



A participatory action research study of junior youth-led
community action in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

Informed by Bronfenbrenner's theory of social ecosystems and embedded in the Freirean pedagogy of participatory and critical praxis, this youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) study aims to highlight the power and potential of young people as peacebuilders. Bringing attention to the powerful capacity young people have in transforming society, the entire process was guided by the following meta-question: "how can YPAR assist young people to become active agents in the construction of peace?"

Approximately 20 young people aged between 13 and 17 from a low-income high-density neighbourhood in central Durban became co-researcher volunteers in the program. Their participation in a six phases process involved exploration and identification of the social needs of the community, followed by planning, implementing and evaluating a peacebuilding intervention. The data itself is comprised of the activities that constituted the YPAR program, including drama skits, mapping and photo story posters. The data was collected using research diaries, video and audio recording and photography.

Through the involvement of participants in research and action as "peace leaders," the findings highlight the potential of YPAR in the peacebuilding field.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation and that neither any part of this dissertation nor the whole of the dissertation has been submitted for a degree to any other University or Institution.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, my dissertation does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotations or any other material from the work of other people included in my dissertation, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my supervisor.

Roya Varjavandi

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis:

Professor Geoff Harris

Declared at the Durban University of Technology on this _____ day of

_____, _____

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background and research problem

All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today.

- Unknown

Born into one of the world's most violent societies not at war, South African "born frees" born after 1994 number 27 million and represent half of the country's population (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015: 2). Despite the political violence in which many of the parents and grandparents of this generation were exposed, most of the young people of this generation escaped direct conflict which subsided after the handover of power took place in 1994. However, they have not been spared the continuing conditions of exploitation and social and economic marginalisation that reproduce lawlessness and criminality to prevail. In addition, some of the biggest difficulties faced by South African young people are a direct consequence of the legacy of poor education and high unemployment rates (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015: 4)

The socio-economic patterns that are rooted in historic apartheid policies and practice and a dominant free market economic system thrive on high levels of inequality (Lamb and Snodgrass 2013: 4). The structural violence which arises from the free market includes limited access to employment and adequate schooling, long term poverty, deep "value erosion" (Lamb and Snodgrass 2013: 7) and pervasive societal violence. As a result, approximately one third of young people aged between 15 and 19 live in households where no one is employed and more than 61% of children are the recipients of child support grants from the State (South African Institute of Race Relations 2015: 2).

Children and youth reared in a culture of violence are frequently judged as either direct victims, or violent perpetrators (Del Felice and Wisler 2007: 2). That young people are either problems in need of control and supervision, or merely helpless casualties in an

unjust system, are commonplace discourses. Implicit in this view is a form of victim blaming that states any problem faced by youth - be it poverty, educational failure or drug and alcohol abuse - is as a result of their own choices and volition (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 4).

That children and youth can be active agents in the construction of a more peaceful social reality is indeed a paradigm shift necessary for the process of peacebuilding to gain momentum (Ataöv and Haider 2006: 128). Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 100) note that in recent years researchers have begun a shift from viewing young people as problems to seeing them as resources for participatory action. A participatory asset-based approach such as youth empowerment is emerging in empirical literature. Furthermore, it can be determined that the participation of young people in peacebuilding can be a valuable and significant contribution towards curbing the tide of violence. Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 13) say that further research should be undertaken to document the phenomenon of youth as primary actors in positive social change in other geographical and cultural contexts.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to develop and examine the potential of young people as peacebuilders through the implementation of a program of youth-led participatory action research (YPAR). Its objectives are to assist a sample of approximately 20 young people aged between 14 and 17 to explore and identify the social needs of the community in which they live and to plan, implement and evaluate a peacebuilding intervention. A secondary aim of the study is to present a thematic analysis of the data collected during the engagement.

1.3 Significance of the study

In an adult-centred society children are frequently marginalised and defined as passive recipients of adult decision-making and not as 'social actors empowered to claim their

rights' (Lansdown 2010: 17). Unfortunately much of the emphasis in instances of child participation has involved presence at high-level events where taking the views of children into account in decision-making is an optional extra (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010: 2). Furthermore, this type of tokenistic decoration is conducted at the expense of building sustainable participation within the children's own local communities (Lansdown 2010: 18).

Likewise, cultural barriers ascribe positions to children that complicate their path to participation more than their actual inability. Recognising young people as active citizens may be outwith the sphere of traditional customs. Additionally, their involvement in public affairs could be seen as a denial of childhood. Due to the open minded attitude it requires to support young people's participation, there is often a lack of capacity in the thinking required among adults and children to foster it (Malone and Hartung 2010: 27).

The need to harness young people's strengths to maximise their well-being and development is all the more acute in an environment where social and political crises are extensively undermining family and community networks that would normally safeguard children (Lansdown 2010: 19). As a response to structural violence, participation goes beyond the expression of views as it encompasses various forms of action (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010: 2). Of course there are many forms of action and reaction that young people can be involved in, including political demonstrations, drug and alcohol abuse and petty crime. There is a need to foster participation of the kind where engagement in using their own resources to make a positive difference in the world is possible.

The contribution to the body of knowledge that this study can offer concerns the impact of child and youth-led participation in peacebuilding initiatives. Through critical reflection of this experience it is hoped that this study will contribute towards an expansion of the theory and practice of young people's participation in peacebuilding.

1.4 Overview of the research design and methodology

Seeking as it does to develop and evaluate the potential of young people as peacebuilders, this study has an action research orientation in which youth-led participatory action research forms the basis of the research design. As a qualitative research method, YPAR is primarily exploratory and is used to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and motivations of human phenomena through activity and analysis. YPAR is an approach that allows young people to study and research the issues that concern them in order that they can craft and implement actions, plans and strategies to rectify these problems.

Almost all participants were recruited using purposive sampling from Mayville Secondary's "Eco Club" in the district of Cato Manor, a low income area with a high population density located 6 kilometres west of the centre of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal.

Various data collection techniques were employed in order to collect the information necessary to answer the research problem. The data itself is comprised of the activities that constituted the entire YPAR program. These included, but are not limited to, drama skits, mapping and photo stories. The ways in which the data was collected included research diaries, video and audio recording and photography. Other sources of data that were collected included the written and visual activities undertaken by participants during phases 1 to 6 of the YPAR program. These phases of the research design are described in further detail in section 3.2 of the methodology and methods chapter.

1.5 Assumptions, limitations and scope

This study makes the assumption that participant engagement with the YPAR program is based on mutual respect, trust and a sincere willingness to contribute towards peace. That they respond honestly and to the best of their individual abilities is a limitation as it is not a guarantee. Compulsory consent forms explaining that anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved and that involvement is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time were implemented to foster the probability of truthful participation.

In terms of selection processes the gatekeeper did not identify individual students to participate in this study as this could potentially lead to bias. Instead, she introduced the program to the members of the “Eco Club” that she convenes and individual members of this initiative came forward to volunteer themselves. Although the teacher was present on the school premises during several days of the study, her participation within the program was limited to a few hours. Once she took that time to assess what the study involved practically for the learners she was then able to withdraw any further involvement so that her presence would not restrict their engagement.

An additional assumption is that the meaning embedded in people’s experiences can be mediated appropriately through the researcher’s biased perceptions. A key concern here is that the reader should be able to understand the topic of interest from both the participants’ perspectives and not just from that of the researcher. This potential weakness of researcher bias and perceptual misrepresentation is a limitation that can be mitigated by directly referring to participant’s actual engagement with the activities of the study.

A further limitation of the research is that the study is conducted over a certain time interval and will indeed be representative of conditions occurring only during that time. The time period necessary for a feasible participatory action research study to be conducted was taken into consideration when the program timetable was planned.

The scope of the study is defined by various factors, including, but not limited to; the population sample engaging in the research, the number of participants, geographic region covered, and the choice of objectives. Therefore there is a limit as to what the findings can ascertain and the results of this study may not be applicable to other geographic regions or populations. It is therefore treated as a case study that suggests certain potential, the results of which cannot be generalised.

1.6 Overview of chapters

In order to interpret the findings adequately and answer the research questions, this dissertation has been organised into seven chapters. The current chapter introduces the study by providing background information, setting out the research problem and offering a review of its aims, objectives and methodological design. Chapter two examines the normalisation of violence and explores the key concepts related to the study. It also evaluates relevant scholarship and theory. In chapter three the methodology used in this study is discussed. The research design, research methodology, research setting and sampling are examined and motivations for their choices are considered. The data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical considerations are outlined. Chapter four introduces the data collected using an analysis of a selection of themes that emerged from the study's implementation. In chapter five, the actual process of producing the results is described in detail. Chapter six discusses the findings of the study and evaluates its theoretical, methodological and practical implications. Chapter seven concludes this dissertation with a summary of the findings and recommendations for further research and ends with a personal reflection.

Chapter Two: Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide, through reference to selected literature, a clearer understanding of the conditions to which young South African people are exposed and

their potential to positively change these conditions as peacebuilders. The review examines the normalisation of violence and the extent, causes and consequences of its prevalence in South African society. Following this is a study of young people as both victims and perpetrators of violence and adult perceptions of their capacity. An exploration into the growing body of knowledge of the positive role that young people can partake of in development processes is followed by a discussion of some relevant participatory principles and theories. The remainder of the chapter discusses some key enabling factors to participation and a selection of global case studies that bring to light a diversity of cultural perspectives.

2.2 The extent of violence in South Africa

The South African Institute of Race Relations (2015: 20) reports that there is an “unprecedented burden of morbidity and mortality from violence and injury in South Africa.” Interpersonal violence and violence-related injury are the second leading cause of death, with almost half of all deaths due to injury caused by interpersonal violence (Seedat et al. 2009: 1011). The South African Police Service recorded that every day between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 an average of 49 people were killed and 48 people were victims of attempted murder. At 33 per 100,000, South Africa’s murder rate is about five times higher than the 2013 global average of 6.2 murders per 100,000 people (Africa Check 2015b).

Internationally, South Africa ranks exceptionally high for reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 3). Non-profit organisation Africa Check reports that the South African Police Service recorded 43,195 cases of rape in 2014/15. Considering that approximately only one in thirteen incidences of sexual assault are reported, this figure is not an accurate reflection of the extent of such crimes (Africa Check 2015a). Furthermore, Seedat et al. (2009: 1011) note that half of all female victims of homicide are killed by their intimate male partners. At 8.8 per 100,000, South Africa has the highest reported femicide rate in the world (Norman et al. 2010: 2). Youth violence is also profoundly gendered as young men are disproportionately engaging in violence, both

as victims and perpetrators, with homicide rates among males aged 15-29 nine times the global average at 184 per 100,000 (Seedat et al. 2009: 1011; Norman et al. 2010: 2).

All age groups, including children and young people of school-going age, feel the adverse effects of widespread violence. Seedat et al. (2009: 1013) describe the violence against this age group in South Africa as an ever-present part of every day life. Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has a broad definition of child maltreatment, including “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (UN General Assembly 1989: 5). Children are exposed to corporal punishment, sexual and psychological abuse in spaces such as families, schools and other community environments that under normal circumstances would play an important role in protecting them.

Obtaining reliable data on any form of violence against children is difficult, but the 2010/11 statistics from the South African Police Service (SAPS) recorded a total of over 50,000 crimes against children that year. More than half of these were sexual in nature, while such crimes accounted for around 20% of crimes against adult women (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7,9).

Violence is high throughout the country but is particularly concentrated in urban areas that have lower levels of economic development (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 4). Breetzke (2012: 305) indicates that since democratisation the police precincts located in townships in six of South Africa’s major metropolitan areas have reported the highest crime counts that are far above the national average. Although the location of crime in post-apartheid South Africa has been marginally displaced from the townships to other areas previously demarcated by the apartheid-era Group Areas Act, the vast majority of offenders hail from areas that are disadvantaged historically and where exploitation and marginalisation are still an omnipresent reality (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 4).

2.3 The causes of the normalisation of violence

Galtung (1990: 294) defines the normalisation of violence as violence that masquerades as socially acceptable or even socially encouraged to the extent that it becomes entrenched in everyday life. One factor that Lamb and Snodgrass (2013: 5) mention as particularly insidious is the invisibility of violence when it is normalised.

The underlying causes of violence are exceedingly complex. There are numerous causes and reasons that contribute to violence becoming a normalised aspect of post-apartheid reality (Breetzke 2012: 303). 400 years of colonialism, imperialism and the colonial and apartheid states have a lot to answer to those generations who suffered exploitation, oppression and discrimination in the process of being forced into poverty, landlessness and social and economic degradation. Appalling social injustice is, therefore, an overarching cause of the widespread social acceptance of violence in present-day South Africa.

Bronfenbrenner's (Bronfenbrenner 1977) ecological systems theory provides a useful tool in providing a conceptual framework to understand further the causes of violence and explore potential prevention strategies. It gives consideration to the complex interplay between an individual, their relationships, community and broader societal factors. Bronfenbrenner (1977: 314) explains, "the ecological environment is conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next."

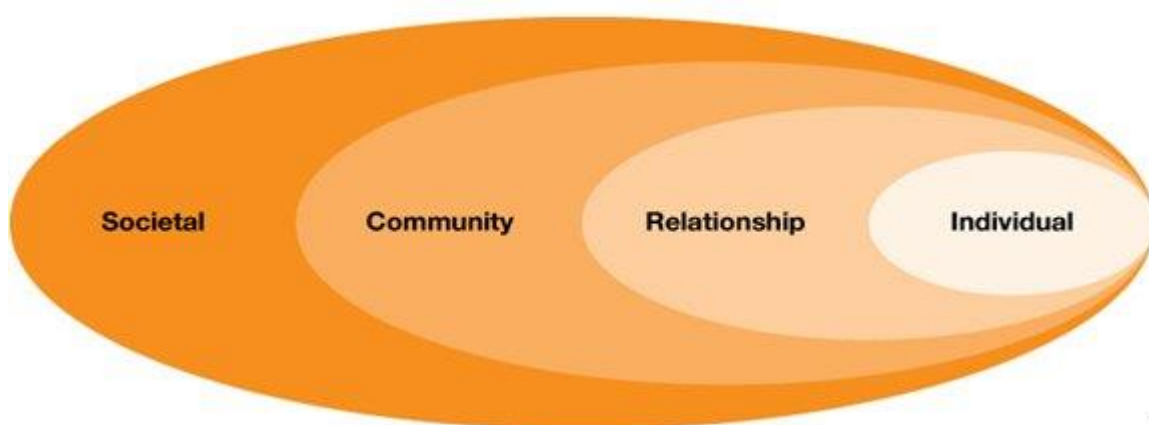


Figure 2.1: The socio-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner 1979)

2.3.1 Individual level

The first level of the model identifies the personal dynamics that influence the behaviour of individuals that increase this risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence (Dahlberg 2007: 477). Biological risk factors include age, gender, malnutrition, HIV infection, a genetic tendency towards psychiatric disorder or intellectual impairment, congenital disabilities and the consequences of a lack of appropriate physical development and mental stimulation. Psychiatric disorders can further advance as a result of the effects of emotional, sexual abuse and neglect, maladaptive personality traits, becoming an orphan and self-stigma.

The individual level also encompasses personal history such as violence and substance abuse in the family, gender-based violence and child abuse or mistreatment. Other factors that can increase the likelihood of involvement in violent behaviour in an individual's experience are the stressors associated with low socio economic status such as low educational attainment, unemployment or lack of sufficient livelihood, lack of positive role models and lowered inhibition frequently associated with substance use, prostitution, weapon ownership and a prior history of aggression and abuse (UN Women 2012b).

2.3.2 Relationship level

The second level explores how the close relationships an individual has – for example, with peers, intimate partners and family members – can profoundly influence an individual's behaviour and their risk for victimisation or predisposition towards violence. Association with friends or vulnerability towards recruitment into gangs who engage in violent behaviour is a significant risk factor for children and young people who lack safe, stable and nurturing relationships at home.

Exposure to violence or violent behaviour can be experienced through neglect, family instability, death, illness, absent or poor parenting, inter-generational child abuse or witnessing intimate partner violence. In dysfunctional family environments an individual

may interact daily or live with an abuser. This results directly in an increased susceptibility to violent encounters and as individuals often have a continuing relationship, the offender will likely abuse the victim repeatedly (Dahlberg 2007: 477). An additional implication is that family honour may be prioritised over exposing violations of child or female health and safety (UN Women 2012b). Evidence cited in the Unicef report titled *Violence against children in South Africa* identifies that abusers are more likely than non-abusers to have experienced some form of abuse as children or to have witnessed violence (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7).

While it cannot be assumed that low socio-economic status is a risk factor in itself in relationships, it does pose additional complexity in terms of, for example; housing density and the associated hazards of overcrowding and inadequate sanitation, the emasculation of unemployment and conversely, the demands of migrant labour and the familial arrangements it necessitates.

2.3.3 Community level

The third level of the socio-ecological model looks at the community contexts in which social relationships are embedded. Access to electricity and lighting in the neighbourhood can affect safety in both public and private spaces in terms of assault and sexual violence. In addition, safe water in or nearby homes determines an individual's level of exposure to the threat of violence while collecting water. Another neighbourhood factor is the proliferation of outlets that sell alcohol and locations that are associated with drug trafficking, prostitution and gang activity and the dangers these pose to community members (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7).

Dahlberg (2007: 477) describes conditions of low social cohesion in communities that have a high population density and unemployment, a deteriorating infrastructure and weak institutional support. As a result, there may be inadequate community sanctions against perpetrators of assault or gender-based violence and victims can become increasingly socially isolated.

The school environment is frequently a site of violence due to the continued prevalence of corporal and psychological punishment, sexual and gender-based violence, as well as transactional sex and bullying. Even though educational settings should play an important role in supporting children and young people and protecting them from violence, for many young women it is at school where they most commonly experience sexual coercion and harassment (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 7). What can contribute to violence in the school climate is a combination of departmental and staff corruption, historical inequalities and a deep value erosion that allows these experiences to be perpetuated and normalised.

Furthermore, neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces are unable to fully address gender-based violence and as a result there is either inadequate victim care or victims are blamed and their identity revealed which is a violation in itself. This is reflective of the lack of information at a community level around rights and justice (UN Women 2012b).

2.3.4 Societal level

The fourth level of the socio-ecological model examines the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is permitted or encouraged. These factors include the broader socio-economic conditions and health and education policies that maintain inequality between groups in society as well as the social and cultural standards of what is acceptable, some of which trickle down from the mass media (White, Stallones and Last 2013: 91). The following paragraphs will highlight several important societal-level factors.

Violence occurs across all socio-economic levels; but from a global perspective poverty is a major risk factor towards violence becoming an accepted norm. Strongly associated with violence are the social inequalities related to poverty such as income inequality, low economic development, inadequate health care and high levels of gender inequality. Some of these key determinants are extremely acute in South Africa, particularly in regards to income inequality and access to services (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 8).

Poverty in South Africa is concentrated geographically and racially in rural areas, ex-homeland regions, rural and urban townships and informal settlements. These were areas that the majority of people were confined to living during the apartheid era. Due to the statutory urban segregation and pass laws enacted in the Group Areas Act of 1950, residents were closely regulated and limited from freely accessing commercial and economic centres and accompanying government services. Institutionalised racism and white social spatial control deliberately created profound levels economic and social marginalisation due to the (Breetzke 2012: 306). The way Breetzke (2012: 306) describes being black in apartheid paints a grim picture:

...being black in apartheid South Africa meant residing in squalid, crime-infested townships characterised by widespread malnutrition, poor or non-existent health systems, poor education in ill-equipped and overcrowded schools, inadequate or non-existent social security, high levels of unemployment, and quotidian experiences of racist prejudice and abuse.

The Group Areas Act was repealed some 41 years later in 1991, but historically concentrated disadvantage still prevails. Half of all South Africans, or approximately 27 million people live below the poverty line of approximately R800 per person per month. Of this number, more than 10 million struggle to afford their daily food requirements and a further 18 million have to sacrifice some food items to be able to afford other essential items (Lehohla 2015: 14). Conditions of isolation and marginalisation borne directly from enforced racist policy planning left millions of people vulnerable to neglect, discrimination and a number of risk factors for crime and delinquency (Breetzke 2012: 306).

A weak legal and criminal justice system is an additional inheritance to which marginalised communities were bequeathed by the crime of apartheid. As a direct consequence, perpetrators are often not prosecuted, there are no legal rights for victims and firearms are easily obtainable.

The aforementioned historical legacy also fostered the disintegration distortion of cultural and social norms towards supporting different types of violence. Traditional gender roles

have in many cases normalised a mans right to assert power over women and children, to beat them and in some cases take sexual advantage of them (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 8). In many communities, restricting freedom and using physical violence is perceived as an acceptable way to resolve conflict or discipline certain behaviours. Violence can occur when the tradition of *ilobola* (bridewealth) becomes synonymous with purchasing and thus owning a wife (World Health Organization 2009: 5).

Children already have a low status in society and within the family, with females being valued less than males. The young are denied rights and recognition and taught to be subservient to adults and obey them unquestionably. This can result in child abuse, much like gender-based violence, to fall under the radar in a conspiracy of silence and treated as a private matter less the child, woman or family be stigmatised by the wider community. Practices such as virginity testing and *ukuthwala* (forced marriage) violate and control the sexuality of young women by further silencing and subordinating them (Mathews and Benvenuti 2014: 28).

The sexual violation of babies, a crime previously unheard of within public discourse, came to the fore in 2001 after South Africa was devastated by the news of the brutal rape of nine-month-old baby Tshepang. Hundreds of similar stories followed, all equally horrific (Newton 2005: 7). Furthermore, the taboo that surrounded AIDS hid the prevalence of the rape of virgins whose purity could allegedly cleanse an individual of the disease (Posel 2005: 245). The rape of infants has also been reported to be perpetrated in order to punish the child's mother (DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 8). This relates to the distorted view that sexual violence is an acceptable way of putting women in their place or punishing them.

Traditional gender norms can also have a detrimental effect on males due to the expectation that masculine traits such as toughness and aggression are expressed at the expense of showing emotion or vulnerability. Violence can be used as a way of demonstrating masculinity, especially if there are feelings of disempowerment due to financial and social conditions. Men also suffer from the expectations surrounding the role of "provider" and if unable to meet this expectation can be excluded from the lives of the children (Mathews and Benvenuti 2014: 26). Additionally, the apartheid-era migrant labour

system, and the entire system of racial capitalism and exploitation, has and continues to have a profoundly disruptive effect on men and their families.

As a result of these factors, many individuals, a majority in fact, have grown up in single parent families or without a consistent primary caregiver. Posel (2005: 249) comments that South Africa's moral crisis is fundamentally a crisis of manhood, stating: "If men failed to don the mantle of responsible fatherhood, they jeopardized the possibility of responsible nationhood."

As noted already, the high levels of crime in South African society have roots in the country's history of apartheid and colonialism. The millions of boys and men exposed to the brutality of the mining environment, humiliating police harassment and a violent prison system influenced the patterns of violence that consequently arose in urban townships (CSVR 2009: 5). Those in power during apartheid legitimised violence as a way of achieving their goals. The decades of political violence and state-sponsored oppression, coupled with rising criminality created conditions that nurtured the culture of violence as a primary strategy for conflict resolution that has until present-day become deeply embedded (Kynoch 2008; DSD/DWCPD/UNICEF 2012: 8)

2.4 The consequences of violence

There are numerous consequences of violence – some immediate and short-term and others that can influence an individual in the long-term or inter-generationally. Much like the causes of the normalisation of violence, its consequences can have an impact at the individual level, within the family and other relationships, in the community and in wider society (UN Women 2012a).

Fatal injuries, murder, homicide, femicide and suicide are often the most visible effects of violence. However, the non-fatal consequences can contribute negatively to the social and health burden across the lifespan, disproportionately amongst women and children (World Health Organization 2014: 15). In addition, the wide spectrum of negative

behavioural, cognitive, mental health, sexual and reproductive health problems, chronic disease and social effects that arise from exposure to violence can persist long after the violence has stopped (World Health Organization 2014: 15).

