about various challenges, social change could be facilitated. The following verbatim focus group excerpts attest to the participants perceiving themselves as transmitters of knowledge to the wider community:

Oh boy, you know in 2006, we felt we were powerful because through the project we managed to divide the activities within the project on our own and able to manage the project, we were able to influence the community. As you can see from the pictures, there were lots of community people participating, for instance some were doing bead project. They were able to participate, even the garden. That is I say we

were in control with lots of power, we decided on our course of action (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

It is our duty to inform... able to visit child-headed families (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 16).

Ja, we acted according to what we wanted. You know, one thing is overcome barriers; our community, most of them are not working, a lot of them, but in 2006, community members we able to do bead work through our initiative, items that we made we sold, these members stress were overcome, because what they did would take them far (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

We were able to share our experiences... We felt in control. We managed to build relationships with others ... We could make powerful arguments (giving examples of how other schools do it e.g. males at high schools) (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 21).

4.4.2.2 Category B: Mobilising resources

Participants reportedly also brought about social change by mobilising resources in the community. Participants explained that they were able to mobilise resources that could benefit the community. The following verbatim extracts provide evidence for this statement:

Our powerful and strong minds made other participants to see the need for help... Number of schools are flocking to our school for help... The department of education has confidence in our school and sending other schools to come and see the display of (xxx centre). We are making our own decisions and we are proud of ourselves (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 22).

Oh, dreams did come true. We wanted to have a garden and we were able to make a garden that is achieving a dream (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 6).

Participants seemingly facilitated social change by being a platform from which others could access resources, such as the provision of social services, food, information centres and networks. It seems as if participants had the power to make decisions for facilitating and mobilising resources. The following verbatim focus group and interview extracts provide evidence for this category:

We were recognised, first we did counselling room, gardening. We created partnerships with olive leaf seed, PEACE, H.A.C., ABSA and created kitchen soup through Muslim. We brought in health volunteers... At the end we felt like owners - hurray!!! (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).

We have had a career day the other time, it was started by varsity students, and it was successful. Then later we initiated more career day, we started in 2009 by inviting police SAPS and invite people from different varsities to talk about different careers (School 2, MP: interview, p. 7).

4.4.2.3 Category C: Creating community networks

Participants reported that they created opportunities to add new partners to participate in the STAR project. These new partners were sensitised about the psychosocial problems that the learners and parents were facing. Participants allegedly developed community networks to provide a variety of services to community members (both learners and parents). Participants reported that they became a link between the wider community, resources and additional networks. They reportedly used their power to collaborate with existing community networks across common interests to build collective strengths resulting in perceived synergy. The following focus group and interview data provide evidence for these experiences:

We have beautiful school garden, we have attended workshops with HOPE worldwide. All work done was done during school holidays, so we are using our time, our family time. We are supported by other participants, wow! They support us. Most of the participants support us fully, now we work with OVC, SASA, ABSA, Muslim school. We working extra mile. Our school is a self-renewing school, we are a No school fund school (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11).

You know UP is very open, they gain from us as well, it's a mutual relationship, and we gain from them too. The school gained from UP, like help with library. They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteers' are able to get us free books. ... Engineering students come here. I would say R and L are nice people, it's a matter of good working relations (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).

Participants described situations where individuals from businesses and NGOs[7] listened to them and agreed to be part of a movement to facilitate social change. Forming and deepening relationships appeared to encourage participants to participate on local and national level (as described in section 4.2.2.1). Ultimately, strengthened networks and solidarity resulted in creating more spaces of engagement, as evidenced in the following excerpts:

People who are helping, giving us strength, what we are doing to the community is benefiting, because now, our learners work with others learners and community, things are easy (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 12).

You know, the network we have now is meeting other colleagues from other provinces, and they help us to see how far we are with the projects. Also our department and school to have it as a community. We have forge hands with local clinic, the learner get resources. Another network is social workers; they are involved with the school once a week. Also with Agriculture, Masibuele, how can they help with project - garden, to meet us half way? But they think that as participants we want to benefit - but we are facilitators, we want to bring in community members, so that they benefit. We also bring in more of our colleagues to get our vision, especially that we started as five. The school accepted us (School 2, MP: interview, p. 4).

The following extracts from my research journal further supports the idea of participants being agents of social transformation based on the knowledge that they shared with others:

Participants have knowledge and information as assets that they use to uplift their community. Both schools are reaching to the community in unique ways that really bring change to the lives of many who are touched… I think the community feels the same, they are being touched by angels… angels bring new life. I think platforms of sharing these with other schools throughout the country should be created. To share with others that teachers can do more to transform communities (Research journal, 15 November 2010).

Every time I make corrections to this thesis, I get a deeper connection and relationship with the journey that I experienced, in an attempt to explore and seek

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[7] Non Governmental Organisation

insights into the lives of extraordinary teachers, who had a vision and a mission that was well executed. The journey of partnership synergy and transformation had made me to fall in love with power-sharing participatory partnerships. The data that I collected, analysed and interpreted has convinced me that the community development echoed by UN/IMF/World Bank is happening in a synergistic manner at EC and MP. My convictions truly tell me that, lessons can be drawn from these two sources to make a better world (Research journal, 8 April 2012).

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter reports on the results obtained during the study, in terms of the three themes that emerged during thematic data analysis. The subthemes and categories represent the power-sharing partnerships as experienced by teachers in a PR project. Throughout, I aimed to enrich my discussions with verbatim extracts and examples of visual data.

In the next chapter, I interpret the results and present the findings of this study. Throughout, I discuss the findings against the background of existing literature, as presented in chapter 2.