2.4.1 Effects on physical health

There are immediate and acute consequences of injury caused by violence. Some are long lasting and chronic and some are ultimately fatal. Wallace and Roberson (2015: 25) describe four classifications of physical injury: the immediate injuries that heal completely such as bruises and cuts; injuries that leave visible scars or are slow to heal such as burns and fractures, unknown and chronic long-term consequences like sexually transmitted diseases and lastly long-term catastrophic injuries that can lead, for example, to physical impairment or disability.

The negative health consequences of violence increase the more severe the violent injury and many of these consequences persist long after incidences of violence. More serious injuries can involve damage to the brain, eyes, ears, abdomen and thorax. There can be long-term health problems in the form of chronic diseases and conditions like cancer, diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular disorders, gastrointestinal conditions and chronic pain syndromes, memory loss and problems walking or carrying out day to day activities due to arthritis (World Health Organization 2012: 2).

2.4.2 Effects on sexual and reproductive health

Women and girls who experience sexual violence are exposed to comparatively high rates of gynaecological problems, including vaginal and urinary tract infections and chronic pelvic pain. The World Health Organization (2012: 3) reports that even in the absence of sexual abuse, and for reasons as yet unknown, women who experience partner violence are at increased risk of such complications. Sexual violence can directly cause various gynaecological traumas and genital injuries, unintended pregnancy, and complications during childbirth. Pregnancy as a result of rape increases the likelihood of seeking an

unsafe abortion. In addition, high-risk sexual behaviours are linked to unwanted sexual activity having occurred during childhood or adolescence in both men and women with such a history (Dilorio, Hartwell and Hansen 2002: 214; World Health Organization 2012: 4).

Research done in South Africa observed that intimate partner violence and a woman's risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted illnesses are strongly associated. Furthermore, women who are HIV positive are more likely than other women to have experienced physical and sexual violence (World Health Organization 2012: 4).

2.4.3 Effects on mental and behavioural health

Victims and perpetrators of assault, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child abuse and traumatic exposure in childhood are at an increased risk of psychological, emotional and behavioural problems during the lifespan. A wide variety of mental disorders can arise from victimisation. These include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, self-harm and suicide attempts, sleeping and eating disorders and poor self-esteem. A study by Hecker et al. (2013: 146) found an association between the severity of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and the severity of violence experienced. In an attempt to deal with trauma, a victim may succumb to a maladaptive pattern of high risk behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse, further perpetuating violence (Wallace and Roberson 2015: 33).

Salzinger et al. (2002: 440) report that externalising violent and aggressive behaviour in one's conduct is directly related to having witnessed or experienced violence in the past. Physical and sexual abuse in childhood has also been linked with a host of subsequent risk behaviours, including early sexual activity, multiple sexual partners and low rates of condom use. Additionally, feelings of worthlessness, inappropriate personal boundaries and submission to sexual coercion are all associated with a history of early sexual abuse (World Health Organization 2012: 5). The "cycle of violence" theory suggests that a childhood history of physical abuse predisposes survivors to violence in later years. It is

clear that violence begets violence – that people abused today’s become tomorrow’s perpetrators of violence (Widom and Maxfield 2001: 1).

2.5 Young people as victims and perpetrators of violence

With over 50% of the South African population categorised as children or youth, young people should be perceived as central to issues of crime and violence. Research from the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (2015: 7) indicates that those under the age of 25 years suffer much higher levels of victimisation than adults and are often the perpetrators of violence against other young people and the wider population.

Unfortunately, crime statistics are not classified according to age and the criminal justice system does not distinguish young people as a category (Burton 2012: 5-6). Furthermore, Burton (2012: 6) found that the research around youth violence in South Africa has been largely centred on a handful of very small studies around offenders. Although the data is limited, it is still essential to examine the current situation of youth violence in South Africa. The following paragraphs will look at the principle types, causes and consequences of youth violence and the public perceptions surrounding it.

2.5.1 Principle types of violence perpetrated by and affecting young people

Violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.” This definition developed by the World Health Organisation (Krug et al. 2002: 1084), goes beyond the physical aspects of violence to encompass the damaging but often normalised behaviour and non-physical forms of abuse that can have a profoundly negative influence. It also acknowledges that violence is not defined by injury or death alone as this limits our understanding of its full impact on individuals, communities and societies (Burton 2012: 5-6).

Some of the experiences young people have as victims and perpetrators of crime and violence are specific to their developmental stage and some are the same as adults (Burton 2012: 7). A national study found that over one quarter of 12-22 year olds had been victims of crime in the previous 12 months. Of the crimes described, theft of personal property and robbery were reported to occur most frequently, with nearly half of all respondents having had their belongings stolen at school (Leoschut 2009: 41). Findings from the National Schools Violence Study report that despite being illegal, corporal punishment such as verbal, physical and sexual abuse abounds in South African government schools. These institutions are also the second most common location for assault after the streets (Burton and Leoschut 2012: 29).

The home was the third most common location for assault, with almost a quarter of respondents reportedly having suffered physical violence there. Leoschut (2009: 41) reports that in 83.3% of attacks described, the victims knew the perpetrators as members of the community, schoolmates and friends. Alcohol and drugs also play a significant role in both physical and sexual assaults with approximately one third of attackers reported to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

2.5.2 Principle causes of young people's involvement in violent behaviour in South Africa

Acquiring any complex social behaviour such as violence and aggression through direct experience or by observing others falls under the theory of "social learning" (Anderson and Bushman 2002: 10-11). As children develop, they learn from exposure to a variety of social experiences that form their internal, mental representation of certain behaviours, how they are represented and what outcomes might be expected if such behaviour is performed. Once formed, these moral standards act as a guide that either deters or encourages certain types of behaviour according to the consequences an individual perceives will happen. The source of a person's moral standards includes direct experiences, evaluating the reaction to their own behaviour and exposure to the standards by which others evaluate themselves. (Ward 2007: 11).

According to Bandura (1978: 344), the concept of “reciprocal determinism” in social learning theory explains further how children develop violent behaviour. They not only learn from the environment to which they are exposed, but their behaviour elicits reactions and in turn affects their social environment “in a continuous reciprocal interaction between behavioural, cognitive, and environmental influences” (Bandura 1978: 344). For instance, a child may seek acceptance or reward in a more aggressive group after their aggression or violence becomes unacceptable within a gentler group of peers (Ward 2007: 11).

The processes by which young people learn standards for regulating behaviour are as varied as they are complex and can only be addressed through consideration of the context within which children develop. The following paragraphs will address the ecology of these contexts using the version of Bronfenbrenner’s socio-ecological model that includes the individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1977: 314; 1986: 724).

Individual

The first level of this ecological system or socio-ecological model is the individual. Characteristics such as age, race, gender and temperament are elements that are likely to influence how one interacts with their social contexts and the influence that the context has on them. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006: 824) identify developmental problems such as impulsivity, lack of attentiveness, hyperactivity, difficulty in deferring gratification and the inability to feel guilt as personal dynamics that put a young person at greater risk for violent behaviour.

There are gender-specific socialisation processes that boys and girls each receive. Males demonstrate more anti-social behaviour, attention problems, aggressive behaviour and substance abuse than females. Girls on the other hand are known to have a tendency towards withdrawing and internalising anxiety and depression in order to protect

themselves emotionally against the expression of aggression (Else-Quest 2012: 490). In terms of age as a variable, aggression and violence is likely to persist into adulthood the earlier a child develops an aggressive pattern of behaviour. In South Africa, children can be exposed to violent criminal contexts from the age of 11 or 12 as accomplices or gang members. This diverts them from learning alternative, pro-social and non-violent behaviours (Ward 2007: 14).

Prenatal alcohol exposure compromises brain development and as a result many children become predisposed to violent behaviours before they are even born. Additionally, young people's misuse of substances is associated directly with aggressive and violent behaviour. Violent incidents are overwhelmingly likely to be associated with the consumption of alcohol than with any other substance due to the manner in which it impairs an individual's physical and cognitive abilities (Parker and Auerhahn 1998: 307). Furthermore, environments that expose children to substances may also be settings where violent behaviour is rewarded and validated.

Microsystem

The microsystem is the term used to describe the everyday social contexts in which the developing person is socialised. For the "born free" generation, a key driver of violence is their exposure to pro-violence models and messages in formative spheres such as the family, school and peer group (Burton 2003: 277).

Burton (2012: 11) describes the family as being one of the most powerful socialising environments for children and adolescents. There are numerous risk factors towards violence that stem from the family. Young children can internalise the violence they experience or witness at home, coming to regard it as a normal and acceptable means of resolving conflict. Other risk factors identified by Ward (2007: 19) are low maternal age and education, poor disciplinary practices and supervision of children, low levels of family bonding and criminality or antisocial behaviour within the family.

Parents might be forced by circumstances to spend a lot of their time working or looking for work. An outcome of this is that they may fall short on the developmental investment of care and support their children need to become healthy and well adjusted adults. Additionally there may be limited access to suitable childcare and constructive after-school activities (Burton 2012: 1,11).

The family and parents also steer young people in regards to the value placed on schooling. However, given the situation of many schools in South Africa, many children who come from dysfunctional home environments may experience an education system that reproduces violent rather than pro-social behaviour. Teachers or other authority figures often perpetrate violent and aggressive behaviour, in part due to schools being chaotic and difficult environments to work in (Burton 2012: 11).

Peers are another key socialising influence, particularly in adolescence. Associating with delinquency via ones peer group, siblings or gang activity is a reliable predictor of violent encounters. Many young people seek peer approval and develop standards that approve of violence if they develop confidence through their violent behaviour being rewarded. Clearly, the likelihood of exposure at a young age to a high-risk environment where alcohol, weapons and drugs are easily accessible increases depending on ones peer group (Ward 2007: 22).

Mesosystem

The relations between these settings is what Bronfenbrenner (1977: 523) refers to as the mesosystem. Risk in one system affects risk in another. The more risks a young person faces the less likely they are to be protected. An example would be a child's performance at school being affected by the violence he witnesses between his parents. If this is not identified then the child is at risk of succumbing to the risk factors discussed.

Exosystem

An exosystem refers to the settings where the developing person is not an active participant but in which events occur that affect the setting containing them (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 25). For example, factors at neighbourhood, community or political level influence the nature of parenting, schooling and the formation of peer groups. The mass media is also a socialising influence within the exosystem as exposure to violent or inappropriate content places young people at risk of developing aggressive behaviours themselves (Leoschut 2009: 24).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem is not visible in life's everyday interactions but it is nonetheless influential. Socio-economic factors and cultural norms and attitudes have an influence on an individual's exposure to aggression and violence. As mentioned earlier, poverty is not a predictor of violent behaviour, but research shows that children who are raised in low-income families and neighbourhoods are more likely to engage in violence. Broad socio-economic factors such as high unemployment rates affect poverty levels and thus the likelihood of violence (Ward 2007: 25).

Political violence and disputes demonstrate that dominant beliefs and ideologies at the level of the macrosystem may support standards where violence is perceived as legitimate behaviour. This type of violence is not new to South Africa as young people were actively involved in the struggle for liberation and were unfortunately both perpetrators and victims of its more violent aspects.

Chronosystem

History leads us to what Bronfenbrenner (1986: 724) refers to as the chronosystem. This final aspect of the model takes into account the changes over time within a person and in their environment and allows an analysis of the dynamic relationship between these two processes.

2.6 Adult perceptions of the capacity of young people

The negative perceptions of adults and their expectation of what children and young people can achieve remain a significant barrier to the participation of children and young people universally (Farrar et al. 2010: 86).

Burton (2012: 14) states that there are ways in which the perception of young people has changed over the last few decades. The reaction from the general public during the transitional period from the late 1980s until the democratic elections is varied, but certain sections of society were gripped by episodes of “moral panic” due to the threat posed by the lawless activities of a seemingly lost generation of marginalised young men and women (Seekings 1996: 103). On the other hand, the activities of same youth were regarded as fundamental to the struggle for liberation.

The rhetoric of political governance has somewhat shifted from viewing young people as delinquent or somehow deficient to viewing them as a positive resource for South Africa. Public perceptions have, unfortunately, been slower to change and sensationalised media reporting further fuels the idea that violence is the preserve of gangs of angry young men (Burton 2012: 14). Furthermore, in South Africa and many other African countries, young people have a low status and are generally viewed as irresponsible, occupied only with frivolous activity and unable or unwilling to take on adult responsibilities. This provides further validation in favour of an adult ideology of dominance and for young member’s of society to be further side-lined (Mafema and Tshisonga 2011: 180).

Lansdown (2010: 15) cites recent research into children’s own perspectives and experiences as indicative that their abilities have been underestimated and their views undervalued. From a minority world perspective, Egan et al. (2013: 613) describe a general climate in the United Kingdom of intolerance and negativity that depicts the culture of young people as passive, incompetent and self-interested. Such “inappropriate characterisation” (Egan et al. 2013: 613) can also be seen in media broadcasting that portrays children as dependents or victims and adolescents as either vacant or delinquent.

A common perception that children are somehow incomplete promotes the idea that they are human “becomings” rather than full human “beings.” Their incompetence is measured against that of a competent adult (Martin and Franklin 2010: 100). In one Ghanaian study, children themselves claimed that they “are not equal to adults” and therefore “do not know anything” (Twum-Danso 2010: 134).

According to Abebe (2009: 451), this attitude is universal and central to any ethical research involving children. However, exploring the impact of cultural values and beliefs is necessary to further understand attitudes around childhood and adolescence. Abebe (2009: 452) found from his study on participatory methods with young people in communities in Ethiopia a local ethos that treats children not as autonomous individuals but as members of a larger family collective. Similarly, research in Bangladesh by Ahsan (2009: 393) found children to be “embedded in relational structures.”

In Ghana, paternalism begets passivity as children have the expectation that they should rely completely on their parent’s best interests for them, even where there is evidence that parent’s renege on such responsibilities. Consultation with children is not seen as a right or an obligation of parents, and the assertiveness of those children who do express their views is considered a socially deviant and disrespectful characteristic. Thus, as a dependent, a child is restricted in expressing their views, as speech is a privilege of those who “feed people.” An emphasis on respect and obedience can result in children finding it difficult to talk to adults when they actually do have a problem (Twum-Danso 2010: 134, 138). Likewise, Ahsan (2009: 393) encountered the position of children in society as being utterly powerless compared to adults.

Each society has its own expectations around adult-child relations, children’s behaviour and the rites and rituals of the transition between childhood and adulthood. Hill and Tisdall (2014: 15) state that historical and cross-cultural comparison’s show that the conceptualisation of childhood inevitably changes as society changes. However, while diverse social groups had their own distinct way of managing the treatment and development of children, all societies determine childhood around their dependency on

adults for supplying their needs and protecting their interests (Shamgar-Handelman 1994: 251). The differentiating factor between children and adults is power. Young people have little formal control of time, decisions and resources, which increases their dependency and vulnerability. If their choices are constrained by adults for the best interests of children, this can easily become a rationalisation on the part of adults to constrain their capacities and viewpoints in favour of convenience (Hill and Tisdall 2014: 20).

Childhood at present does not belong to children, but the growing awareness that children and adolescents are social actors and people in their own right and not merely “human becomings” is changing this (Qvortup 1994: 4). This topic will be explored further in the proceeding sections.

2.7 Moving from deficit to asset

Deficit thinking defines development or peacebuilding work with young people in terms of deterring negative or undesirable behaviours. Regarded as a problem or a potential problem that needs to be fixed or managed, the description of a well-rounded young person is simply one who has been successfully deterred from partaking in undesirable behaviour such as unsafe sex, crime and violence (Lerner et al. 2006: 19). According to Benson (2003: 25), we have “a culture dominated by deficit and risk thinking.....[that] encourages an ethos of fear, and by consequence, derogates, ignores and interferes with the natural and inherent capacity of communities.” This explains why the focus of discussions on young people stresses the risks and dangers of their problems. It is assumed, therefore, that a sensible response is to prevent an encounter with these inevitable problems (Lerner et al. 2006: 20).

A deficit approach also views young people’s involvement in risky behaviour as indicative of an inherent shortcoming or deficiency. From a traditional pathological view, a reduction in teen pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, or educational failure would be a laudable cause. However, it might not be encouraging for a young person to be constantly confronted with messages telling them they will succumb to any of these social issues

unless preventative steps are taken on behalf of adults (Lerner et al. 2006: 20). In addition, these perspectives can view the issues faced by youth as being a direct result of their own actions – essentially blaming the victim for their problems (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 4). According to Lerner et al. (2006: 23), “problem free is not prepared,” as an absence of behavioural problems is not equivalent to possessing the skills required to engage productively in society, whilst preventing negative behaviour is not the same as promoting positive values.

An emerging counter narrative to deficit thinking turns the focus onto the assets that young people possess and developing their role in peacebuilding. A new, positive and strength-based vocabulary discusses young people in relation to these potentialities. Research and practice in positive youth development views young people as “developmental assets,” and provides helpful vocabulary such as “moral development,” “noble purpose,” “civic engagement” and “community youth development.” These terms are predicated on the idea that all young people possess the capacity to develop in a positive healthy manner (Lerner et al. 2006: 21), reshape the context of their lives, contribute to the transformation of their communities and address the social conditions that impede their development (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 10).

Positive youth development can be promoted through enhancing the strengths or assets of an individual. Research cited in Lerner et al. (2006: 26) found that the likelihood of positive, healthy development increases according to the more developmental assets an adolescent or young person possesses. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003: 96) describe assets in terms of skills and competence in physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social arenas, as well as moral, spiritual or cultural spheres. Leadership skills, work ethic and civic engagement are also positive developmental assets (Roth and Brooks-Gunn 2003: 95).

Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 24) describe young people as being more open to change, as future oriented, as innovative and courageous. Also, they have first hand knowledge of the local environment, their own reality and the reality of their peers. According to Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010) young people have a willingness to try new ideas and offer a fresh perspective. Indeed, the recognition of the strengths and competence of children and

young people and the positive resource they represent can counteract their powerlessness. This resourcefulness cannot be underestimated as many triumph grim challenges to become active and competent participants in their own lives, while positively influencing their peers, families, school, communities and even socio-political structures (Feinstein, Giersten and O'Kane 2010: 53).

2.8 Young people's participation in theory

Youth are the primary actors in grassroots community development, they are at the frontlines of peacebuilding (Del Felice and Wisler 2007: 12).

Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010: 2) acknowledge that participation encompasses various forms of action, involving much more than involvement in an agenda that is not their own or tokenistic episodes of "having a say." According to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the United Nations in 1989, participation for young people is a human right. The preceding sections will discuss participation as a right and then reflect on some of its conceptual theories and principles, the role of adults, key-enabling factors to participation and conclude with a selection of global case studies.

2.8.1 Implications of child and youth participation as a human right

The first human rights treaty to explicitly affirm civil rights for citizens under the age of 18 is the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Gready and Ensor 2005: 157). Defined as a universal set of standards for the protection and development of children, it has been ratified by over 170 nations. Many of these rights were incorporated into South Africa's constitution after the democratic government ratified the CRC in 1995.

There are several provisions in this treaty that enshrine children's right to participation. Article 12 states that children have the right to influence decisions on matters that affect

them within the family, school or community. Indeed, participation is a right that should be accessible to each young person. The participation of children in the poorest and most difficult situations and those most easily excluded by their gender, economic status, ethnicity or religion and the implementation of their being respected as active citizens is a largely unfulfilled aspiration (Austin 2010: 246).

The entire CRC relates to respect for the worth and dignity of each individual young person and the social, economic and political means of promoting it in each society. However, policy alone cannot guarantee action, and like any other set of rights there is a long distance between ratifying an international convention and reforming the legislation to implement the rights of all citizens (Dadich 2010: 105). Children's right to participate might be guaranteed by law, but what the law permits and what is actually accessible are not the same.

The CRC views children in two ways: as weaker than adults and needing protection but nonetheless in need of more opportunities for self-determination. These aspects are complementary as giving children more of a voice will in turn improve the portions of the CRC that speak to their protection. The dominant protectionist approach unfortunately has not been effective in helping children who are exploited, abused, neglected or even involved directly in violent conflict.

Now the concept of "protagonism" is emerging from the literature on child's rights that indicates the best way to protect and guarantee children's development is "self-protection" (Hart 2013: 11,15). For some young people, participation as a protagonist may open up new opportunities and choices, but for others it may be essential for survival, equality and social justice.

One potential weakness of an exclusively rights-based approach to children's participation that Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010: 359) highlight is that rights can be exercised without a real contribution to social processes. Likewise, many children who participate in social activism are not recognised as holders of rights. However, the underlying principle that

participation is a human rights issue supports the idea that participation is a means of fulfilling those rights (Farrar et al. 2010: 83).

It is vital to note that for participation to be embedded there needs to be an intrinsic respect for the individuality of young people. Alderson (2010: 122) claims that many participatory studies examine shared activities in formal groups. In contrast, however, some may exercise more autonomy and agency in their individual personal life and relationships. Similarly, care must be taken not to describe multiple and diverse voices as one view that describes what all children and young people say.

2.8.2 Principles and theories of young people's participation and the role of adults

Young people have different criteria for what it means to participate and there is no one approach that can be universally defined as best practice (Farrar et al. 2010: 84). It can simply imply that children "take part" in activities, or express "views." Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010: 2) argue that this has often resulted in little change if their suggestions are not linked to actual consequences. Furthermore, this kind of mobilisation can involve a predetermined agenda, missing out on the great value that participation has to foster long-term development or involve a sense of responsibility to create change in their lived reality. Various models have been developed to distinguish meaningful involvement from "tokenism" or "decoration" (Lundy 2007: 938) The first substantial attempt to quantify this is found in Hart's ladder of children and young people's participation (Hart 1992: 8).

The first three rungs on this ladder - manipulation, decoration and tokenism - are described as non-participation. The further four rungs assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult-initiated shared decisions with children, child initiated and directed, come before the eighth and top rung of the ladder which is child-initiated shared decisions with adults. Hart (2013: 45) maintains that the reason why adults are still involved is that ultimately children do not need to operate independently from their community.

While Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 102) argue that that the linear progression of the types of participation in Hart's model implies that the top rung is the most desirable.

Kellett (2011: 4) also mentions this as a criticism of the “implicitly sequential nature” of Hart’s model and its corresponding implication of hierarchical values. Kellett (2011: 4) states that Hart failed to acknowledge contextual factors such as the appropriateness of promoting the perceived ideal of young people driven participation in all contexts. She cites Treseder’s (1997) circular model as an alternative that moves away from a linear conception of participation demonstrating that different forms of participation are still equal.

Hart (2013: 41) explains that while the upper levels of the ladder express increasing degrees of initiative by young people, it does not imply that they should always be attempting to operate at this level. He maintains that the model is designed as a guide to adult facilitators of the various conditions that enable children to work at the level of their choosing. Avoiding the rungs of non-participation at the three lowest levels is, according to Hart (2013: 41), a principle of considerable importance.

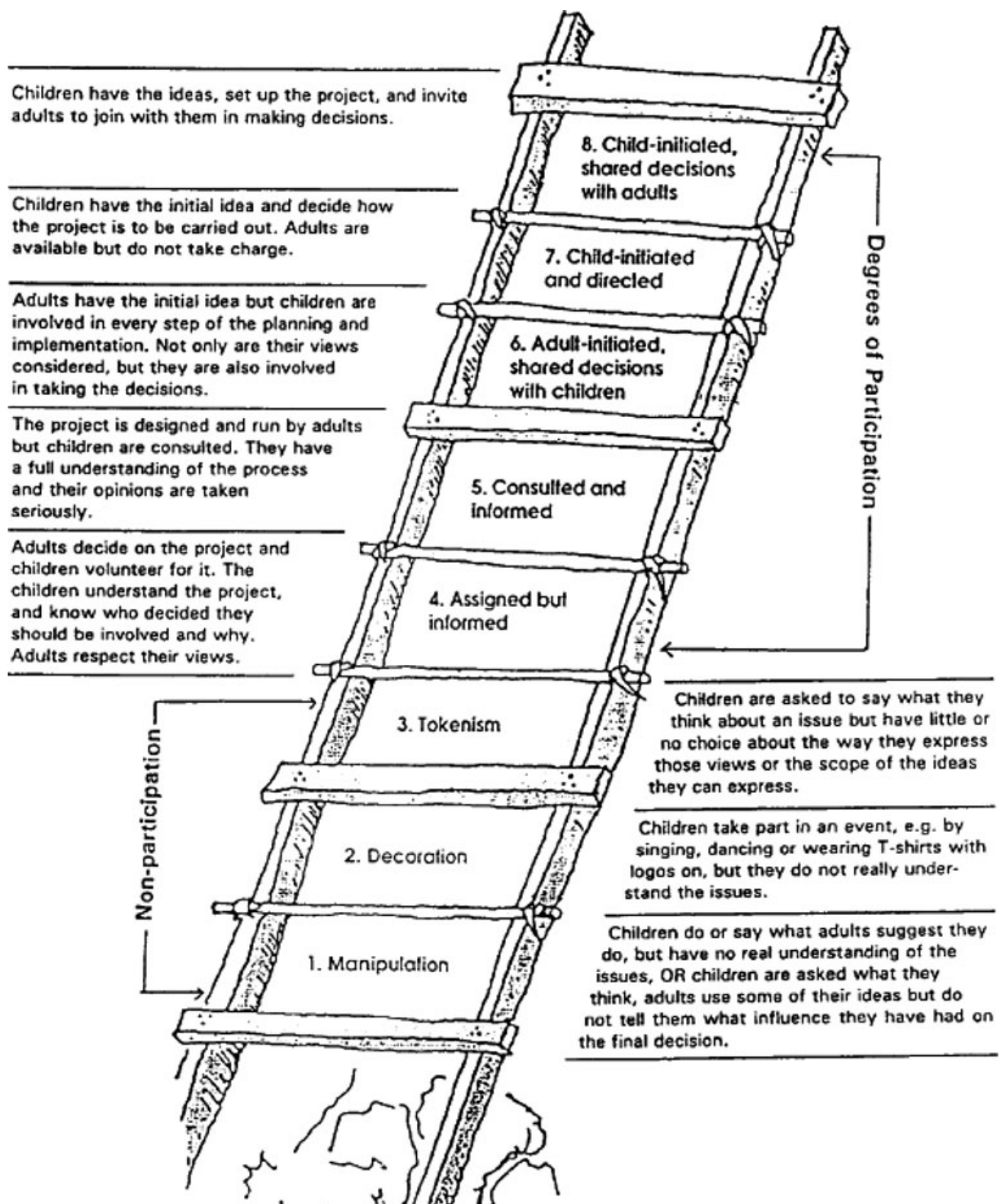


Figure 2.2: Hart's ladder of participation (1992: 8)

Shier's (2001: 111) typology expands on Hart's participation types that gives consideration to three stages of commitment that can be applied progressively to each level of participation, namely openings, opportunities and obligations. At each level, Shier poses key questions that can be used to investigate the level of participation or to enhance the design of participatory action with both young people and adults. Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 102-103) explain Shier's claim that Hart's model is useful in identifying just how many activities and programs are designed at the non-participation levels. They state that Shier designed his typology to include only the participation rungs of Hart's ladder. Wong, Zimmerman and Parker's (2010: 103) criticism of Shier's model is that it is designed for adult-centric responses, further perpetuating an adult position of power.

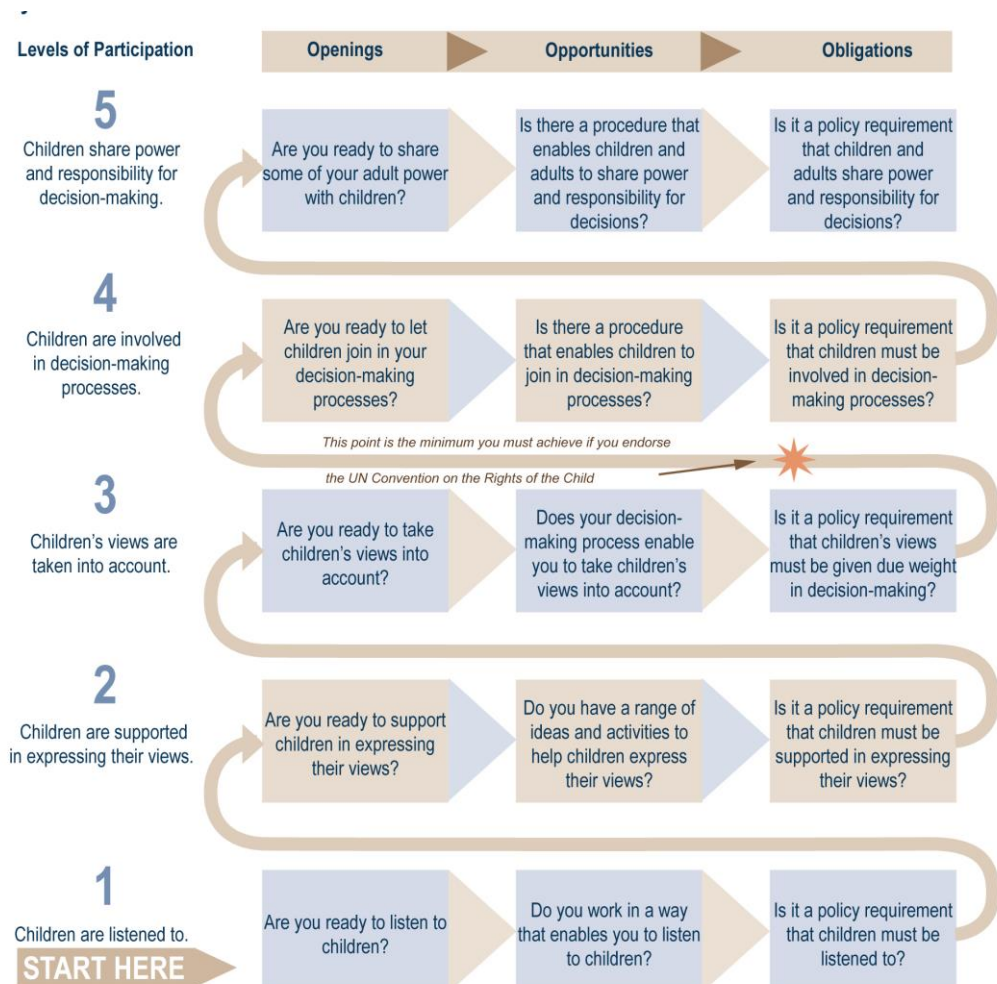


Figure 2.3: Shier's pathways to participation (2001: 111)

The Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) proposed by Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 103-104) uses an empowerment framework to incorporate intergenerational linkages and partnerships. Like Treseder's (1997) model it shifts from a ladder metaphor to avoid any one type of participation being perceived as ideal. It uses a pyramid diagram to demonstrate the different participation types that can enable empowerment. The model has five types of participation: vessel, symbolic, pluralistic, independent and autonomous. The pyramid structure and the direction of the arrows are intended to represent the varying degrees of empowerment and positive youth development potential for each type of participation.

The authors explain that an empowerment framework was used because of its emphasis on developing wellness and the identification of socio-political influences and their effect on quality of life (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 104). Central to the empowerment process is critical consciousness, also known as critical awareness or conscientisation. We will explore these pedagogical principles in the following section.

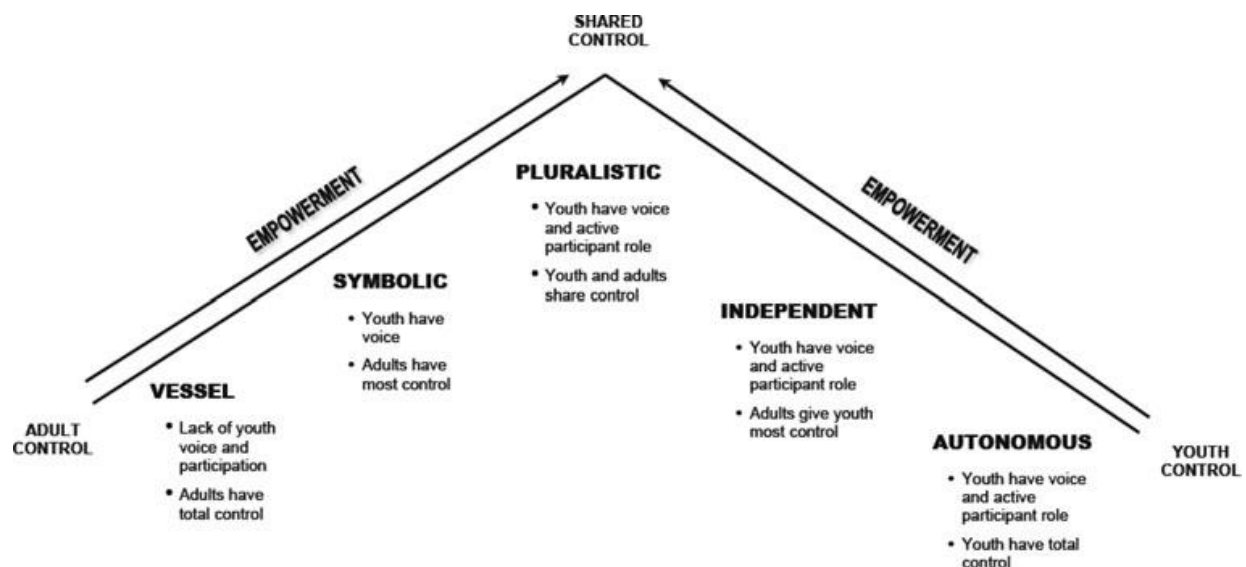


Figure 2.4: The TYPE pyramid (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 105)

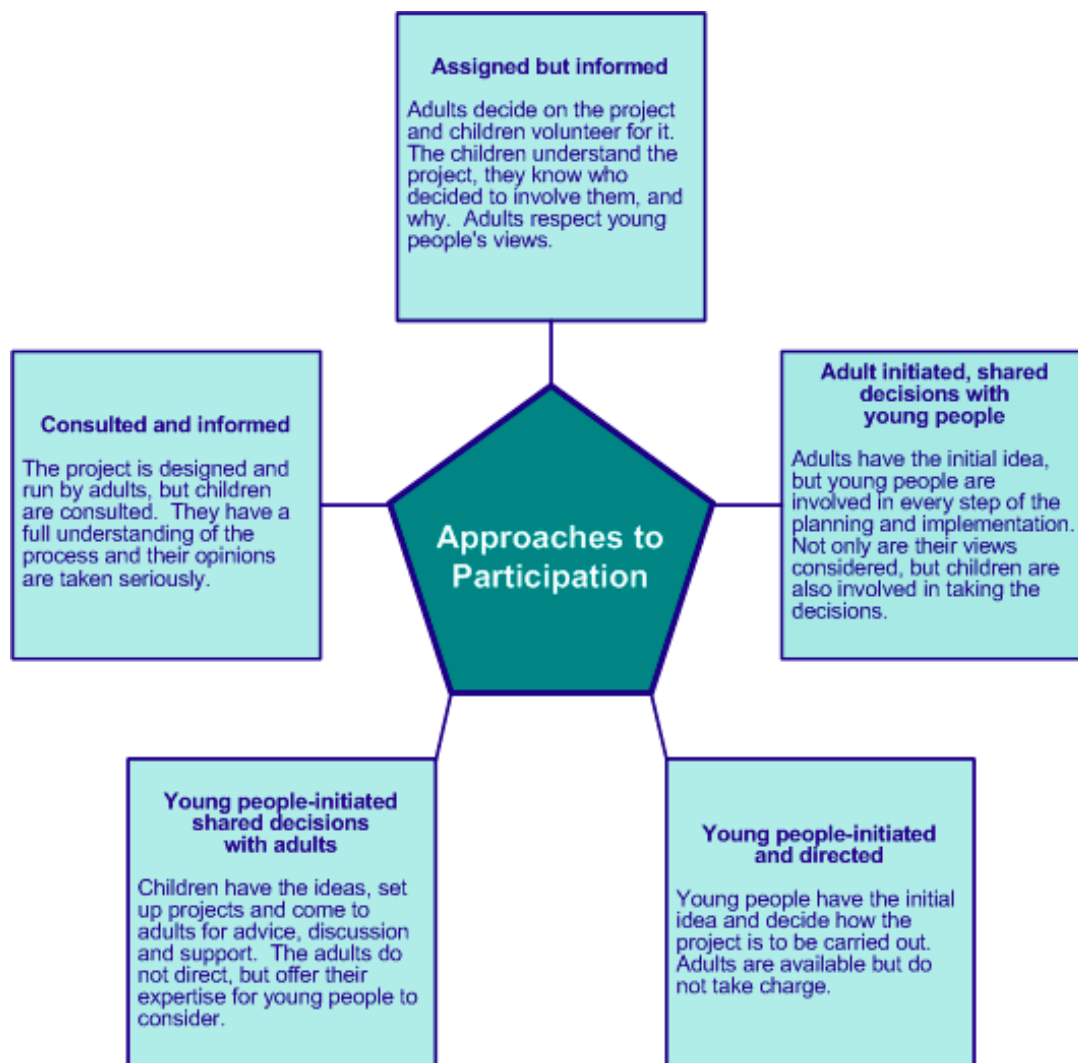


Figure 2.5: Treseder's "degrees of involvement" model (1997)

2.8.3 The role of critical consciousness

It is necessary that the weakness of the powerless is transformed into a force capable of announcing justice (Freire 2000: 50).

A theoretical foundation for participatory work can be found in the writings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and his seminal tome *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. A pedagogical principle of Freire's theory of critical consciousness central to the empowerment process is that people are powerless when unaware of the causes that shape their condition. Therefore, empowerment - and therefore the process of peacebuilding - occurs through

critical and collective enquiry of the social institutions and processes that influence their lives.

A dawning of critical awareness or consciousness can then emerge around the knowledge that circumstances are shaped not only by one's own behaviour, but also by broad social and historical forces that influence one's life course. The combined result of critical reflection and action is identified as "engaged praxis." It is a tool for young people to empower themselves, uncover their own sense of agency, resist the normalisation of systematic oppression and "speak to the reality of their world" (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 1; Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 105). Critical reflection and consciousness, therefore, can lead to discovery and action and contribute towards the social transformation of inequality (Burke and Greene 2015: 388).

The power of participation as a form of self-advocacy and self-determination echoes the concept of critical consciousness, as the focus is on developing the ability to change reality through reflecting on and transforming one's own marginalisation. Engaging in this pedagogical practice can expose young people to the principle that life and society is subject to change, and that they possess the agency to produce such changes (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 2). In this way, an individual can come to see the world "not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (Freire 2000: 12)."

2.9 Key enabling factors of participation

They are both tomorrow's leaders, parents, professionals and workers and today's asset. Properly supported and given the right opportunities, girls and boys, young women and young men can play a significant part in lifting themselves, their families and communities out of poverty (Maguire 2007: 2).

2.9.1 Diverse definitions of intelligence

Each individual develops different spheres of capacity and intelligence at different rates. According to Hart (2013: 27) this is the most important principle to consider in terms of a young person's participation. Intelligence has traditionally been viewed by minority world research as a universal developmental process founded in "staged" theories. Implicit in this approach is the assumption that variation outside the parameters of these stages represents a deviation or is detrimental to the developing young person.

On the contrary, might it be more accurate to suggest that multiple intelligences in each individual develop at different rates? Both a person's innate capacities and the opportunities that exist to exercise these capacities vary. It might be necessary to take into consideration the complexities of shifting physical and social settings, cultural frameworks, customs and child-rearing practices to understand why different competencies emerge at different times (Lansdown 2005: 12). There are real differences between families as to what kind of learning is valued. Some foster practical competence and intelligence, for example working with one's hands or with certain materials. Other families encourage a pattern of learning that is analogous to formal education such as language and mathematics. It is important to recognise the value and qualities of both (Hart 2013: 27).

The conception of what young people can or cannot do at a certain stage or the corresponding level of intelligence is not universal. In light of this, offering opportunities that suit different domains of intelligence could certainly enhance participatory processes for children and young people. This can begin with an honest discussion with participants about the diverse competencies that exist amongst individuals, how our skills can be shared and that they each have an equally valuable contribution to offer (Hart 2013: 28).

2.9.2 Identity development

Another construct relevant to children's and young people's participation is the development of identity. An individual's identity is informed by an understanding of the social world and by the thoughts, feelings and actions of others and oneself. There is a reciprocal dynamic between the *extrapersonal* social influences and *intrapersonal*

processes of internal understanding and communication (Tsang, Hui and Law 2012: 1). Jackson (2010: 809) proposes that identity is, however, an inherently “social process rather than simply an individual possession.”

Even though identity formation evolves throughout the life span, it is the aspects of an individual’s sense of identity during the years of middle childhood and adolescence that are most relevant to this study. One of the most prominent theorists to bring attention to the nature and development of identity is Erik Erikson. His *Theory of Identity* (Erikson 1968) outlines eight stages of development and offers detailed insight into the nature of the acquisition of identity.

Erikson viewed the years of middle childhood from the ages of about eight to 11 years as a time when children develop a “sense of industry,” when they learn to cooperate and work alongside their peers and when a more independent identity away from home in social contexts such as school is forged (Eccles 1999: 32). Erikson’s notion that competence and personal esteem are central to a child’s well-being indicates that encouraging experiences in a range of settings “can help to give a child a healthy, positive view of his or her competence, and a positive attitude toward learning and engagement in life’s activities” (Eccles 1999: 32).

This age group channel’s significant energy and enthusiasm outwardly, using the world as a mirror to finding their identity. Children who do not master the skills required in these settings or whose efforts are not met with appropriate feedback are likely to be frustrated by feelings of inferiority or incompetence that can have long-term negative consequences both intellectually, emotionally and interpersonally.

In Hart’s (2013: 28) view, projects should provide support through structure and practical resources for the ambitions and ideas of the young participants due to the significance of children experiencing success in participatory programs. Furthermore, organisations can assist children in learning to deal with failure. If adequate supervision is given towards engagement in meaningful tasks and demonstrating confidence, children at this age can feel part of a community where their industry is valued.

Adolescence as a developmental stage is characterised by rapid and extensive physical and psychosocial changes and extrapersonal and intrapersonal upheaval (Tsang, Hui and Law 2012: 1). According to Erikson's stages of development, adolescents experiment with different identities and seek to consolidate their social roles to try to figure out "who am I?" (Eccles 1999: 33). Individuals in this stage can test this emerging sense of self in various contexts, expressing it in behaviour, language or appearance.

The combination of so many changes occurring at the same time can make adolescence challenging for many young people. How adolescents formulate their identity by what they experience in adolescence has a "pivotal impact on their subsequent life journeys" (Tsang, Hui and Law 2012: 1). Therefore, coping with the stresses of adolescence successfully can contribute to a positive personal and social identity, while a negative experience can put young people at risk for behavioural and psychological complications.

Another factor in the development of identity is the failure of one's family or school environment to respond to adolescent's emerging maturity and independence by providing healthy or flexible environments. An important function of organisations designed with adolescents in mind is to provide a context in which young people themselves can make a positive impact through their own decisions and actions (Hart 2013: 29). Effective participatory programs offer adolescents an environment that accommodates the complexity of the identities they are in the process of creating for themselves.

Furthermore, the experiences of partaking in different activities offer reflective material in the process of identity exploration and development.

2.9.3 Interpersonal relationships

In Hansen, Larson and Dworkin (2003: 28), *interpersonal development* is described as the process of developing social connections and relationships with others and acquiring skills that cultivate these connections. Social contexts such as families, schools, peer groups and neighbourhoods shape an individual's developmental process. For the purpose of this

research we will look at the role of peers and the role of adults in participatory processes and the influence that these interpersonal relationships have on child and youth development.

Peers

The amount of time children and young people spend with peers rather than in family situations increases with age (Cockburn 2010: 313). The level of importance attached to these peer networks cannot be underestimated. As a child grows, the importance of peers in value formation and as a behavioural guide increases. At a certain point, the influence of children and young people's friends and acquaintances surpasses that of parents.

Harris (2011: 211) in *The nurture assumption: Why children turn out the way they do*, offers the illustration of a child whose home life is different in some way or whose parents are different from the parents of his peers who will still acquire the same culture as his peers. Often in these cases language, customs and beliefs are passed via the peer group from the parents of his or her peers.

Furthermore, peers can undermine any effort made on behalf of the family to assist the young person to navigate the years of adolescence. Young people who grow up in neighbourhoods where delinquency such as drug and alcohol use, criminal activity and contact with gang members is endemic are more vulnerable to problem behaviour as a result of associating with peers who are involved in these behaviours (Rankin and Quane 2002: 83).

According to Rankin and Quane (2002: 83) "social pathologies are transmitted epidemically through peer associations." The same authors reflect, however, that parents are often mindful of these consequences and will try to lessen the likelihood that attachments with deviant peers will occur. They can influence these friendship choices through normative socialisation; by choosing to live in a certain neighbourhood or intentionally choosing a certain school for their offspring, and by giving appropriate supervision, guidance and monitoring.

In sum, childhood and adolescence is a critical stage in which many developmental outcomes become embedded. The potential for participatory, empowering or achievement orientated social functioning versus disengagement from school or deviance are linked directly to the quality of peer groups. In this way, peer-to-peer activities can be effective in reaching young people in way that adult-run programs cannot.

The role of adults

Building partnerships with adults is one of the keys to the successful and meaningful participation of young people. While the relationship with parents and educators may have a hierarchical dynamic and focus on preventing potential problems, a partnership is characterised by mutuality in which each party is recognised and respected.

Camino (2000), quoted in Commonwealth Secretariat (2005: 6), identified three key components of successful youth-adult partnerships. The first component defines the principles and values that orient this type of partnership, namely that youth and adults are equally appreciated for their unique and valuable contributions. This means going beyond the conservative scenario where adults act as the authority and youth hold inferior positions. The second component involves the skills and competencies necessary for successful partnerships such as communication and teamwork. The third and final component to youth-adult partnerships involves co-operating on a common goal by developing a plan for community action, for example providing a community service, creating a new program or increasing youth involvement in community-decision making.

Hart (2013: 36) observes that by early adolescence, relationships with adults can be transformed from being authoritative to being more reciprocal. Then the role of adults would involve respecting young people's individuality and to share roles and responsibilities with them. Additionally, adults can help to facilitate youth development by providing opportunities for young people to feel physically and emotionally safe, to build healthy relationships, to acquire knowledge and information and to engage in meaningful activities. In genuine youth-adult partnerships, all these opportunities should be present (Norman 2001: 11). Furthermore, programs are more sustainable and effective when youth

are partners in the designing, development and implementation of a program. When trusted adults share with youth the power to make decisions, it demonstrates a belief that young people are capable individuals and valued resources.

2.10 Participation in Practice – country-specific examples of young people’s participation

A number of studies have been done around the world on participatory empowerment programs with children and youth. These case studies have put the enabling and empowering values underlying participation into practice. They are outstanding examples of young people’s potential as peacebuilders and social activists. They also illustrate various organisational dynamics and program designs that are useful for the development of the current study.

2.10.1 South Africa: The Abaqophi bakwaZisize abakhanyayo children’s radio project

Children in the remote district of Ingwavuma in South Africa’s northern KwaZulu-Natal grow up amidst extensive poverty, limited access to services and a high prevalence of HIV. Despite the constant and visible havoc of illness and fatality that the disease wreaks, there remains an almost impenetrable silence around the epidemic. In this context, tradition does not allow children opportunities to speak inside or outside the home. As a result there is very little inter-generational dialogue about important issues in the home or community and the needs of children are misunderstood or go unnoticed.

It was in this setting that the *Abaqophi bakwaZisize Abakhanyayo*, (meaning *Shining recorders of Zisize*) children’s radio project was initiated by a local non-profit organisation and primary school in collaboration with the Children’s Institute research unit at the University of Cape Town. The aim of the project was to provide children growing up around poverty and HIV with an opportunity to use audio recordings and radio as a vehicle to articulate their stories. It aimed to improve local and global understanding of issues that

concern children growing up in this context and to raise awareness towards addressing children's needs and experiences.

The actual production process involves 4 groups of young people between nine and 18 years grouped according to age and location who meet weekly for after-school sessions and for intensive holiday workshops. The groups have different levels of technical skills, dependent on their length of involvement in the project. Initial training focuses on how to record personal radio diaries, progressing to other formats then presenting the live show. The children themselves identify topics, interviews, questions and locations to record. Once complete, the children script, narrate and edit the programs towards completion.

The *Abaqophi*, as the children refer to themselves, have chosen to address a wide range of topics. These include experiences of illness and death, poverty, abuse, the impact of adult alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, corporal punishment and access to water.

In their role as "reporters" the children publicly tackle conventional adult perceptions and practices towards them by breaking the silence on troubling issues and experiences through their choice of topics, the content of their narratives and the questions they ask. They urge adults to change the ways they think about and communicate with children and for their need for information to cope better with their circumstances.

Over and above the support provided by facilitators who train the children to produce and broadcast the programs according to their level of experience and technical expertise, there is limited formal involvement of adults in the project. As reporters, the children participating in the project develop a set of skills that allow for communication with adults and children alike. They are asking the questions in conversations they have initiated and interviewees then respond. This limits opportunities for the young people to be patronised or dominated. Such a process enables children to frame the issues for discussion and to demonstrate to adults their capacity for understanding and engaging in the world in which they live, in addition to provoking important shifts in cultural approaches and practice (Meintjes 2011: 65-69).

2.10.2 Nicaragua: Learning from child coffee workers

Children's life and work in remote northern Nicaragua's coffee sector is characterised by extreme poverty and dependence on coffee production. There is a high incidence of child labour and conditions are harsh due to long hours, dangerous conditions, low pay and a high educational drop out rate. Non-governmental organisation Centre for Education in Health and Environment (CESESMA is the Spanish language acronym) works with children and young people in this region and is managed and staffed entirely by local people. Their mission is to work in partnership with children, young people and other members of the community to promote and defend the rights of child workers through education and collective action.

CESESMA trains and develops young community education activist "*promotores or promotoras*" aged 12-18 years to run learning groups with younger children in their communities outside of school. The activities in these learning groups include organic farming and environmental action, folk-dance, mural-painting, craft, theatre and girls' groups.

The process of training and development that *promotores/as* follow has up to five stages and begins from age six onwards when children join an activity group. As confidence and self-esteem increase, the young people who want to share their skills with other children of their community enter a *promotores/as* training program run by CESESMA. In the next stage those who are typically aged 13 or above work alongside more experienced *promotores/as* who mutually support their forming of new groups. By stage four the young *promotores/as* can begin to use their awareness of key issues, skills and confidence to become active in community action, advocacy and defence of children's rights. The final stage is when the most capable and committed *promotores/as* continue as volunteers to join CESESMA's area teams.

The CESESMA approach is a long-term process that promotes personal development, self-organisation, autonomy and activism. It is grounded in the belief that children and young people are capable and competent. Limitations they may have experienced are due to lack of educational opportunities and not lack of capability. As educators, organisers and

activists they have expert local knowledge about their lives, their families and their communities. Central to this is a rights-based approach that involves organised action by children and young people in the promotion and defence of their rights.

The experiences and learning gained from CESESMA's initiatives show that one way to achieve non-tokenistic participation is to support children's gradual or "bottom-up" processes of learning, sharing, organising, mobilising and demanding a voice in decisions that affect their lives (Shier 2010: 215-229).

2.10.3 Turkey: Exercising agency through participation in a youth organisation

As a nation, the citizens of Turkey are dependent on the potential of a young population being realised. Unfortunately, participatory action and a sense of community are inaccessible to many disadvantaged young people due to historical reasons, cultural attitudes and the economic demands placed on them by families.

The Young Volunteers Association represents a rare example of a youth organisation established by disadvantaged youth. Founded in 2004 by a 16-year-old high school student Eyup Coskun, the young activist started questioning adult-initiated, tokenistic activities during his involvement in an environmental club that did clean-ups and tree planting. He decided to form his own organisation that would give youth the opportunity to "become the engine of community change towards self-governance and help to solve significant problems." Since then, the Young Volunteers have embarked on a wide range of activities and branches have been set up in a number of cities.

The organisation's work at the local level in the Ayazaga district of Istanbul is described as being the most enduring and tangibly influential. Free preparative courses for high school and university entrance exams for those who cannot afford private tuition were established, relying on local resources to build social capital in the neighbourhood. The after-school, weekend and seasonal environmental programs where volunteers help children with their academic work had 200 registered students, over 50 per cent of which

are female. Salman (2006) reported that Ayazaga children's academic performance improved due to these initiatives. In addition, Sancar 2010 observed that fifteen to twenty children below the age of 12 came to the space daily to help out with cleaning and chores – demonstrating dedication and sense of ownership of the on-going activities in this safe space.

The Young Volunteers Association is unique in Turkey as it was initiated and run by disadvantaged youth from low-income families based in a *gecekondu* (squatter) district. The success of the activities of the organisation is reported to be in part due to leaders who know local issues well, have experience in issue-specific projects and enthusiasm for changing the condition of disadvantaged youth.

Furthermore, an important principle of practice for the Young Volunteers Association was political and ideological neutrality and an equal attitude towards children from different ethnic and gender backgrounds. This, in addition to fostering a relationship of trust with the local residents, garnering municipal government support and building on intergenerational collaboration, allowed the effectiveness of the organisation's interventions at the local level to be enhanced.

In reviewing the experiences of the Young Volunteers, Sancar and Severcan (2010: 281) found that when a youth organisation's activities and membership are bound to a specific place it may be better able to represent a broad range of socio-economic and environmental issues. According to the same authors, "youth servicing the children of the neighbourhood is an obvious strategy that creates a multitude of positive outcomes, including establishing trust and nurturing future youth leaders" (Sancar and Severcan 2010: 284).

2.10.4 India: Child reporters as agents of change

In India and in many parts of the world it is a common practice for organisations and governmental agencies to involve children as an expedient way to attract media attention.

As a result, in 2006, the chief minister of the state of Orissa banned the involvement of children in welcoming ceremonies for visiting dignitaries (Acharya 2010: 204).

. It was in this state that UNICEF established the Child Reporters initiative to facilitate the involvement of children as active participants in the development of their communities. The project was specifically aimed to involve under-privileged children from marginalised groups who have little access to mainstream resources.

The program initially began with 100 children writing daily diaries, a selection of which were part of the five issues of a bi-monthly newsletter that were published and circulated to state and district officials, non-profit organisations and the media. Several of the young people also participated in numerous conferences, representing the state nationally and internationally at a conference in China.

As the process gathered momentum, funding and support from the Department of Education allowed the Child Reporters initiative to be integrated into regular school activities. As a result, the program expanded to include more than 5000 children across 519 villages and involving 539 schools.

The children's reports cover their experiences at their schools, homes and villages, about government schemes, on incidents nearby, on their trips to nearby towns and on positive or negative issues that interest them. Often these are perspectives that would not normally have come to light, demonstrating that there was much that is not seen or addressed by organisations, the media, government, as well as parents and teachers.

What is remarkable about these accomplishments is that this program involved only tribal children from a remote part of India who had never travelled far from their own village. Developing and making presentations independently was a significant achievement for those who had once been shy and unable to speak fluently.

The Child Reporters initiative impacted significantly on the children, the community, the government and wider society. Schoolteachers and parents found that individual children benefitted from being reporters. There was improvement in the children's level of

engagement with schoolwork, writing and speaking skills, their perspective and knowledge of the world and overall confidence.

At a government level, the authorities in the district gave specific attention to the child reporter's feedback from the newsletter as a monitoring tool that offered first-hand accounts of schemes and development work at the village level. For example, supplies and repairs were done to many village hand-pumps on the basis of children's reports. In addition, the local media's response was that the project was successful in highlighting the situation of women and children and of village development in general – such that they developed their own stories based on the reports of the children.

Despite challenges, the Child Reporters initiative has provided important learning about child participation and ways forward in overcoming challenges to planning, implementation and children's participation in general. Ultimately, the approach can provide many more children with a sound participatory forum for contributing their skills to uplifting their lives and communities positively and peacefully (Acharya 2010: 204-214).

2.11 Summary and conclusion

The review of literature in this chapter that concentrated on the prevalence of violence in South Africa revealed that the phenomenon is an ever-present part of every day life for a majority of young people. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provided a conceptual framework to understand the complex causes of violence such as socialisation, historical inequality and cultural norms. The numerous consequences of violence were also examined.

The literature revealed adults could either constrain or capacitate the progress young people can potentially achieve to change these circumstances. Additionally, a strength-based approach offers a counter narrative to deficit thinking as it turns the focus towards developing young people's contribution towards solution finding.

The theoretical portion of the review provided an analysis of a rights-based approach to young people as participants, protagonists and peacebuilders. It also explored the principles and theories of factors that contribute towards participation being effective through an analytical comparison of several typological frameworks. This section concluded with a study of the role of critical consciousness and enquiry based on the writings of Freire on engaging in the praxis of critical reflection and praxis.

This chapter also examined some of the key enabling factors that can assist in developing the capacity to participate, including intellect, identity and the role of interpersonal relationships with peers and adults. The remainder of the chapter reviewed four participatory case studies that involved children and youth from diverse parts of the world. To conclude, the literature points directly to the wide scope available for further research to be conducted in this field, specifically in the South African context.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Present-day social, economic and political structures perpetuate colonialism and apartheid by continuing to impose neo-liberal racial capitalism that thrives on structural violence, inadequate schooling, unemployment, long-term poverty and value erosion. Children and youth reared in a society as violent as South Africa's are typically deemed either as perpetrators or victims of violence. Other than in a tokenistic or decorative capacity, the majority of young people rarely find opportunities to be active agents in the construction of a more peaceful social reality. In order to curb violence, a deeper understanding, acknowledgement and support of their involvement in peacebuilding activities is necessary.

The purpose of this study was to conduct participatory action research on the role young people play in building peace as an alternative to a violent society and fostering positive change in their communities. A participatory action research (PAR) design provided the framework for the young participants in this study to make their contribution to peace. This chapter outlines the research design, methodology, sampling, data collection and analysis, reliability and validity and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Participatory Action Research led by Youth

To understand the role of young people in peace building, youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) was the specific action research paradigm used in this study. Similar to PAR, the only difference is that young people rather than adults participate. Mouton (2011: 143) classifies the participatory action research approach as a component of research design. The author describes PAR as a method that involves the subjects of the research as an integral part of the design. It uses mainly qualitative methods to gain understanding and insight into the worlds of the participants. Most often, PAR involves a commitment to empowerment and a change of social conditions for the participants (Mouton 2011: 150-

151). The following quote describes the field of participatory action research in which YPAR is situated:

Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview... It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally to the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.
(Reason and Bradbury 2001: 1).

Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 100) note that by constructing child and adolescent research and practice using an adult lens, the perspectives and experiences of these essential protagonists are often overlooked. YPAR is an approach that allows young people to study and research the issues that concern them in order that they can craft and implement actions, plans and strategies to rectify these problems. Rubin and Jones (2007: 363) describe YPAR as a method “conducted by youth...with the goal of informing and affecting school, community, and or global problems and issues” which in the process “contributes to the positive development of a variety of academic, social and civic skills in youth.”

Typically applying a social justice perspective (Herr and Anderson 2014: 9), YPAR provides young people the opportunity to investigate the underlying causes that produce conditions of injustice and ultimately to challenge them by finding solutions to specific community concerns. Understanding how to overcome them is critical to discovering one’s ability to produce personal and social change. Cammarota and Fine (2008: 6) state that once this capacity to effect change is understood, the systems of oppression experienced can no longer dictate that the source of social and economic problems are merely a result of poor choices. The authors say this gives participants the opportunity “to realise the equal capabilities and universal intelligence in all humans, knowing problems are a result of social forces beyond his or her own doing” (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 6). Furthermore, understanding the world through a critical lens can lead to a more systematic approach to

the issues they encounter (Herr and Anderson 2014: 29).

The praxis of YPAR promotes a sharper perception of the machinations behind societal constructs that can directly influence the production of positive action and a reality more suited to the needs and interests of humanity. Moreover, greater empowerment and personal agency can arise from critical knowledge of social contexts (Cammarota and Fine 2008: 7). Additionally, YPAR is an approach that can appeal to the creative energy, ideas and visible outcomes that attract young people towards critically addressing issues of their concern with a view to finding solutions. It creates a learning environment in which these solutions can be applied to real-life situations (Ataöv and Haider 2006: 132). As YPAR values participation, empowerment and action, it does not view research as necessarily separate from practice (Wong, Zimmerman and Parker 2010: 111).

Herr and Anderson (2014: 29) claim that young people partnering with adults during the process of conducting research and assisting in possible interventions is the ideal way of carrying out YPAR. This is also consistent with the typology proposed by Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010: 105) in Chapter 2, Section 2.8.2, in which a pluralistic paradigm of intergenerational partnership is situated at the top of their pyramid. The illustration demonstrates that shared control with adults and young people, in combination with young people having a significant and active role, is a process that has the potential to be the most empowering.

YPAR also includes young people joining research initiated by adults, or young people planning programs of their own choosing and perhaps inviting adults to join. All of these approaches can construct new understandings and new roles for youth. As Checkoway and Gutierrez (2006: 2) state, “the issue is not whether the effort is youth-led, adult-led or intergenerational but rather whether young people have an actual effect.”

3.2.2 Introduction to the YPAR phases

The YPAR approach is flexible in terms of the phases that participants follow during their engagement with this orientation to inquiry. Essentially, there is no essential number of

phases that all YPAR projects must undertake. This study used the following six due to their alignment with the aims and the objectives of the study, both theoretically and practically. Several of the phases such as *topic identification* and *data collection* had a clear beginning and end, while others such as *pre reflection* and *evaluation* were applied throughout the study.

Prior to implementation, participants chose whether to participate in the first week or the second week of the project. All phases of YPAR described here were applied during each of these weeks and with both groups of participants. These separate groups will be referred to as “group 1” and “group 2.” Figure 1.6 below shows diagrammatically the phases involved in this study.

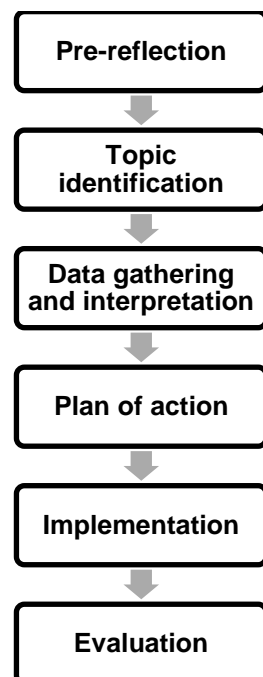


Figure 3.1: Phases of participatory action research led by youth implemented in the current study.

3.2.3 Phase 1: Pre-reflection

In Schensul and Berg (2004: 81), *pre-reflection* is described as a phase that allows young people to “explore their growing sense of self in a safe environment and learn about the social dynamics and structures that promote certain identities and stereotypes or stigmatise or marginalize others.” Furthermore, they claim that since YPAR is done in groups, the participants have the opportunity to learn to negotiate differences of opinion, approach, learning style and “their own and others complex social and personal identities” (Schensul and Berg 2004: 81).

Participants undertook daily team building exercises that allowed them to situate, examine, recognise and understand these concepts. This included warm-up games that varied in complexity and scope with some aimed at the more physical aspects of warming up and others to give participants the opportunity to get to know each other and themselves in order to create a feeling of safety, togetherness and group identity.

One of the games, called “doctor doctor” is a physical problem solving game that involves the entire body. Group members join hands and a volunteer who is called the “doctor” is called in to untangle them to create a circle without any of the participant’s hands loosening their grasp. Another activity that can be situated within the pre-reflection stage involves participants swapping seats with other participants according to their identification with a personal attribute. For example, if the participant standing says “stand up if you grew up in a rural area” then all those participants who identify with this statement, plus the one standing, swap with each other. As there is one less chair than participants involved, each round the individual left standing asks the next question. This activity provides a fun way for participants to get to know each other and identify important commonalities and differences between them.

3.2.4 Phase 2: Topic identification

During the phase of *topic identification*, participants studied their social context including their school and the surrounding community they live in, namely Cato Manor. They critically engaged in a variety of activities that allowed them to identify certain issues or

dynamics and the risk and protective factors at the individual, school and community level that may influence an individual's exposure to such issues.

Making a nest

Making a nest is a team building exercise that was designed to enhance interactive teamwork and creative thinking. The participants broke off into three teams and each was tasked with designing and building a structure that would protect an egg dropped from one storey. The team whose egg survives successfully wins the challenge. Teams were also asked by the facilitator to write and decorate their creation with the type of qualities and values that would make a nest safe and to give a name to their egg. Debriefing sessions before and after the activity allowed for the facilitator to explain the purpose of the exercise and allowed for reflections to be made in regards to the overall experience, the characteristics of good teamwork and what the participants would do differently next time.

Integration/Disintegration

Though devastating in their effects, the forces of disintegration tend to sweep away barriers that block humanity's progress, opening space for the process of integration to draw diverse groups together and disclosing new opportunities for cooperation and collaboration (Universal House of Justice 2013: 1-2).

Drawing inspiration from this quotation, the researcher developed an exercise that would enhance participant's understanding of the forces of integration and disintegration they observe in the world through making poster collages of text and image they have chosen.

Participants divided themselves into three teams. They then set about preparing a poster to present images and text of the forces of disintegration on one side and integration on the other. The teams all used A1 paper, a selection of recent news magazines and newspapers such as TIME and The Guardian, scissors and glue.

Making a community/school base map

Hart (2013: 168) proposes that making a community or school base map is a basic tool for any community development project. The author describes maps as a valuable means of expressing ideas around the lived environment and to synthesize these ideas with others in collective expression.

During this activity, participants broke into two teams and began drawing a series of maps on A1 paper. The first team drew a map of their school and the second team drew a map of elements of their neighbourhood or local community. After this was complete, each team created new maps of their “ideal” school and “ideal” community.

Each team then presented their maps and explained to the other team the various elements of their illustrations and what they would like to see in their community and school in an ideal future. The exercise provided the participants with their first practical tool to engage in discussing social issues and the peacebuilding and development needs of the community and school.

Drama skits

Once the participants had discussed and identified a social issue, the group split into two teams to devise drama skits based on this issue. Each team was provided various props and costumes, but no further instruction was given. Preparing and performing drama skits was used as a tool for the participants to interpret and express creatively the issues surrounding their topic according to their own perspective. Following their performances, the entire group discussed the issues the drama skits raised.

3.2.5 Phase 3: Data gathering and interpretation

In the data collection and analysis phase, the participants were assisted in developing a research tool. Participants were introduced to the idea that they are also researchers and

that there are various tools such as interviews and surveys that they can use to gather data on their topic. The participants from both group 1 and group 2 decided to develop short surveys to investigate the opinions of community members and each conducted one on one interviews. Participants then shared and interpreted the results together, the findings of which partially informed the “Plan of action” phase.

3.2.6 Phase 4: Plan of action

Participants discussed a variety of possibilities in implementing an action or intervention. They chose what was deemed most effective given their resources and circumstances. The collaborative activities of the *pre-reflection* and *topic identification* phases and the survey results formed the foundation from which the action plan was created.

3.2.7 Phase 5: Intervention

In terms of the intervention itself, both groups implemented plans with considerable success. Group 1 chose issues-based drama and poetry and elected to perform during an assembly at another school. In order that this could be shared with an even wider audience, the researcher introduced the concept of creating a “photo story.” Participants made photographs of scenes they chose to be pertinent to the plot and then dictated the captions and speech bubbles while looking through the selected photographs they made. The facilitator recorded their dictation and the researcher used it when putting together group 1’s poster that included both the story, the poem that inspired the drama and a photograph of all participants holding handmade posters of the message they wished to communicate.

After group 2’s group of participants saw the poster that group 1 had created hanging in the foyer of their school, they immediately requested to create one too. They created the photo story content in the same manner as group 1 but did it concurrently with rehearsing their drama skit. They performed their drama during break time for a group of learners from the Eco Club.

3.2.8 Phase 6: Evaluation

Critical reflection was an on-going part of the program and was built into numerous activities throughout. Evaluation surveys prepared by the researcher were used in face-to-face interviews conducted by pairs of participants at the end of each week. Elements of reflection or evaluation that are more abstract can be observed in the group's collective process, individual personal growth, transformative action and participants reactions, learning and use of skills and knowledge garnered.

According to Schensul and Berg (2004: 83) measuring the effect of this work in terms of transformation of the social environment is difficult. Therefore "what is important is not whether they can accomplish transformations, but whether they learn to use the results of their work, and the communications skills they have acquired to influence others" (Schensul and Berg 2004: 83).

3.2.9 Research timetable

The YPAR program timetable is presented in the following table:

	Date	Activity
1	14 June 2016	Met with the gatekeeper, a teacher at Mayville Secondary, to introduce the aim and purpose of the program and to discuss a potential collaboration. Also liaised with the principal of the school at this point.
2	15 – 24 June 2016	The gatekeeper recruited approximately 20 participants
3	24 June 2016	Researcher returned to Mayville Secondary to meet with potential participants. Those who were able to commit for 5 consecutive days were given consent forms for their guardians and all signed assent form
4	27 June – 1 July 2016	YPAR group 1 program
5	4 July – 8 July 2016	YPAR group 2 program
6	1 August	Group 1 rehearsal
7	4 August	Group 1 performance at Bechet Secondary
8	16 August	Group 2 photo shoot/rehearsal
9	18 August	Group 2 performance at Mayville Secondary
10	19 August	School assembly - certificates and posters presented to

		participants
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The following tables present the daily activities of the YPAR program:

Date	Number of participants	WEEK 1: Program of activities
27 June	8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups – name games, doctor doctor, whoosh 2. Discussed and created the common set of values together 3. Creation and presentation of community/school base maps 4. Looked at some social issues and discussed the idea of doing research within the community. Broke into two groups to decide on which social issue to research and implement an intervention on. 5. The whole group came back together and decided on teen pregnancy 6. Group reflection
28 June	8 + 1 volunteer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups and trust exercises 2. Making a nest activity and reflection 3. Group discussion - participants decided to prepare a short survey to use in one-to-one interviews. The researcher typed up and printed surveys on site 4. The group was split into two and each created team created and performed a drama about teen pregnancy, used props 5. Debriefing and role plays about one-to-one interviewing 6. Group reflection
29 June	8 + 2 volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups - shumphu/volleyball 2. Sharing results of the surveys and writing them up on

		<p>the flipchart</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Writing down types of interventions – they decided on a drama performance at a local school that would include poetry 4. Created a long drama together with 8 scenes 5. Group reflection
30 June	10 + 2 volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups 2. Integration and disintegration activity 3. Developed the drama further 4. Group reflection
1 July	11 + 2 volunteers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups – shumphu and mopping in preparation for yoga 2. Participants were given the camera and tripod to take stills for their photo story. The story was recorded while they went through the photos on the computer 3. More cleaning up outside – everyone helped to clean up garbage leftover from a separate community engagement initiative 4. Participants sat on yoga mats to prepare their posters. The group photo of the group holding their posters was made. 5. Yoga session 6. Evaluation surveys

Date	Number of participants	WEEK 2: Program of activities
4 July	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wrapped up unfinished garbage disposal 2. Ice breakers and warm ups – name games, doctor

		<p>doctor, if you</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Creation and presentation of community/school base maps (filmed by participants) 4. Shared oranges with other learners on the premises 5. Reflection
5 July	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm ups 2. Making a nest activity and reflection 3. Volleyball 4. Discussion and identification of social issues 5. Creation and presentation of drama
6 July	8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mopping in preparation for Capoeira session 2. Warm-ups 3. Group discussion - participants decided to prepare a short survey to use in one-to-one interviews. The researcher typed up and printed surveys on site 4. Debriefing and role plays on one-to-one interviewing 5. Capoeira session 6. Haiku writing session in English and IsiZulu 7. Reflection

7 July	7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm-ups 2. Integration/disintegration – Sane explained the activity 3. Shared data from the survey – first numerical and quantitative followed by a mind map to describe the qualitative data
8 July	7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yoga + warm ups 2. Prepared and performed drama skit 3. Participants discussed the logistics of performing it for the Eco Club at Mayville Secondary 4. Evaluation surveys

3.3 Methodology

In contrast to Mouton (2011: 143), Creswell (2013: 173) defines quantitative methods and qualitative or mixed method procedures as the definitive elements of research design. Following on from Mouton (2011: 143), the term research methodology is referred to in this section.

Although the roots of qualitative research predate modern science, its origins are commonly linked with the formation of the social sciences - principally sociology and anthropology. Qualitative research seeks to answer questions about the *what, how* or *why* of a phenomenon, rather than quantitative questions around *how many, how much* or *how often* (Bourgeault, Dingwall and De Vries 2010: 4). Qualitative research focuses on the

emic perspective that occurs within a social group or from the perspective of the subject. Additionally, qualitative research views the close relationship between the researcher and the researched as one based from the position of equality.

Qualitative research as an investigative process allows the researcher to make sense of social phenomenon by seeking the perspectives of participants or by entering their world and interacting in their daily life. According to Creswell (2013: 4), the process of qualitative research involves “...data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the research making interpretations of the meaning of the data.”

The data that emerges from a qualitative study is descriptive and reported in words and images rather than numbers. The current study can be defined as qualitative research as the focus is on participant’s perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, the meaning and interpretation of the process that is occurring can be described as equally important as the outcome (Creswell 2013: 195). In sum, qualitative research can be defined as a methodology that is practical, exploratory and grounded in the lived experiences of subjects or participants.

3.4 Research setting

The study was carried out at Mayville Secondary, a co-educational public high school located six kilometres west of the centre of Durban and situated within the greater Cato Manor district. The area boundaries of Mayville and the informal settlement Cato Crest are unclear so for the purpose of this study the research setting will heretofore be referred to as “Cato Manor.”

Cato Manor is a high-density, low-income area that has historic significance due to forced removal and resettlement of people from this area between the 1950s and 1970s. Some of the demolition allowed for further extension and construction of the apartheid legislated “white” suburb of Manor Gardens.

Mayville Secondary has 1200 learners and has been operating since 2001. It is part of a relatively new government run complex that includes a primary school, library, community centre and outdoor gym. The community centre is currently disused due to an incident of arson that occurred in 2015 during a service delivery protest. This complex and surrounding informal, government and private housing are located in what was previously an open veld or “buffer zone” in the area’s previous incarnation during apartheid.

The “buffer zone” is an area of veld deliberately kept uninhabited in order that the residents of Manor Gardens and the residents of Cato Manor maintain a significant degree of physical separation. This is according to the Group Areas Act of 1950 that legislated racially segregation in town planning. Due to the acceleration of rural-urban migration since the late 1980s, Cato Manor has witnessed rapid resettlement and substantial population increase. As a result, much of the buffer zone has been eliminated and now only a road separates Manor Gardens from Cato Manor.

Cato Manor is the closest “township” area to Durban’s central business district. Due to this proximity to public services, employment and amenities, the population growth continues to increase year on year. The roll out of services such as government housing, sanitation and refuse collection has unfortunately not kept up with the high level of demand. Unemployment and overcrowding is commonplace, as is domestic and crime related violence. The area remains characterised by overcrowding, sub-standard housing, high levels of unemployment and social fragmentation. In addition to crime and crime-related violence, service delivery protests, vandalism and political conflict further reinforce the penurious conditions that are home to some of the poorest of Durban’s urban poor.

Despite this, increasing levels of community organisation and citizen action are evident, both from residents, the municipality and by external stakeholders and non-profit organisations. These continue to contribute greatly towards social upliftment and economic development. Due to the convergence of these factors, Cato Manor as a research setting offered great possibilities in terms of some of its young people becoming peacebuilding activists themselves.

3.5 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of this study. Defined as a method of non-probability sampling, purposive sampling is used to recruit a specific and predefined group. The main goal in using this method is to find respondents within a population that are interested in participating and making a contribution towards the research.

Almost all participants were recruited at Mayville Secondary in Cato Manor, Durban. The majority participate in the school's "Eco Club" that has over 100 members. The geography teacher, who runs and supports the Eco Club, is constantly seeking opportunities to offer enriching experiences to learners and for them to collaborate with outside organisations to improve their school experience.

When the concept of the current study was introduced, the teacher was very keen to assist in getting learners from the Eco Club involved as she felt the great need to build peace in the school and wider community. In total, 20 young people, the majority of them female, aged between 13 and 17 were able to make a contribution to the study.

3.7 Data collection

The data that was collected during the YPAR program comprises detailed field notes, video and audio recordings, photography, posters, flip chart notes, the participant's surveys and completed evaluation forms.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of focusing and simplifying data, presenting it and making interpretive conclusions. There are many approaches to the process of analysing qualitative

data and Kawulich and Holland (2012: 229) state that the choice of how to analyse data depends on the theoretical framework, the purpose of the study and the researcher's intentions in conducting the study.

Chapter four uses this thematic analysis to introduce some of the themes that emerged from the study. As a technique, thematic analysis is useful in creating categories or themes in order to perform analysis on qualitative data in recorded speech, written text, video, photographs, visual exercises and drama skits. Unlike other approaches, thematic analysis offers no automatic starting or finish points. Research framed in terms of themes can, however, enable us to "see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change" (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2013: 1-2). As a method of enquiry, thematic analysis can therefore allow researchers to describe, understand and explain important social realities. Chapter four uses this data analysis technique to introduce some of the themes that emerged from the study.

3.9 Reliability and validity

Reliability in qualitative research is the means to which researchers determine if an approach is stable and consistent across different projects and research studies. In order to ensure the reliability of this study the following measures outlined in Creswell (2013: 203) were employed. First, all steps of the research project were documented and a detailed case study protocol was outlined in order that others could follow the procedures. Lastly, the academic supervisor was consulted regularly during the data collection and analysis phases.

Validity can be defined as a "means that researchers can draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population" (Creswell 2002: 600). Employing certain procedures can ensure the accuracy of research findings. First, the process of *triangulating* or examining evidence from different data sources added to the validity of

the study and ensured that themes emerging from the study were justified. Secondly, a *rich, thick description* was used to convey the findings. Creswell (2013: 202) explains “this description may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experience.” The process of providing detailed descriptions about the setting allows results to be more realistic and richer and can thus add to the validity of the findings.

Next, offering clarity on the role researcher *bias* had in terms of interpretation of findings created an honest and open narrative that allowed for reflectivity, a core characteristic of qualitative research. Spending *prolonged time* in the research setting allowed the researcher to “develop a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study,” lending credibility to details about the site and participants that enabled more accurate and valid findings.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The necessary permissions from Durban University of Technology’s Institutional Research Ethics Committee were obtained prior to the initiation of the research process. After approval was granted, signed letters giving informed consent were obtained both from the participants and their guardians. These letters included a description of the purpose of the research, details of the project’s activities and a guarantee of the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. Participation occurred on a voluntary basis and allowed participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that the data gathered in this study will be part of a Masters dissertation and that pseudonyms will be used. In addition, information letters were handed out to staff members. The consent forms and information letters are presented in Appendix 1.

Chapter Four: The YPAR process

4.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to explore the potential and role of young people in peace building through the implementation of youth-led participatory action research. This chapter presents the phases of the process from which the results were produced. The content of first sub-heading describes the study's recruitment procedure. Following this is an account of the entire process using the dates of the program as a chronological framework. The last sub-heading describes the intervention phase of both groups.

4.2 Recruiting participants

Section 3.5 of the research design and methodology chapter describes the sampling methods used for this study and offers a brief description of the process of participant selection. This section offers a more detailed account of the manner in which recruitment took place.

The emphasis placed on junior youth aged between 11 and 15 in the community building activities of the Baha'i international community is what inspired the researcher, a Baha'i herself, to work with this age group. The following quotation outlines the motivation behind the importance placed on the participation of junior youth:

While global trends project an image of this age group as problematic, lost in the throes of tumultuous physical and emotional change, unresponsive and self-consumed, the Baha'i community – in the language it employs and the approaches it adopts – is moving decidedly in the opposite direction, seeing in junior youth instead altruism, an acute sense of justice, eagerness to learn about the universe and a desire to contribute to the construction of a better world. (Universal House of Justice 2010: 4)

In South Africa, young people between the ages of 11 and 15 attend school in both primary and secondary level. As the initial point of contact that became the gatekeeper for the study was a teacher at Mayville Secondary, it was decided that the study would be implemented with learners only at this school to avoid potential limitations in terms of support for the study. Between the 15 and 24 June 2016 the teacher attempted to recruit ten female and ten male students in grades 8 and 9. Any learner in grade 10 or 11 aged 16+ who wanted to participate was given the opportunity to join as a volunteer.

The majority of learners were part of the school's Eco Club that the teacher convenes. This created a more manageable pool to recruit from as Mayville Secondary has approximately 1200 learners. The teacher invited prospective participants to meet with the researcher on Friday 24 June during break time. At this meeting the researcher was introduced and she explained the aims and purpose of the research, answered questions and discussed all matters pertaining to the assent form. In contrast to the researcher's request for a balance of male and female participants, a majority of the learners who came to the meeting were female Grade 9s, with a smaller number in Grade 8 and 10. There were significantly more female learners than male.

Consent forms were assigned to the twenty learners who committed to participating. These were to be signed by their guardians and returned to the researcher on Monday 27 June or Monday 4 July 2016 respectively. The twenty learners wrote their names and contact numbers on the assent forms that the researcher collected during the information meeting on the 24 June.

4.3 Group 1

Day 1: 27/6/16

Participants: 8 - 6 female, 2 male

On Monday 27 June 2016, the researcher and an isiZulu speaking graduate student research assistant arrived at Mayville Secondary to begin the YPAR program. The teacher was also present, as she had expressed willingness to oversee the activities that the learners were participating in where possible. 8 learners from Grade 9 ranging between 14 and 15 years of age joined on the first day - 6 were female and 2 were male.

Phase 1 – Pre-reflection

Section 3.2 on research design offers a detailed description of activities that comprised the phases of YPAR undertaken in this study. This phase of pre-reflection is modelled on a definition by Schensul and Berg (2004: 81) that describes it as a time in which participants can explore their own and other's identities in a safe environment and learn to negotiate diversity in terms of opinion or approach. Phase 1 on the first day started with warm-ups, also known as team building exercises or energisers. Our first meeting included name games, "doctor doctor" and "whoosh" - a fast paced kinaesthetic elimination game conducted with participants standing in a circle. Following the warm ups the researcher asked the participations for their ideas to create a common set of values.

COMMON VALUES

- CELLPHONE ON SILENT
- RESPECT EACH OTHER
- CLEANLINESS
- ALWAYS BE ON TIME
- DO NOT GIGGLE WITHOUT ANY JOKE
- TAKE PART IN EVERYTHING YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE TO DO.
- SPEAK UP
- SHARE IDEAS

Figure 4.1: Common set of values – Group 1

Phase 2 – Topic identification

The process of topic identification began with a practical activity titled *Making a community map* that was designed to get the participants thinking about their school and community in a critical way. This activity is described in more detail in section 3.2.6. Group members universally participated in the conceptualising and drawing aspect of this activity. During the presentation phase a total of four participants volunteered to explain their diagrams to the rest of the group.



Figure 4.2: Community and school base maps – Group 1

Using the community and school base maps as a springboard for topic identification, the researchers explained to the participants that this process is one that they are learning to be researchers too and that the contribution to building peace through researching a social

issue and then creating an intervention is an important task that they have the ability to undertake.

The group then broke into two and the participants were encouraged to identify and discuss some social issues. Unfortunately a robust discussion amongst the participants did not transpire despite the researcher, research assistant and teacher asking questions in an attempt to prompt participation. When we brought the groups back together the participants made a collective decision that the social issue they are most concerned about and that interests them most as a topic to research is teen pregnancy.

Day 2: 28/6/16

Participants: 9 - 8 female, 1 male

On the second day of the study one of the participants brought a friend who lives in the local area but attends Bechet Secondary in Sydenham. A 16-year-old female volunteer joined too. In addition, a young woman who runs a journalism program with several learners from the school and who is familiar with both the teacher and the researcher volunteered to come and facilitate the *Making a nest* activity described in section 3.2.5.

Phase 1 – Pre-reflection

After the warm-ups the researcher facilitated a series of trust games. Used by theatre practitioners, their implementation is designed to increase trust between members and to foster team spirit. One of these activities involves participants standing in two rows clasping a partner's hand across the space between the rows. One volunteer stands on a wall or chair and closes their eyes and free falls back first onto the row of clasped hands.

The *Making a nest* activity as a pre-reflection was designed to assist in developing practical capabilities in craft, group work, problem solving and critical thinking. The facilitator gave instructions and the participants set to work in three different groups to create a nest for their eggs. After the nests were dropped the facilitator did a debriefing and started off by

creating a respectful and inclusive mood by stating *“Everyone’s ideas are important.”* She then asked *“Like the words on the nest, what would make you feel safe talking in a group?”* A response from one of the participant’s was *“There’s no wrong or right, no discrimination like ‘that’s wrong’ – there’s communication and understanding.”*



Figure 4.3: *Making a nest* activity – Group 1

The participants were then asked to create dramatic presentations around the social issue they had identified the previous day. The researcher had brought simple costumes and the participants improvised their own props. The intention of this drama session was to enable the learners to move away from just talking about an issue but to interpret it expressively. The complexity and dynamic nature of the performances of these drama skits suggests this intention was fulfilled.



Figure 4.4: Drama skit 1 – Group 1



Figure 4.5: Drama skit 2 – Group 1

Phase 3 – Data gathering and interpretation

The participants had a group discussion led by the research assistant on how they would go about doing research on the social issue they had chosen. With her guidance, the participants decided to do a survey and made a draft of their questions with multiple-choice answers. The participants then decided that multiple-choice answers might limit the results and that they would rather use open questions.

The group decided that each of them would interview a total of three respondents - one male teenager, one female teenager and one adult. After the researcher typed out the survey she printed it upstairs in the teacher's classroom where there was an electric plug. When the printed surveys were brought back the researcher and the research assistant improvised a role-play showing one way to conduct an interview. They then asked for feedback from the participants about how they could improve the interviewer's techniques. Two participants volunteered to do their own role-plays of the different techniques we can use to conduct an interview. The intention behind this role-play was to prepare the participants for the interviews they were about to undertake.

What causes teen pregnancy?

- ☐ Sex at an early age
- ☐ rape
- ☐ Financial reasons
- ☐ influence

What are the effects of teen pregnancy?

- ☐ Conflict with family
- ☐ Shame
- ☐ Stop education
- ☐ poverty

How can we prevent teenage pregnancy?

- ☐ Abstain from sex
- ☐ protection & contraceptives
- ☐ Find other recreational activity
- ☐ Aggressive sex education & counsel at an early age

Figure 4.6: Teen pregnancy survey – first draft

Name of interviewer:

Age:

Gender:

1. What causes teen pregnancy?

2. What are the effects of teen pregnancy?

3. What can prevent it?

Figure 4.7: Teen pregnancy survey – final

Day 3: 29/6/16

Participants: 10 - 9 female, 1 male

One of the participants brought their 14-year-old cousin, also a learner at Mayville Secondary, to join the program and she stayed with the group up until the final intervention. In addition, the 16-year-old volunteer brought a 15-year-old neighbour who was in the area for the holidays.

Phase 1 – Pre-reflection

The participants independently started their own warm-ups on arrival. They played volleyball and *shumphu* - a dodge-ball game that traditionally only girls play. During the

following phase of data gathering, the participants engaged in a game of *If you...* as an energiser when they were midway through their results.

Phase 3 – Data gathering and interpretation

The participants were invited to share the findings from their interviews the previous day. Before starting, they were asked to consider the common set of values on the flip chart in order to foster a receptive and participatory mood for the session. The participants began sharing the results of the 23 surveys they had implemented and the researcher wrote them on the flip chart. Each member shared the answers they gathered to the first question before moving onto the second and the third. Included in each answer was the respondent's gender and age. A sample of the survey results is presented in Appendix 2.

Phase 4 – Plan of action

After wrapping up the results of their interviews, participants were asked to brainstorm the types of interventions they could do in order to make a contribution to prevent teen pregnancy. A collective decision was made to create a drama and poetry performance. They decided to perform at Bechet Secondary as one of the participants was attending the school and because Mayville Secondary is considered a tough crowd. The participants proceeded to begin working on this production and at the end of the session they gave the researcher a copy of the poem *Eish, Mama I'm pregnant*.

Day 4: 30/6/16

Participants: 12 – 11 female, 1 male

One of the participants brought a younger sibling who joined in for the remainder of the week's program. A female volunteer over the age of 16 came for the final two days.

Phase 1 – Pre-reflection

After a series of warm-up games, the researcher had planned a poster activity called *Integration/Disintegration* for the participants to engage in. Once the groups had finished their posters they displayed them on the wall and each group gave a short presentation of their work. More details about this activity are given in section 3.2.5. The posters are presented in Appendix 3.

Phase 4 – Plan of action

The researcher had reflected on the fact that following the drama intervention; the only record of it that could be shared might be a video or photographs. How these could be disseminated to other learners and members of the community remained unclear. She considered the possibility of creating a photo story and did some online research and to find samples of a photo stories to show to the participants. When the participants finished their rehearsal on Day 4 the researcher showed them a sample and asked if they would be interested in making something similar that could be displayed as a poster. As it happened, the participants showed considerable interest in creating a photo story of their own. They decided to start working on it the following day.

Day 5: 1/6/16

Participants: 13 – 12 female, 1 male

Today a male cousin of one of the participants joined in. In addition, a female friend came along with one of the participants. This day was action packed as there were several tasks to complete in order to finalise Phase 4 – Plan of Action.

Phase 1 – Pre reflection

The warm ups today were a fun and dynamic yoga class conducted by a professional instructor.

Phase 4 – Plan of action

The researcher showed the participants how to use the camera with the tripod. The entire group then proceeded to move around the school grounds making photographs of different scenes of the drama. When they came back the participants and the researcher went through the photos on a laptop and the ones they wanted to use for the final photo story were chosen. Due to time constraints the participants did not write the script and content. Instead, the researcher filmed the participants telling the story as they clicked through this sequence of photos.

They decided that the story would have the same title as the poem – *Eish, Mama I'm pregnant*. The participants then created slogan posters for a group photograph that would be included in the final poster.



Figure 4.8: Making the photo story – Group 1



Figure 4.9: Creating slogan posters – Group 1

Phase 6 – Post reflection/evaluation

Instead of asking participants to fill in evaluation forms individually, the researcher requested they get into pairs and take turns interviewing each other to give the process a more stimulating and interactive dynamic. The reason why the researcher prepared evaluation forms was to stimulate universal participation as using group discussion to conduct evaluation cannot guarantee this. A written evaluation gives all participants an opportunity to reflect and write their thoughts. The researcher is also able to obtain solid feedback from each individual. A selection of completed evaluation forms are presented in Appendix 4.

4.4 Group 2

Day 1: 4/7/16

Participants: 6 - 4 female, 2 male

On day 1 there were four participants, two female and two male. They were joined by two female volunteers both aged 17. The female participants were 13 and 15. Compared to the first week, the rate of attrition of prospective participants that had come forward during the recruitment phase was significant. Six female participants who had shown interest and committed to participating did not arrive on the first day.

Many of the activities that group 2 participated in were identical to those of group 1. To avoid repetition, the description of group 2's process of going through the phases of the YPAR program will focus mainly on any activities and dynamics that differ.

Phase 1 – Pre reflection

The researcher facilitated a selection of the same warm-up games as were conducted the previous week.

Phase 2 – Topic identification

The participants broke into two groups of three for the community and school base maps. The researcher decided to tweak this activity and instead of each group doing either the school or community for both the existing and ideal map, she asked the group who did the existing school map to draw the ideal community map and vice versa.

As there were only three participants presenting, each group member had an opportunity to describe different parts of the map. They decided to film their presentations on and members of the other group controlled the camera.



Figure 4.10: Presenting community and school base maps – Group 2

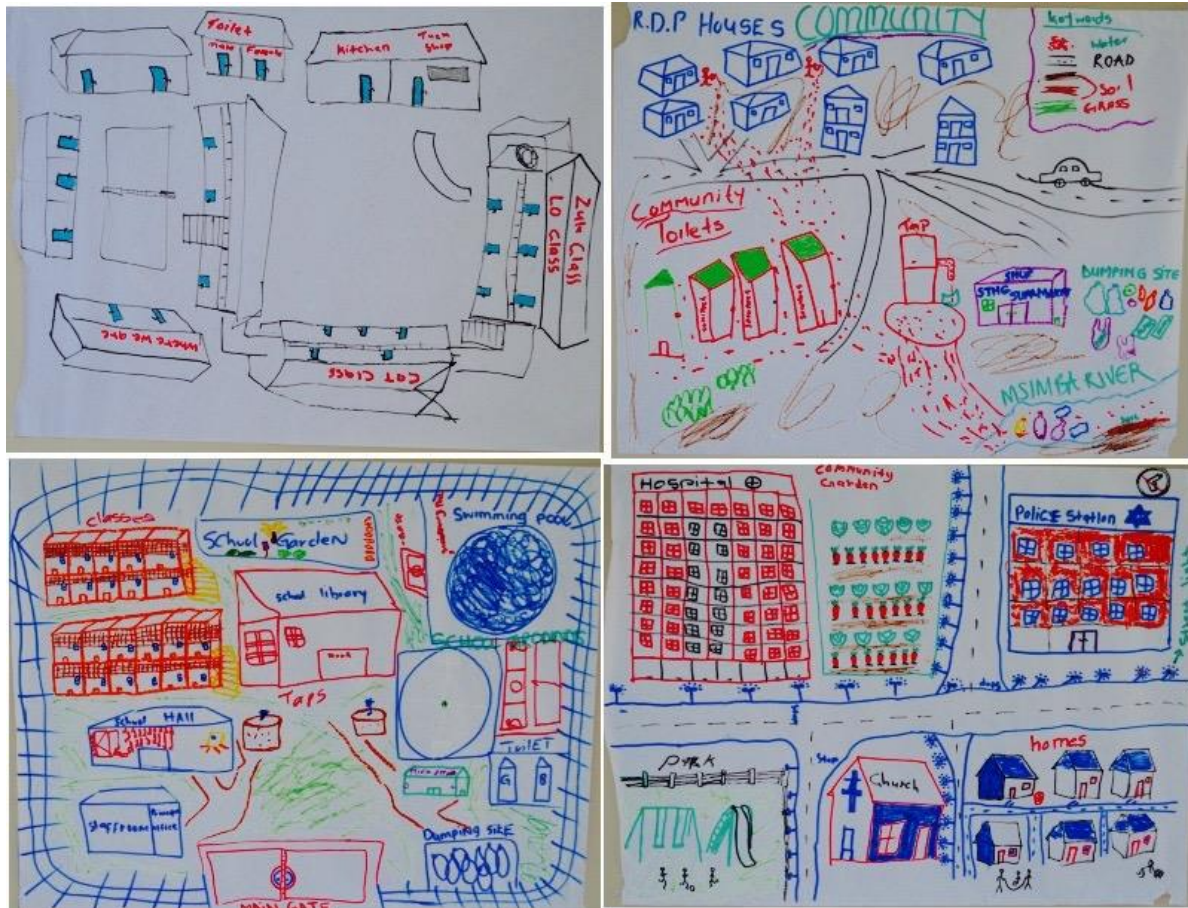


Figure 4.11: Community and school base maps – Group 2

Day 2: 5/7/16

Participants: 6 – 4 female, 3 male

One of the participants brought her 15-year-old sister and her two younger brothers tagged along too.

Phase 1 – Pre reflection

After the warm-ups, facilitation of the *Making a nest* activity began by the same volunteer as the previous week. The researcher and research assistant participated in order to increase the number of group members. In the debriefing discussion that followed, different ideas were shared about creating a safe space and connecting this to the qualities written on the nests. One participant shared “*If we are building a house and we have*

different ideas about how to do it we have to respect other people.” The participants also talked about how we should share our ideas, and be fair, trustworthy, honest, respectful and listen to each other.



Figure 4.12: *Making a nest* activity – Group 2

Phase 2 – Topic identification

The participants stood in a circle around the flip chart to identify the social issues that are prevalent in their environment. After making a list of 14 social issues, they circled the ones they would like to tackle (see Figure 4.15). The participants did their own writing on the flip chart, a contrast to the previous week where the researcher and research assistant would usually write. This may have been reflection of the overall maturity of the group, a smaller group size, and the willingness of the adults to relinquish this responsibility given their increased level of experience facilitating the YPAR program. Another aspect to note about this brainstorming session was that there was a high level of participation of individual participants.

Following the brainstorm session, the group set about creating one drama skit that incorporated some of the social issues they had selected. This was in contrast to group 1 who made two separate dramas. Group 2's participant's recorded this with different group members taking turns behind the camera.



Figure 4.13: Filming the drama skit – Group 2

Day 3: 6/7/16

Participants: 8 – 6 female, 2 male

A 16-year-old female volunteer who had played a prominent role working with the participants in the first week returned to participate along with her 15-year-old friend. In addition, one of the male participants brought an 18-year-old female friend.

Phase 3 – Data gathering and interpretation

Following the warm-ups, participants sat on the floor on yoga mats and began to discuss how they would research the social issues they had identified and presented in their drama skit the previous day. First the participants decided that even though they had listed many issues, the one that they wanted to do research and specifically target in their implementation was that of “blessers.” They discussed different ways of researching, including using the Internet and doing interviews. They decided to create a questionnaire, finalising their questions and multiple-choice answers on the flipchart. A decision was made to include a section on the questionnaire for writing notes on what respondents say.

Mayville Secondary Peace Educators Survey

1. What are the causes of blessers?

- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Greed
- ✓ Inequality
- ✓ High life

2. Are blessers the main cause of teenage pregnancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS?

- ✓ Yes
- ✓ No

3. How can young men and young women stop blessers?

- ✓ With violence
- ✓ Awareness campaigns
- ✓ Income generation through small business
- ✓ Being supportive and encouraging each other

4. Why doesn't the community care?

- ✓ Each family looks out for their own family
- ✓ Parents have given up
- ✓ No information or resources
- ✓ Children on drugs can't be controlled

Notes:

Figure 4.14: “Blesser” questionnaire – final

The researcher typed out the survey and printed it in the staff room where there was an electric plug. After bringing back the printed copies, role-plays were improvised by the researcher and research assistant and then by the participants on how to conduct an interview.

Phase 1 - Pre-reflection

On this day, instead of warm-ups, a graduate student volunteer (not the research assistant) conducted a session of the martial art Capoeira facilitated. The participants then sat down again on the yoga mats for a haiku writing and reading session that the researcher facilitated.

Day 4: 7/7/16

Participants: 7 female

Two new participants attended today, one was visiting family in the area and the other was a friend. In addition, a 17-year-old female volunteer joined for the final two days of the program. All of the participants today were female.

Phase 1 – Pre reflection

Following warm-ups, the participants split into three groups for the *Integration/disintegration* poster activity. The researcher asked the 16-year-old volunteer to facilitate as she had engaged with the activity the previous week. Once the groups had finished these posters they were displayed on the wall and participants discussed them. The posters are presented in Appendix 3.



Figure 4.15: Disintegration/Integration activity – Group 2

Phase 3 – Data gathering and interpretation

With little involvement from the researcher, the seven participants present collated the data from their 17 questionnaires in a manner of their own choosing. They chose to tally the answers from the 4 questions numerically and compiled the interview notes into a mind map. The questionnaire results are presented in Appendix 2. A long and in-depth conversation, led by the participants, emerged from this process.



Figure 4.16: Compiling the results of the questionnaire – Group 2

Phase 4 – Plan of action

The researcher asked the participants what they would like to do as an intervention to the social issue they identified and conducted research on. They decided they would like to perform a play for the Eco Club after the holidays. They assigned themselves roles, including director and costume designer.

Day 5: 8/7/16

Participants: 7 – 1 male and 6 female

Phase 1 – Pre reflection

The warm ups today were conducted by a professional children's yoga instructor. She facilitated physical energisers before conducting a session of yoga that was different from the standard adult style as the participants engaged with collective activities through the postures, both as a team and in pairs.

Phase 4 – Plan of action

The participants started curating and rehearsing their dramatic performance. The researcher observed them using a “workshopping” technique of developing their scenes through improvisation.



Figure 4.17: “Workshopping” the drama skit – Group 2

Phase 6 – Post reflection/evaluation

Like the previous week, the participants were asked to get into pairs to complete evaluation forms. The results of the evaluation forms are presented in Appendix 4.

4.5 Intervention phase

This section will present the results of the interventions that the groups implemented. The following passages will focus first on describing the drama performances, followed by the corresponding photo story posters

It shall be noted here that the creation of group 2's poster was prompted by the completion and display of group 1's in the school foyer and geography teacher's classroom. The members of group 2 expressed their desire to follow suit and together made time to take the photos and compile the captions and speech bubbles. As with group 1, the researcher implemented the design and printing of the posters.

Group 1: Drama performance

The researcher had made a prior arrangement with the vice-principal at Bechet Secondary to allow group 1 to perform at an assembly. The audience comprised all the learners in grade 8 due to the perceived receptivity and need for such interventions amongst this age group. A majority of them were speakers of isiZulu.



Figure 4.18: Audience at Bechet Secondary

The performers comprised 11 female participants. The majority were 14-years-old, aside from 2 volunteers aged 16 and 17 respectively. The participant who is a learner at Bechet

Secondary joined the group upon their arrival. We were warmly welcome by the vice-principal who guided us to the school hall. The participants congregated in the changing room back stage and began preparing their costumes for the performance. The researcher set up the tripod and camera while the audience members were filing in. The vice-principal then introduced the participants and their peacebuilding initiative before handing over to the 16-year-old female who had taken on the role of master of ceremonies. She introduced the themes and issues that were to be presented in the drama performance.

The aim of this section is to describe the intervention as a whole and not to present a full plot summary or ethnographic analysis. The performance was based on the same plot as the photo story featured in Figure 5.22. All participants had a role to play, but in some scenes shyness and unfamiliarity with the setting resulted in some clinging to the back of the stage thus making their words and actions less perceptible, more so as there was only one microphone. This was understandable as the group had directed and produced it themselves without any adult interference and any prior rehearsal on this particular stage. Overall, however, the message was not lost as demonstrated by the laughter and reactions coming from the audience. Most of the performance was conducted in isiZulu, but the poetry segment was in English.



Figure 4.19: Scene from the performance at Bechet Secondary

The group had prepared a dynamic and participatory way of presenting the poetry that seamlessly merged with the final scene of the drama. While *Aunt Thobile* is comforting *Zinzi*, performers came from the wings one by one to recite different sections of the poem *Eish, Mama I'm pregnant*.



Figure 4.20: *Aunt Thobile* comforts *Zinzi* while performers take turns reciting the poem

After the poem concluded, the 16-year-old volunteer interacted with the audience by getting them involved in a call and response rap that features the lyrics: “*Choose a heart – choice, choose a voice – choice, choose the mind – choice, choose to use voice.*” She then delivered the following rap:

*When I'm angry I write, I'm not always right but I try to be right when I write.
Give someone a choice to embrace their voice so they find peace with their
voice.
Let the peace increase, let the violence decrease, let the haters see that its
time to make peace.*

The audience met the performers with enthusiastic applause and the group bowed and returned to the dressing room. After changing back into school uniform, the participants were invited by the vice-principal to go to the principal's office for a brief introduction. Before the learners returned to Mayville Secondary, the researcher attempted to do a brief focus group to evaluate the participant's reactions to their experience of performing and their thoughts about its overall impact on the audience. Unfortunately, she was unable to prompt their engagement in a verbal dialogue and there was not enough time to employ another method as they had to return to school.

Group 1: Poster

Group 1's poster had two parts that were joined side by side during printing. Figure 4.21 presents the photo story *Eish, Mama I'm pregnant*. The second half of the poster shown in Figure 4.22 features the corresponding poem that was also used in the drama performance. Below it is the group photo with participants holding their slogan posters. The A1 size poster was displayed in a prominent place in Mayville Secondary's lobby and in the geography teacher's classroom. An A2 size copy was presented to each participant, along with a certificate of participation, during a school assembly after the intervention phases of both groups were completed.

“Eish...Mama I’m pregnant”

A photostory by Mayville Secondary Peace Club



Figure 4.21: Photo story – Group 1

“Eish...Mama I’m pregnant” –a poem by Sane Shange^[7]

It was the start of something great
Made me feel like a flame
Wishing I could fly into the sky
To shout out I'm in love
But sadly it was all a game
Eish.....Mama I'm pregnant...

I tried to fight what I thought was
Feelings of love
But damn they were too strong
Not even the Umngeni dam could
Hold this flood of emotions
But look where am at
Eish....Mama I'm pregnant

They say in life if there's no problem
It's like a school with no education
There's no lesson you could learn
You taught me to stay true to myself
Even though there won't be anyone to
keep me
Except me myself and I.....but
Eish.....Mama I'm pregnant

Division, conflict, confusion
All hit me at the same time
Just right when I thought there was
nothing left
I just stood right there in that
doctor's office
Thinking how am I gonna tell her?
Eish.....Mama I'm pregnant

Now he doesn't agree that the baby is his
Now it's hard he's the only one I ever loved
I've brought shame, disrespect
And judgement of your parenting skills
Ma, I hope one day you'll forgive me
because...
Eish.....Mama I'm pregnant



Figure 4.22: Poem and group photo with slogan posters – Group 1

Group 2: Drama performance

Group 2 had previously made a decision to perform their drama within Mayville Secondary for the Eco Club. The club met at the geography teacher's classroom on a weekly basis during break-time. The performance was to take place at this time and in this venue. The performers numbered 6. All were aged 16 and 17 except from 1 who was 15. There were 2 males and 4 females. A male volunteer from the Eco Club took the photos of the performance featured in Figures 4.23 and 4.24. The group set up their stage and costumes while the audience comprising around 20 learners of a variety of ages were seated. This was less than expected as many were not notified in time.

One of the female group members, who had volunteered to be in charge of costumes, introduced the themes and issues that were to be presented in the performance. The other five members enacted the same plot as the photo story in Figure 4.26. As with the description of group 1's intervention phase, a plot summary will not be provided, as the aim of this section is merely to describe the intervention.



Figure 4.23: Introducing the performance

The performance was conducted predominantly in isiZulu. The participants had rehearsed the piece several times and this came through in their performance. They were well prepared, knew the message they wanted to put across and were able to express themselves convincingly and confidently. The results were powerful and dynamic, and the audience responded well to their presentation, the acting, costumes and props. The teacher also praised their efforts to raise awareness around the issue of “blessers” through the medium of drama in such an effective way. She also noted that some of the learners who are normally shy came to the fore during this performance.



Figure 4.24: Scene from performance at Mayville Secondary

Group 2: Poster

Group 2's poster was created after the participants had seen the results of group 1's poster and had made a specific request to make one of their own. Therefore, unlike group 1

where the process of creating the poster began during the week long YPAR program, group 2's was created and finalised over a month later. This is the reason why its creation is discussed here and not described previously.

The researcher confirmed a time to bring the camera and tripod so that the photographs of the scenes could be made. Two additional male learners assisted with the camera. The participants set about photographing the scenes they wanted to include in the photo story. Following this they selected the images they wanted to use and what the text and speech bubbles should say. They also took a group photo for the poster.



Figure 4.25: Making the photo story – Group 2

Figure 4.26 presents Group 2's photo story entitled *#Why blessers must fall*. Like Group 1, the poster was displayed in a prominent place in Mayville Secondary's foyer and in the

geography teacher's classroom. In addition, a copy was presented to each participant at a special assembly.



Figure 4.26: Photo story – Group 2

Chapter Five: YPAR in practice: Exploring five emergent themes

5.1 Introduction

Thematic analysis can be used to make interpretations of data by describing what is going on within it. In *Research with children: Theory and practice*, authors O'Reilly, Dogra and Ronzoni (2013: 223) state that a theme is “something that captures something important about the data and thus relates to the research question in a patterned way.” Identifying and describing some of the themes that emerged during the YPAR phases conducted in this study can offer understanding into how the local context of the study and the lived experience of the participants drove their *implementation* phase. The following sub-headings describe five key themes that emerged from the data gathered.

5.2 Theme 1: The importance of security and safety

A recurring issue that was expressed by participants was the importance of safety and security. They identified that security at the school, in their neighbourhoods and by local police was inadequate and that they often felt unsafe in their surroundings. The following sub-headings present the participant's views on factors that fall under the general theme of security and safety.

5.2.1 Personal safety

During the researcher's first meeting at Mayville Secondary to discuss the aims and objectives of the study, the teacher stated that the school and the community in which the school is situated would certainly value an initiative centring on peacebuilding. She talked about a dreadful tragedy that had happened within the past couple of years in which a learner from the school had been stabbed and killed by another learner. Her view was that their having the same surname – which in many cultures implies that they belong to the same family – is a particularly horrific aspect of this incident.

During the course of the YPAR study, personal safety was frequently expressed as an issue. One of the ways participants articulated this was through the creation of a map of their ideal community which had “...street lights everywhere we go, even at night” because “a high percentage of crime which is caused by dark roads. You could be followed by someone.” In Figure 5.1, the words *street light* are written on the far right hand side and blue street lights line the roads.



Figure 5.1: Ideal community map – Group 2

Participants also conveyed their concern about the risks of public sanitation facilities “You can get mugged, even raped, when you go to the toilet at night. There must be toilet inside and water inside because it’s too far. That needs to be sorted.” The issue of mugging appears in one of the posters made during the *Integration/Disintegration* activity. Figure 4.2 features the words *stealing* and *robbery* and *violent attacks*. The words *killing a friend* on the left hand side appear as a solemn echo to the incident the teacher described.

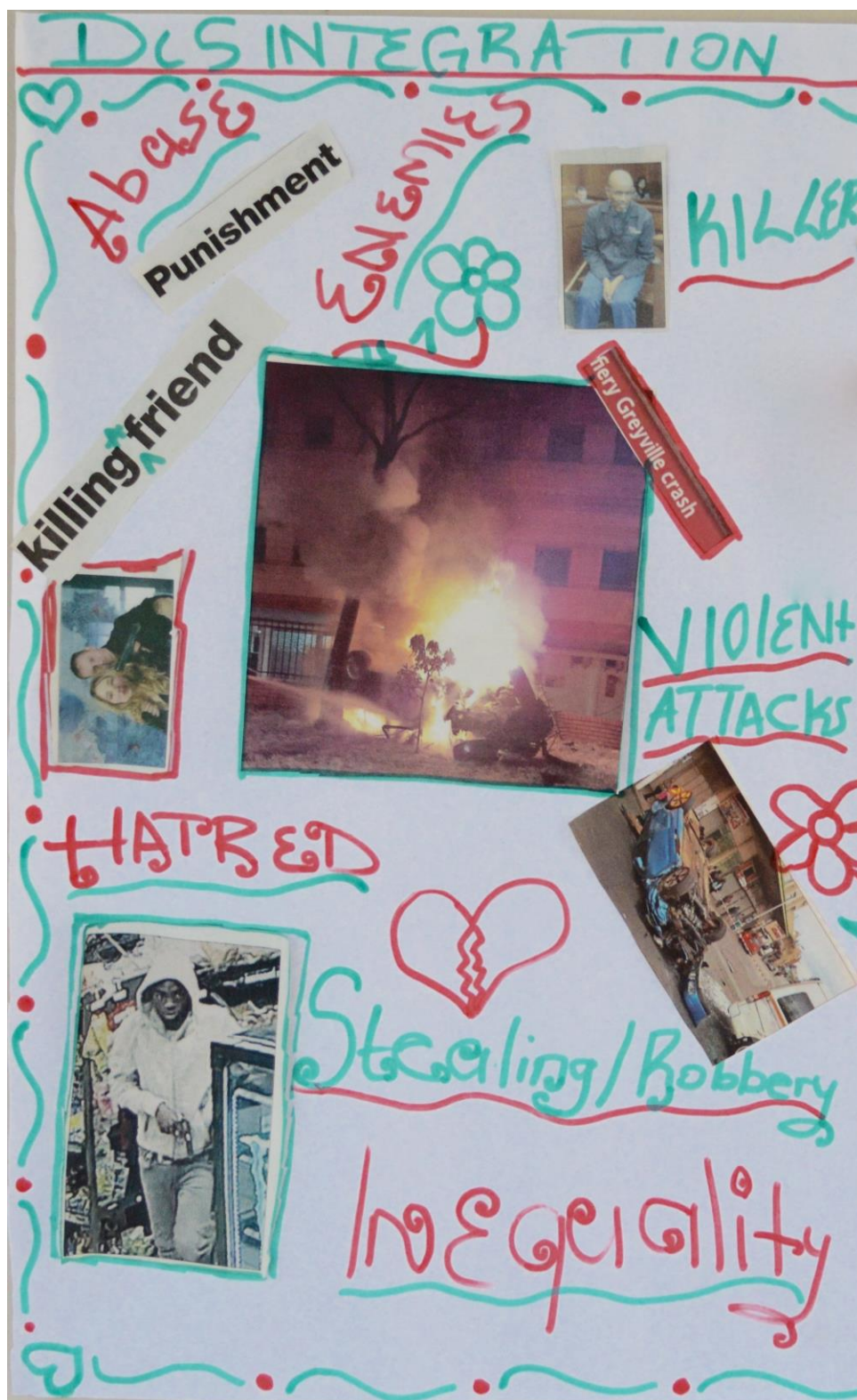


Figure 5.2: Disintegration poster – Group 2

In Figure 5.3, the author of *#rapemustfall* has adapted the viral hash tag initially made popular by the *#feesmustfall* campaign. Although Figure 5.4 is not explicitly about rape, the

idea that *you have a right to say no to sex* can be viewed as a powerful statement against sexual violence, which can be considered the ultimate violation of personal safety.



Figure 5.3: *#RAPE MUST FALL* – Group 1

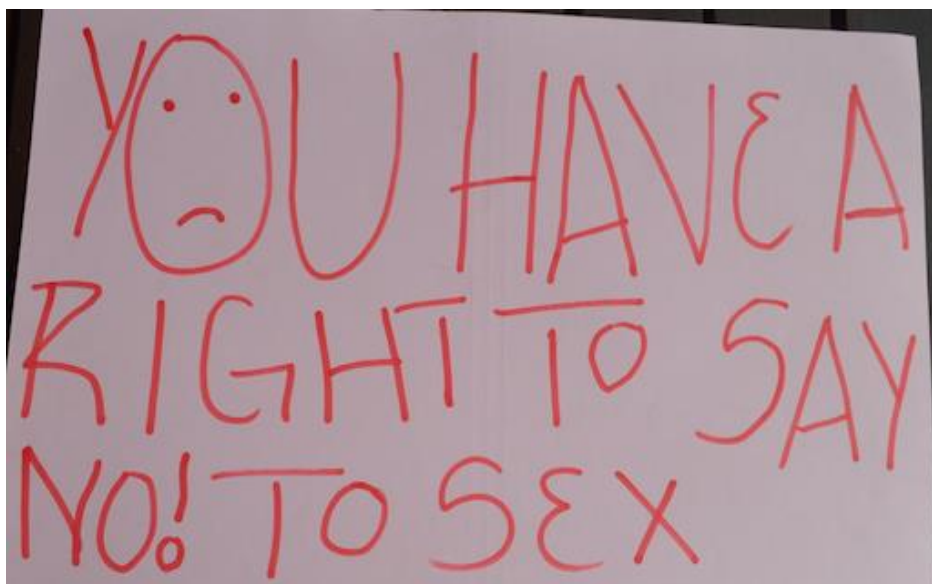


Figure 5.4: *YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO SAY NO! TO SEX* – Group 1

5.2.2 Security at school

Section 2.5.1 offers insight into issues of violence in South African schools. Half of all 12-22 year olds personal property theft occurs at schools that are the second most common location for assault after the streets. Often this can be linked to corporal punishment. One of the participants said *"They beat us with a pipe on the butt and the hands, the teachers. I know it's illegal but they do it. It keeps the kid in line."* The researcher witnessed corporal punishment, as did hundreds of other students who were exiting the gate at the time. Its application appears to be a normalised aspect of the school's disciplinary culture. Some of the perpetrators are not teachers, but thuggish "security" men who monitor things like punctuality and uniforms. Corporal punishment is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.3.

In addition to internal violence, the threat of criminal elements such as drug dealers and thieves was a consideration for the group who created Figure 5.5. At the top is an electric sliding gate with wheels. Participants in group 2 even drew a fence all the way around their ideal school map. When presenting Figure 5.6, group members said *"There must be only one gate – no potshos (places where people can trespass). If there are many gates, strangers come in without the permission of the school and steal."*



Figure 5.5: Ideal school map – Group 1

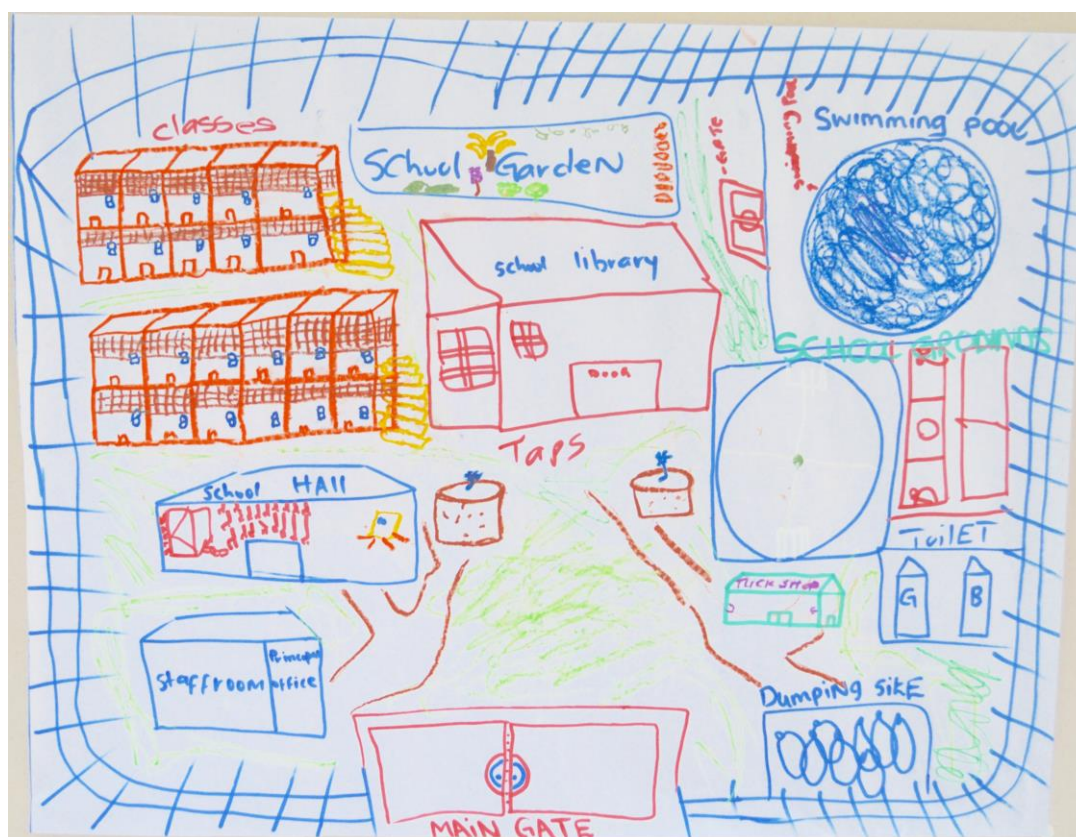


Figure 5.6: Ideal school map – Group 2

5.2.3 Law enforcement

A participant in group 1 said, “We want to have police stations with police that we can trust in the community. We don’t wanna have police officers who are friends with people who are destroying our future, like criminals. We don’t want police who will be working as drug dealers.” This statement prompted a further investigation of the visual data for other clues into the participants general views on this theme. Both the *ideal community maps* feature prominent police stations (Figures 4.1 and 4.7). Interesting to note is the *no gun* sign in the top right hand corner by the police station in Figure 4.1. Through further analysis of the *Integration/Disintegration* posters, it was determined that all the photos featuring specifically men who are armed and wearing military or police uniform were placed under the heading *disintegration*. Some examples are featured below in Figure 4.8.

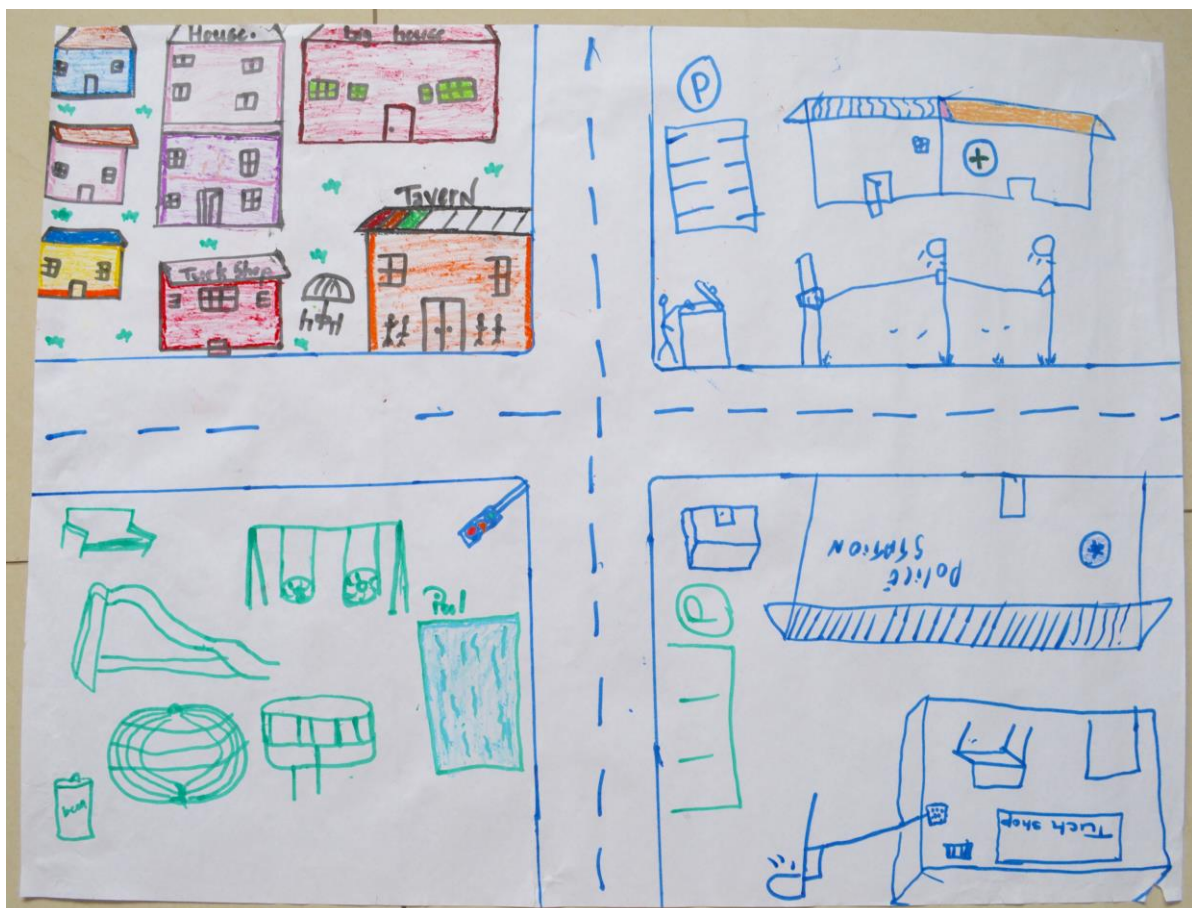


Figure 5.7: *Ideal community map* – Group 1

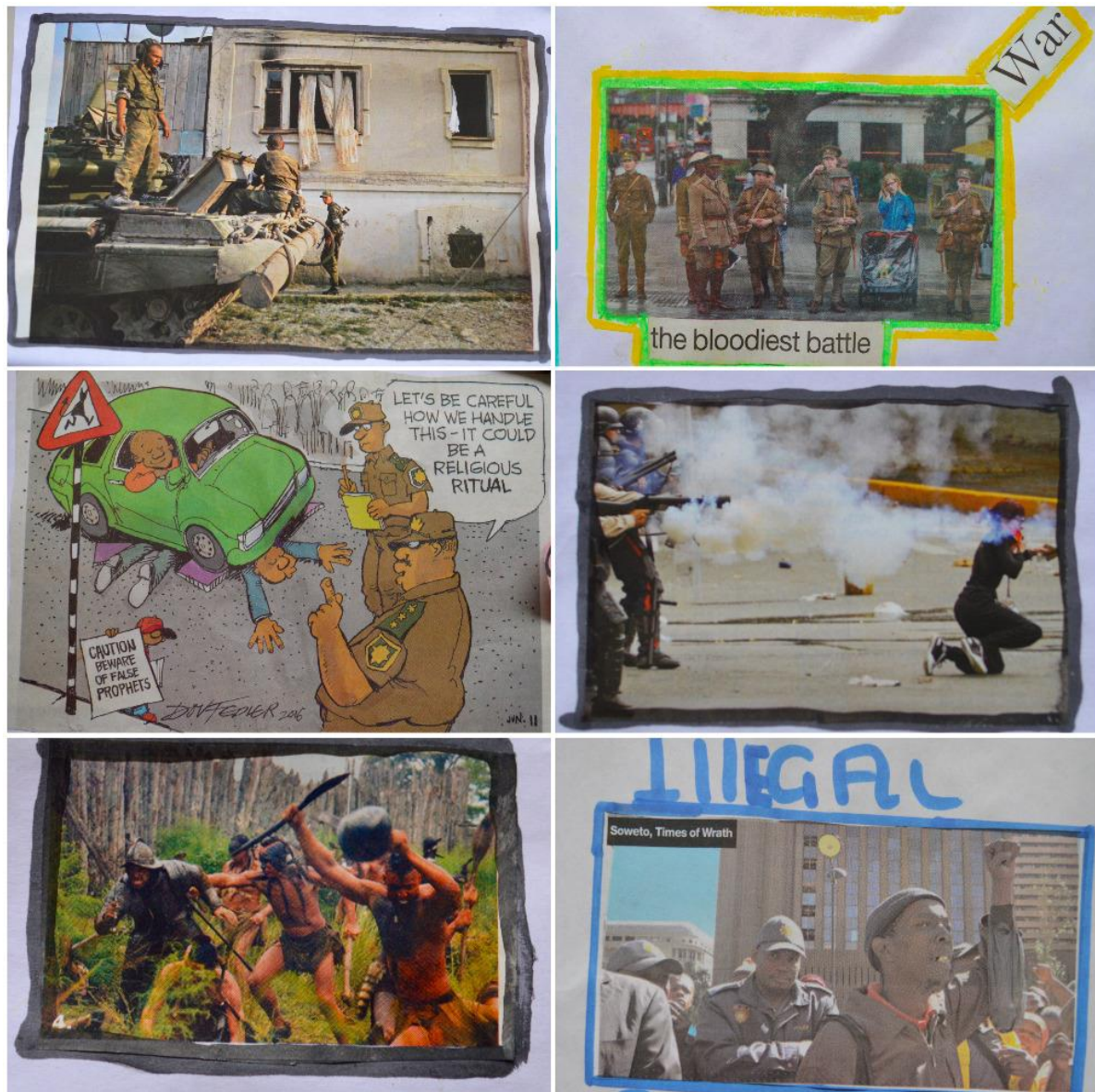


Figure 5.8: Images from the *Disintegration* poster activity – Group 1 and 2

5.3 Theme 2: Using violence to solve problems

Some of the images in Figure 5.8 depict the use of violence as a means to solve problems. Participants chose to place these images in the category of *disintegration*, denoting a negative perception of this phenomenon. If viewed in the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model described in Section 2.3, the use of violence in law enforcement would fit into the *societal* and *community* categories. The use of violence on the level of the *individual* and their *relationships* was a recurring theme throughout the research,

particularly in the context of creating drama skits and photo stories. The following sections will discuss the situations whereby participants expressed through drama the use of violence as a means to solve problems.

5.3.1 Parents

The first parent to be depicted in a drama skit beat up her daughter after finding out she had been seeing a “blesser.” The moment captured in Figure 5.9 shows this violent reaction. Participants from group 2 would often mention that some of their mother’s are very strict, even using violence like the movie character “Madea” whose African American “mammy” trope is well known for using beatings and threats to discipline family members. Violence between two mothers of teenage classmates is depicted in Figure 5.10.



Figure 5.9: Screenshot of drama skit – Group 1

Participants in group 2 talked about family members who had been imprisoned: *“My dad is in prison for 15 years. This is his second year. He killed two people and I don’t know why. Am actually thinking of going there [to the prison] in December to find out the whole story.”* Another described the circumstances surrounding her father’s incarceration: *“My father*

was arrested for beating up a taxi driver who wanted to shoot him and so he fought back. He stayed in prison for 1 month”

5.3.2 Peers

The use of violence as a means to solve problems amongst peers is seen in Figure 4.11.

Zinzi is shoving Lethiwe away from Zinzi’s boyfriend Sakhile who Lethiwe is dancing with.

This scene is part of the same drama skit that group 1 developed into a photo story. This scene contrasts with a separate discussion during group 2 in which a participant said about her male peers, *“For these teen boys the only thing they think solves problems is violence.”*

However in Figure 5.11 we can see it is teenage girls who are fighting.



Figure 5.10: Frame 13 from *Eish, Mama I’m pregnant* photo story – Group 1



Figure 5.11: Frame 15 from *Eish Mama, I'm Pregnant* photo story – Group 1

5.3.3 Teachers

The screenshot in Figure 4.12 is a scene from a drama skit where a teacher confiscates a student's phone using physical force. This scenario was also featured in group 1's photo story. Contextual factors around the use of corporal punishment are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.2.



Figure 5.12: Frame 3 from *Eish Mama, I'm Pregnant* photo story – Group 1

5.4 Theme 3: The role of the family

"If you are clean it means you represent your family very well to other people."

On a number of occasions, the topic of the role of the family and the responsibilities both parents and young people have to each other emerged. Two aspects of this topic will be discussed in this section.

5.4.1 Representing your family well

Mrs Gungxwana, the fictional teacher found in Figure 5.12, said the above quote to the class during one of the drama skits. The idea of representing your family well and not bringing them any shame emerged again when a participant in group 1 described the consequences one young woman received when she became pregnant out of wedlock for the second time, *"The second child was with an older man old enough to be her grandfather. Her family covered up her shame and took her back to the farm."*

5.4.2 Parents talk to us!

The participant in Figure 5.13 made this poster to illustrate that parents speaking to young people is part of the solution to issues such as teen pregnancy. The 16-year-old protagonist

in group 2's photo story (Figure 5.14) attributed her poverty in part to having lost both parents. As the story unfolds, the main character runs into all sorts of trouble that she might have been better able to avoid if her family and parents were present.



Figure 5.13: *PARENTS TALK TO US! #TEEN PREGNANCY MUST FALL!* – Group 1



Figure 5.14: Frame 1 from *#Why Blessers Must Fall* photo story – Group 2

5.5 Theme 4: Peer pressure

“These days sex is a fashion and some of us don’t want to lose our friends. We grew up with our friends since grade 1 and now they experiencing it and we want to as well. Actually we don’t, but due to our friends...”

Peer pressure is an additional theme that emerged during the YPAR process. Figure 5.15 is a list from a brainstorming session from Week 2. Peer pressure is cited as one of several social issues that participants identified as preventing peace. It is one of the circled points that group 2 decided to address in their drama and photo story.

In the story the participants developed, *Sthembile* complained of being broke and her friend *Asiphe* introduced her to a “blesser,” encouraging *Sthembile* to get involved with him. Even though both *Sthembile* and *Asiphe* did for a short time enjoy the fruits of *Sthembile’s* “blessee-dom,” (see Figure 5.16) her friend’s advice led to *Sthembile* being raped, infected with HIV and ultimately becoming a teenage mum.

As the story unfolds, another peer – this time the local drug dealer *Thulani* – pressures *Sthembile* into taking drugs to deal with her woes (see Figure 5.17). Additionally, the author of the poster in Figure 5.18 also linked the issues of peer pressure and teen pregnancy.

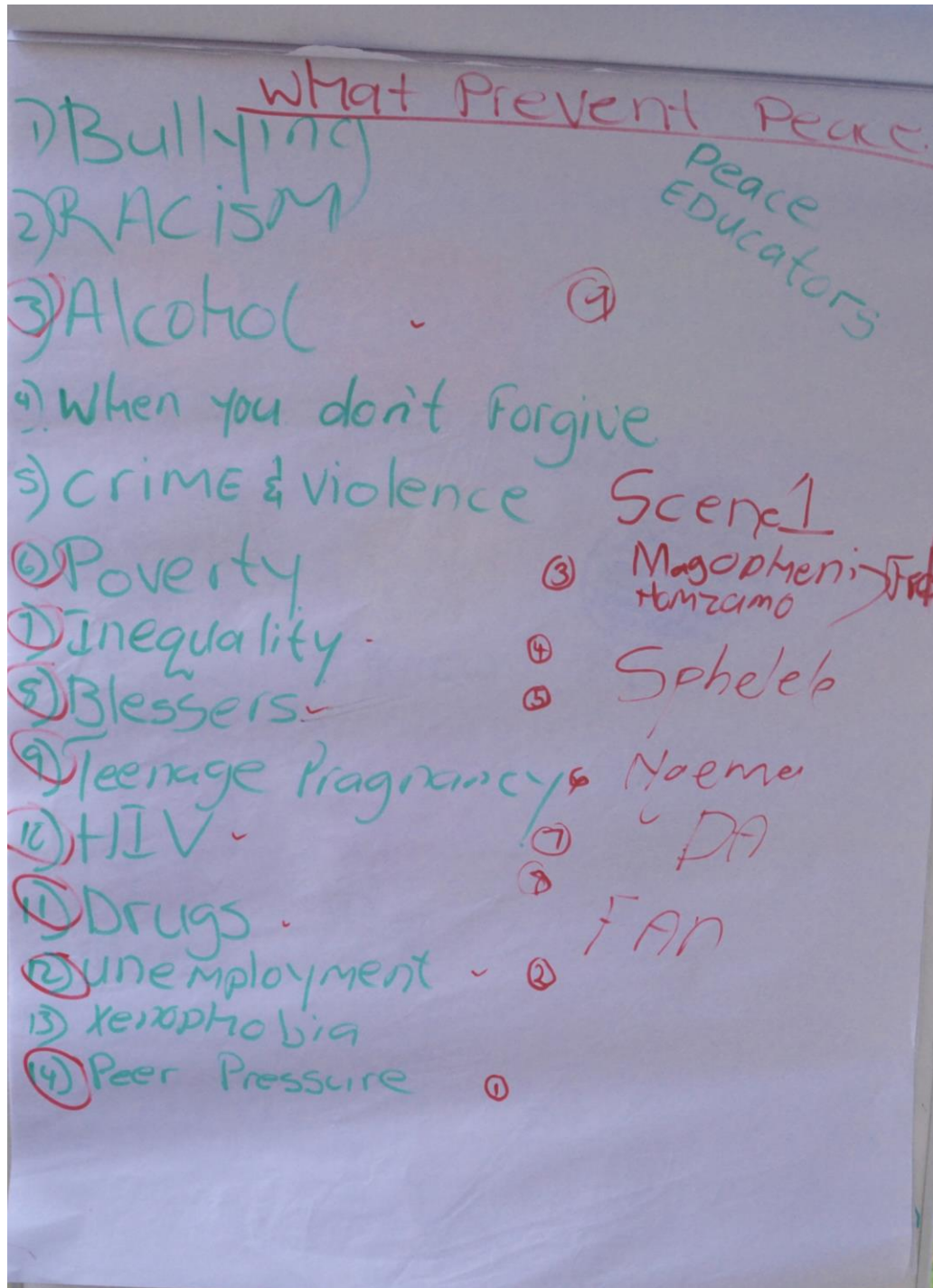


Figure 5.15: *What Prevent Peace* – Flipchart notes – Group 2



Figure 5.16: Frame 4 from *#Why Blessers Must Fall* photo story – Group 2



Figure 5.17: Frames 15 and 16 from *#Why Blessers Must Fall* photo story – Group 2



Figure 5.18: *#Say No To Peer Pressure #Teenage Pregnancy Must Fall* – Group 1

5.6 Theme 5: The “blesser” phenomenon

“First it was your sugar daddy, now it’s blesser. Next thing you know they’ll be called presidents...”

The final theme that will be discussed in this chapter is the “blesser” phenomenon.

“Blesser” is a newly coined South African slang term for a man who offers support, typically financial and material, to a young female “blessee” in exchange for sex and companionship. While many sections of South African society view this culture as socially abhorrent, poverty has normalised it to the extent that 14% female tertiary students are reported to be involved in transactional relationships (SABC 2016). Transactional sex is widely reported to elevate young women’s exposure to HIV and is one of the gendered structural drivers of the disease.

A 16 year old participant in Week 1 described her first interaction with a “blesser,” “I was accompanying my sister to the salon and was waiting outside. This man old enough to be my granddad stops in front of me in his car and was like come here and showed me a couple of R200s. I just said hell no, leave me alone. He called me foolish for refusing. I told him my mum has more money! From my point of view it’s a mid-life crisis.”



Figure 5.19: #BLASSERS MUST FALL!!! WE DON'T NEED BLASSERS – Group 1

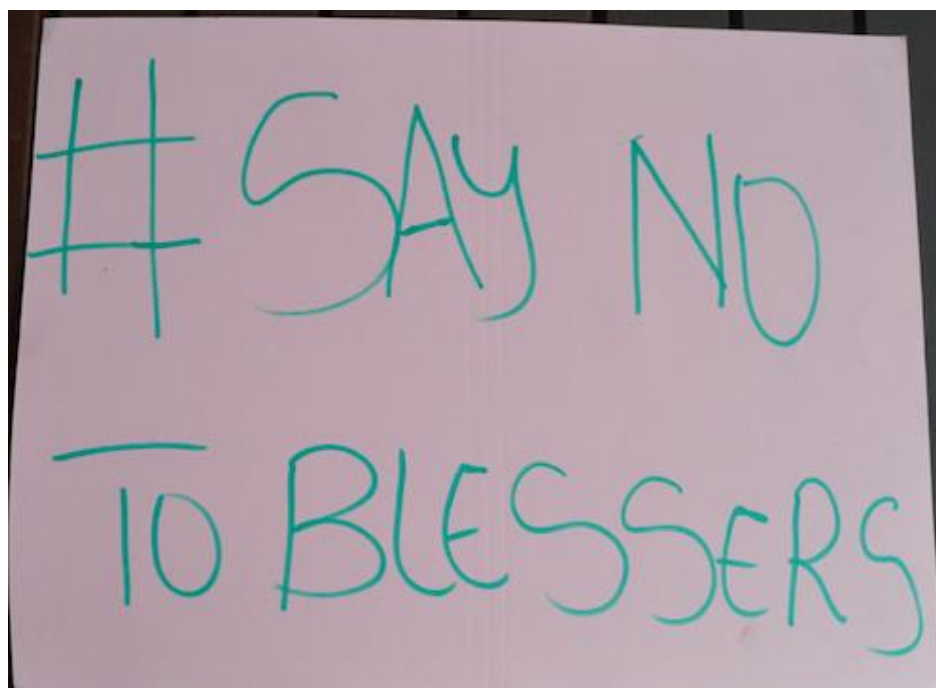


Figure 5.20: *#SAY NO TO BLESSERS* – Group 1

Group 1 created the slogan posters shown above as part of their intervention. Week 2 went a step further and based their entire intervention on the issue of “blessers.” The 16 year old protagonist in *#Why Blessers Must Fall* unwittingly falls prey to a “blesser” who sexually assaults her as “payment” for his gifts (see figure 5.21).



Figure 5.21: Frames 9-12 from *#Why Blessers Must Fall* photo story – Group 2

The reason group 2 chose to focus on this issue could be due to their average age of 16, compared to group 1 in which the average age of the participants is 14. Group 2 may have felt compelled to address specifically the issue of “blessers” as their age group might identify more with romantic relationships due to the phase they are at in their adolescence. One of the participants suggested that often girls themselves find “blessers:” *“Do you know us girls will be like ‘no teens bore me, I want someone who is older, who will treat me well, who is not too jealous and will take me out.’ In some situations it’s the girls who go to the blessers themselves. A guy my own age is too jealous.”*

5.7 Summary and conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to impart a range of themes that emerged from the data gathered during the YPAR process. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to systematically present the activities, comments and lived experiences of both groups of participants that in turn influenced the *implementation* phase of their research. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that participants are keenly aware of the

adverse effects of violence and the corresponding lack of safety and security in their school and community. In particular, a negative perception of the use of violence to solve problems was expressed. Participants also shared their views on the role of their families and the effects of peer pressure. The final theme determines some of the causes and consequences that participants identified that perpetuate the “blesser” phenomenon.

Chapter Six: YPAR as a framework for building peace: findings and discussion

6.1 Introduction

We entered the study with a specific question - how can YPAR be used to develop the potential of young people as peacebuilders? In an attempt to answer this question, the following chapter aims to discuss the findings of this YPAR study. First the chapter will look at the results of the study in terms of the strengths of young people as peacebuilders, constraints they experience and how their capacity can be strengthened. The next section examines points of similarity and points of contrast between this study and the findings of other similar studies. A short section follows this on how validity and reliability was strengthened during the study. Reflections on the intervention phase and some of the challenges and limitations will then be discussed before the chapter ends with some concluding thoughts on the findings and outcomes of the study.

6.2 Strengths of young people as peace builders

A key principle in which this research is grounded is that young people have specific strengths as peacebuilders. This section describes some of these strengths in reference to experiences of the YPAR program and relates them to relevant points made in previous chapters of this dissertation.

Awareness of their reality

Section 2.7, *Moving from deficit to asset*, discussed one of the strengths of young people as peacebuilders as being first hand knowledge of the local environment, their own reality and that of their peers. According to Del Felice and Wisler (2007: 25), youth see a completely different reality from adults and therefore their perspective on any matter pertaining to them should be considered.

This principle is reflected in the participant's engagement with artistic media such as *integration/disintegration*, *drama skits* (see section), *making a community/school base map*, (see section 3.2.4) and making *slogan posters* (see section 3.2.8). The participant's had in-depth knowledge of personal safety in their local environment, security at school as well as specific insights regarding the weaknesses of law enforcement, the pervasiveness of parents, teachers and peers using violence to solve problems, on their families, peer pressure and the "blesser" phenomenon (see Chapter 4 on *YPAR in practice: emerging themes*). Their insights show an acute awareness of their own reality, as well as that of their peers and the local environment.

Resourcefulness and resilience

A strength that was also discussed in section 2.7 of the literature review is the resourcefulness of young people to become active in their own lives and to positively influence their peers, families, schools and communities despite the challenges and hardships they face. This is closely linked to resilience as the participants in this study confront various challenges related to the issue of violence (see section 2.2, *The extent of violence in South Africa*) and the majority come from single-parent families, have responsibilities towards their younger siblings and household, as well as various other social and cultural pressures. Despite these challenges and a myriad more, experiences with this particular group found that the participants were willing to make a difference towards improving their own lives and the lives of others, and the resourcefulness and resilience necessary to act is a significant strength of their capacity as peacebuilders.

Working together in a team

A strength that emerged from the study is the ability of young people to work together with peers as a unified team. This strength is necessary in peacebuilding as unified groups have the potential achieve a lot more than individuals working alone. Both groups of participants came together in a manner in which everyone was able to make a contribution towards a unified vision in all stages and activities of the process. This unified spirit allowed the inclusion of all group members as well as new participants. This strength of young people to work as peace builders in a united team relates to the nature of interpersonal relationships amongst peers (see section 2.9.3 on *Interpersonal relationships*) in which the influence of young people's friends at a certain age surpasses that of family to essentially become a surrogate family. The influence of the peer group plays a prominent role during the period of adolescence, and one's group of friends can dictate whether an individual becomes a victim, a perpetrator or a peace builder.

Guiding and helping younger peers

In addition to working with same age peers, a capacity of young people as peacebuilders is to positively influence their younger peers. An observation of group 1 in this study was the competence the 16-year-old volunteer applied to collaborating with the younger members of the group, to assist with facilitation and by being a true friend to them. The effectiveness of this interaction is reflective of the proximity in age the group members had to the volunteer. Young peacebuilders can play an important role towards their younger peers who can relate to someone from the same school and neighbourhood and who may face similar life circumstances.

As mentioned in section 2.9.3 on *Interpersonal relationships*, young people spend an increasing amount of time with peers and the level of importance attached to these networks cannot be underestimated. As the importance of peers in value formation and as a behavioural guide increases, so does the necessity that there are older peers who have the capacity to guide others in a positive direction.

Relatedly, participants cited peer pressure as one of the social issues that prevent peace (see section 4.5 on *Peer pressure*). Furthermore, a case study cited in section 2.10.3 states

that “youth servicing the children of the neighbourhood is an obvious strategy that creates a multitude of positive outcomes, including establishing trust and nurturing future youth leaders” (Sancar and Severcan 2010: 284).

Courage

One of the strengths of young people’s participation in peace building mentioned in section 2.7, *Moving from deficit to asset*, is courage. Many young people who suffer under existing structural norms and violence are jeopardised by a weight of hopelessness that in turn influences their adult life choices. Often courage is needed to believe in a cause that others believe is impossible to change. Another strength of young people as peacebuilders is their courage to take a risk to not only believe a new future is possible, but to actively work towards create it. Participating in peacebuilding can be challenging when peers, neighbours, classmates and even family members are unsupportive or in favour of violence (see the findings in section 4.3 on *Using violence to solve problems*). Courage is a strength young people in particular can cultivate as they are willing to take risks that will make a positive difference to their future and the future of their communities and to break the social and structural barriers that prevent their participation in peacebuilding and other forms of social action.

6.3 Constraints facing young people as peacebuilders

Some of the concerns raised by participants and described in chapter 4, *YPAR in practice: emerging themes*, including peer pressure, transactional sex or the “blesser” phenomenon and the use of violence can be considered constraints to their involvement in peacebuilding. In this section, such constraining factors will be examined more broadly at the level of individual, microsystem and macrosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner’s socio-ecological model. They will be discussed in relation to experiences of the YPAR program and relevant sections of previous chapters.

Individual

Race, gender, temperament and socialisation are elements likely to influence how one interacts with their social contexts and the influence that the context has on them (see section 2.5.2 on *Principle causes of young people's involvement in violent behaviour in South Africa*). Some potential young peace builders may be discouraged or are despondent about their capacity to change society positively due to the negative social conditions they have experienced or continue to experience. These can include long-term poverty, deep value erosion, pervasive violence and oppressive gender norms (see section 2.3.1 on *The normalisation of violence at the level of the individual*).

Microsystem

The microsystem is the term used to describe the everyday social contexts in which an individual is exposed to and influenced by. The researcher's experience interacting with the participants of the YPAR program found that many young people have responsibilities towards their family that may constrain their involvement and participation in peacebuilding and other pro-social initiatives. The responsibility to take care of housework and visiting family members, to look after siblings or find paid holiday work were notable instances. Their control of time, decisions and resources was further constrained due to their lack of autonomy. This is reflective of a definitively low status as dependents within the relational structures in which they inhabit (see section 2.6 on *Adult perceptions of young people*).

Another aspect of relationships that can either empower or constrain young people is their relationships with peers. Part of the success of this YPAR program was the strength of the relationship that existed and was then strengthened between group members.

Unfortunately, gender was a constraining aspect for one group member in particular who attended regularly but did not participate in the intervention phase possibly because he was the only male participant.

The context of the community can also be a constraining factor in peacebuilding.

Neighbourhoods and schools with a negative social climate can constrain young people

both in terms of destructive influences and weak institutional and infrastructural support. Young people can also be constrained by living in a community that normalises assault, robbery or corporal punishment (see section 4.2 on participants views on *The importance of security and safety*). Furthermore, when violence is used as a way to solve problems (see section 4.3 on *Using violence to solve problems*), this can further constrain young people to see the possibilities outside these normalised dynamics.

Macrosystem

As stated in section 2.5.2 on the *Principle causes of young people's involvement in violent behaviour in South Africa*, the macrosystem is not visible in everyday interactions but is nonetheless influential in a person's life. Socio-economic factors and cultural norms and attitudes that trickle down from the broader societal level or from the mass media have an influence on an individual's exposure to aggression and violence. There are societal factors that either encourage or constrain youth to be involved in peacebuilding. An overarching constraint young people as peacebuilders face is the polarised positioning of youth as either infantilised victims or demonised perpetrators. As mentioned in section 1.2 on *Background and research problem*, a common perception of young people is either that they are a problem that needs to be fixed or casualties that need to be helped.

Even more constraining is an insidious form of victim blaming which views any of their problems solely as a result of their own choices. Section 2.6 on *Adult perceptions of young people's capacity* expands further on the common perception that young people are incomplete and incompetent compared to a competent adult. This kind of paternalism constrains young people to gain the power and resources necessary to contribute to building peace. Without a societal re-examination of their role and the type of support necessary for their direct participation, young people will always be constrained to the extent society, its institutions and norms do not value them as competent and capable human beings.

6.4 How young people's peacebuilding capacity can be strengthened

This section describes a selection of approaches that can strengthen young people's capacity as peacebuilders. If we examine the language that is frequently used to describe such a process, it is often framed as the support that adults can provide. Words like promote, build upon, be sensitive, enable, create, involve, enhance, invest and introduce are noble guiding principles. However, this informs only the roles adults can play in strengthening young people contribution to peace. Some of these roles are described in the first sub-heading. The following sub-heading will then examine how initiating activities and supporting younger peers has the potential to strengthen the capacity of young people. The final section discusses the value of using innovative methodologies as a means to strengthen capacity and relates these tools to the findings of this YPAR study.

The role of adults

The role of adults in strengthening young people's peacebuilding capacity is significant in the protection of human rights, promoting agency and participation and intergenerational exchange. Supportive adults can include teachers, non-profit workers and community and religious leaders. Theories of the role of adults in young people's participation described in section 2.8.2 on *Principles and theories of young people's participation* under the sub-heading *The role of adults* are relevant as they acknowledge some of the complexities pertaining to adult support.

There are various steps that adults can take to strengthen young people's capacity, ranging from assigning projects that respect young people's views, to supporting ideas initiated by young people themselves. As there is no one approach that can be defined as best practice, the typologies described in section 2.8.2 merely allow us to distinguish meaningful involvement from tokenism. Furthermore, having adult support available without creating dependencies or unequal power dynamics gives young people an opportunity to take charge themselves which can in turn strengthen their capacity. The findings of the current YPAR study indicate that an adult researcher initiating and offering an opportunity was just the first step towards participants initiating their own plans, decisions and actions.

The role of young people

The role young people play in starting activities and supporting peers can be crucial in strengthening their capacity. If we look at Hart's ladder (Hart 1992: 8) in section 2.8.2 on *Principles and theories of participation*, the highest degree of initiative described in the typology is young people coming forward with ideas, setting up the project and inviting adults to join them. This view is based on the idea that adult-centric plans have the potential to further perpetuate an adult position of power, which in turn stunts the growth of capacity in young people. One way in which they can be strengthened is through opportunities that have increasing amounts of responsibility and ownership at the forefront of peacebuilding processes.

Artistic media

In this YPAR study, it was observed that artistic media strengthened existing capacities of young people to engage creatively towards the goal of peace building. When participants were in a focus group setting, participation would be limited. However, meaningful dialogue and dynamic outcomes emerged from participation in artistic media. This finding was evident when participants presented the *Community/school base maps*, when reflecting as a group on the *Making a nest* activity and when engaged in creating drama skits, public theatre and the creation of photo stories. It can be posited that artistic media gave participants an accessible and dynamic opportunity to contribute and strengthen their capacity towards the goal of building peace.

6.5 How this study compares to previous case studies

The researcher was unable to locate any studies that are designed using YPAR methodology for the purpose of increasing peacebuilding capacity in young people. The following points of agreement and contrast covered in this section will be drawn from the

findings of previous studies that were similarly inspired by the principle of young people's participation and participatory action research.

Results described by Morrell (2008: 182) of a participatory study with high school students aimed at school change through educational research define YPAR as a powerful model of youth engagement "that affirms the legitimate role young people can and should play in the process of collecting and analysing data that reveals the contemporary conditions of urban schools and communities." The current study supports these findings in that the process of YPAR afforded the participants an opportunity to play a key role in producing, collecting and analysing data about their lived experience and local reality. Furthermore, the findings of the current study support the notion that in order to change current conditions, young people must play a central role in bringing forth data and personal experiences that critique current practices (Morrell 2008: 182).

The findings of the current study further indicate that using artistic media in YPAR is an effective means to designing interventions and in identifying critical needs. Supporting this notion is the work of Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2010: 67) who used Photovoice in an innovative YPAR project engaging 19 middle school-aged youth in problem identification, data analysis and feedback. As a participatory method, Photovoice allows individuals to capture their voices and visions of their lives and community through photography. The study illustrates how using this type of praxis enabled the development of a more critical understanding of community problems.

Furthermore, a study by Burke and Greene (2015: 398) found that using the cultural tools of language, image and text in new contexts allowed the young participants in their PAR study to "re-appropriate these tools in ways that enabled them to develop a sense of agency." This further articulates the importance of artistic media in fostering meaningful participation and empowerment in YPAR program design.

The current project contrasted with a recent South African study that used YPAR to assess teenage pregnancy prevention strategies conducted by Wood and Hendricks (2016), as well as the previously mentioned study by Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2010). These studies did not

involve the implementation of an action phase. Its intentional inclusion in the current YPAR program design was a strength that corresponds with the theory of YPAR discussed in section 3.2.1, where Rubin and Jones (2007: 363) describe it as a method “conducted by youth...with the goal of informing and affecting school, community, and or global problems and issues.” Relatedly, the findings of Shier (2010: 225) cited in section 2.10.2 demonstrate that direct action can be hugely effective in working for change.

6.6 Ensuring validity and reliability

Section 3.9 of the methodology described procedures and attitudes that would increase the reliability and validity of this study. In terms of reliability, all steps of the research project were documented and a detailed case study protocol was outlined (see section 3.2 on *Research design* and chapter 5 which covers the entire *YPAR process*). In addition, the academic supervisor was consulted during all stages of the process.

To ensure the validity of the study, *triangulation* was used as a means to justify the themes and findings of the study through examining evidence from different data sources. A *rich, thick description* was used and the detailed descriptions add validity to the findings by providing a realistic and rich depiction of the process.

The researcher spent *prolonged time* in the research setting, and a more in-depth understanding that stemmed from this exposure lent credibility to the findings. A useful method of gaining further validation for the study would have been *informant feedback*, also known as *respondent validation*. The researcher decided not to carry out this procedure due to the inclusive and participatory nature of the study. Contrary to the implications carried by terms *informant* or *respondent*, the role of participants as knowledge producers within a team of peacebuilders involved a complex engagement that would be difficult to validate by one individual.

Lastly, as is the nature of participatory research, the participants’ involvement was not entirely uniform and flexibility was necessary for the research to carry on without

interruption. While there the majority participants who were there throughout, those who joined during the program did not cause any disruption and were able to participate fully into the program on whichever day they were present. This did not jeopardise the overall outcome of the study and furthermore provided a “safe space” dynamic in which participants could invite their peers to contribute.

6.7 Reflections on the intervention phase

The following findings and points of discussion arose from reflecting on and analysing the results of the photo story and drama intervention. The first is the way in which the content of the dramas and stories are representative of the age of the participants. The second is the degree to which the stories are a reflection of the reality of participants lived experiences.

Group 1’s *Eish, Mama I’m pregnant* photo story portrays the protagonists *Zinzi* and *Lethiwe* as young women who defer to the adults in their lives. Even the title *Eish, Mama I’m pregnant* implies that the actions of the protagonist are framed as a reflection of disobedience to one’s mother. In the first scenes, the teacher assaults one of the young women when she confiscates her cellphone. The teacher then contacts *Zinzi* and *Lethiwe*’s mothers. The first to hear gossip about *Lethiwe* is her mother, not *Lethiwe*, despite the fact that it is her friend who delivers it. *Lethiwe*’s mother then proceeds to get into a physical fight with *Zinzi*’s mother about this gossip. Finally, when *Zinzi* discovers she is pregnant, she seeks consolation with *Aunt Thobile*. With the exception of the last scenes at the club, all of the protagonist’s actions are linked back to some kind of guardian or adult in their lives. With one exception, all of the participants who participated in both the drama and creating the photo story are 14.

In contrast, *Sthembile*, the protagonist of group 2’s *#Why blessers must fall*, is a 16-year-old who lives alone as both her parents are deceased. Two other characters can be counted as peers – the friend who encourages her to meet the *blessor* and the drug dealer. The *blessor*, cannot be defined as a guardian in *Sthembile*’s life despite his being an adult. The

nurse is an incremental character who also does not play a guardianship role. We can presume that the character of *Sthembile* plays the role of an adult herself as she doesn't answer to anyone, has adult decisions and responsibilities and has no one to look out for her, fight her battles or chastise her like the protagonists in group 1's story. The story ends with *Sthembile* taking on the ultimate adult responsibility when she becomes a parent. Again, the content of the photo story and drama performance may be indicative of the participants who created it and their respective ages. Of the seven participants who created the photo story, five were aged 16 or 17. Like the creators of *Eish*, *Mama I'm pregnant*, there is a potential link between age of participants and the story they created.

Group 1's story directly addresses the issue of teen pregnancy but has an undercurrent of violence. Violence is used in the classroom, a physical altercation occurs in public between two mothers and *Zinzi* and *Lethiwe* get into a fight in a club. We can observe that violence is a theme that is woven throughout the story. Instead of violence being perpetrated by an external aggressor like the *blessers* in group 2, violence is perpetrated by the very guardians to which the protagonists must answer to.

If we look at the critical issues that group 2's story addresses – sexual assault, *blessers*, drug abuse, poverty – one can assume that these issues are taken from experiences of the young people that created the story and their age group. How the participants express their knowledge of these social issues through their story raises the question – “is the ability to conceptualise and express an experience always come from one's own personal experience? Or can social knowledge derived from observation offer as powerful a tool of expressing a lived experience that is not one's own?” Unfortunately, these questions are outwith the scope of this study but are worth contemplating in order to consider the contextual processes in which the stories were developed.

6.8 Challenges facing YPAR programs

There are many challenges when engaging in any program of PAR or YPAR. The following considerations can offer insights into improving practice when approaching this kind of work.

The largest challenge faced in this study was guaranteeing the involvement of young people in group 2 who had volunteered to participate following the process of recruitment described in section 5.2.1 on *Recruiting participants*. For group 1, the attrition rate was low with only two out of ten initial participants absent. With group 2, six participants out of ten were entirely absent. It is possible that the contrast in the rate of attrition can be attributed to the length of time between the recruitment meeting that happened on the 24 of June and the first day of group 2's engagement which occurred 10 days later on 4 July.

There are several strategies that could have been employed to counter this lack of consistency. One is that the recruitment of participants be designed as a planned process with targeted follow up before the program commences. The second would be to run group 1 and 2 concurrently. In hindsight, had the researcher been aware that the rate of attrition would be so high in the second week then one of these strategies could have executed. Unfortunately, given that 80% of the recruited participants came for week 1, the researcher did not foresee that there would be a challenge the following week.

During the recruitment phase, the researcher spoke to 20 learners, a vast majority of whom were 15 and under. Other learners who were interested in making a contribution and were aged 16 and older were invited to join as volunteers. In practice, however, there was little distinction between the volunteers as they joined in as the rest of the participants, albeit in with the view to helping their younger peers. This was not necessarily a major shortcoming of the entire study, but a notable observation. With the first group, the inclusion of one or two older volunteers who facilitated and lead many of the activities created a positive inter-generational dynamic. In contrast, the majority of the members of group 2 came into the study as volunteers but became the participants due to low numbers.

It is also worth noting that group 2 was challenged by a lack of consistent attendance overall. Participant's would bring a friend or sibling one day but not attend the next day. Ultimately, this meant that we did not have the same individuals consistently integrating the work that had previously been done with what was emerging during a given session. To counter this lack of consistency and offset the complications associated with a shifting participant base, YPAR projects can first do a more thorough introduction to prospective participants about the necessity of commitment to a certain period of participation.

6.9 Conclusion

At a fundamental level, the program demonstrated the importance of creating opportunities that give voice to young people's concerns whilst also supporting their interest and capacity in building peace and creating positive social change. It also highlights the methodological necessity of designing YPAR approaches that can effectively tap into this wisdom and promote critical consciousness.

We can speculate that participatory power is strengthened when participants in a YPAR program have the opportunity to expand not only their own critical consciousness but also that of their community and peers. Each phase of a YPAR program can make an important and unique impact on the participants. It is worth noting a potential link between empowering and participatory outcomes and practical interventions. Participants commented that learning to "*protect themselves*," and "*for the voices of us youngsters to be heard*," means they have "*to work together with the community*" and "*advise everyone about what should they do to build peace*." As one of the participants noted:

I wish for a better world – where people are smiling everywhere, where there is no more pain and suffering, children happy as can be, no more wars just peace and love. #PEACE MUST REIGN!

There is a potential correlation between participating in the YPAR program and gaining a heightened sense of awareness and solidarity towards the collective power that young

people can harness to enact change and build peace. There is also growing evidence to suggest that the program enhanced the participant's engagement within the community. The YPAR program was followed up with a 2-week summer holiday program in which 12 to 14 participants, most of whom were part of this study, engaged in a moral development curriculum and began to train as "Peace Leaders." Following this program the group decided to implement an open day for younger members of the community so that they could also join peace clubs that the "Peace Leaders" will facilitate.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to implement a program of YPAR in order to develop and examine the potential of young people as peacebuilders. The objectives were for the participants to explore and identify the social needs of the community in which they live and to plan, implement and evaluate a peace building intervention through the implementation of six distinct phases of YPAR. A secondary aim of this study was to present a thematic analysis of the data collected during the engagement.

The design and execution of a YPAR program with two groups of young people aged 14-17 (see section 3.2. on *Research Design*), frames the objectives of this study based on the six phases conducted. The first phase, the purpose of which is described in section 3.2.3, was *pre-reflection*. If we refer to the description of the actual engagement with the YPAR program in chapter five, we find that the phase of *pre-reflection* (described in section fulfilled its purpose of team building and exploration of identities and topics in a safe environment. The results describe the creation of a *common set of values* was established, the experiences doing team building exercises and energisers and the processes that developed problem-solving skills. As such we can deduce that a potential outcome of this phase was a more profound and in-depth engagement in the remaining parts of the process.

Phase 2 of the YPAR process was *topic identification* (see section 3.2.4). Here the participants studied their social context and engaged in a mapping activity that allowed for the identification of social issues and dynamics that could be used in discussion. The intended outcome of this phase was fulfilled when participants made a collective decision on which social issues they would like to do an intervention on.

The intention of the *data gathering and interpretation* phase described in section 3.2.5 was for participants to develop a research tool, to implement it and then discuss their findings together. Both YPAR groups developed surveys, conducted face-to-face interviews and shared their results with the rest of the group. During the next phase *plan of action* (section 3.2.6), participants were able to draw on the collaborative activities of phases 1-3 to plan their intervention.

The intervention phases discussed in section 5.5 describe the experiences of participants in their peace building intervention. This phase was the ultimate result of the participant's engagement with previous phases. A potential outcome is that participants were strengthened as peacebuilders through expanding the consciousness of their community and peers.

The final phase, *evaluation*, described in section 3.2.8, only partially fulfilled its objective to generate participant's reflections and thoughts about the process. Although a written evaluation was conducted by participants before the intervention phase, circumstances did not allow for a specific evaluation done after the *intervention* phase. In addition, triangulation or the use of several evaluation tools could have offered richer results and beneficial outcomes for both the participants and the objectives of the study.

A secondary aim of this study was to present, analyse and discuss the participants immediate concerns about their social context according to themes. Chapter 4 examined five overarching themes that emerged from the YPAR program. Drawing on an array of data from the audio and visual material gathered, the chapter presented a selection of this data along with analysis and discussion on its implications. The findings of this chapter

provide a tentative inventory of the participant's experiences in their lives and communities that offers insights into the change they want to enact in as peacebuilders.

7.2 Recommendations

The findings of this study can offer further recommendations around the implementation of YPAR and of the involvement of young people aged 14-17 in peace building activities. First of all, further research is needed to replicate similar studies across communities that employ a robust methodology, giving careful consideration not just to the phases of YPAR, but also to important elements prior to and following the engagement. This includes recruitment and the *evaluation* phase. Furthermore, inclusion of more research sites would permit greater knowledge of community-level factors and thus broaden the experiences in the field of youth-led participation in peacebuilding.

Using YPAR as a vehicle to foster the development of young people as peacebuilders is only one of several approaches. Peace and values education, service learning and moral and spiritual curriculums can offer equally, if not more valuable outcomes. The YPAR methodology was used for the purposes of this study, but the use of other methodologies can provide a source of convergent data from which to draw conclusions.

The field of peacebuilding would benefit from developing the knowledge of how specific experiences of young people, like those featured in this study, can lead the way for the expansion of young people's participation. Creating momentum for building a peaceful society can only occur when it is a process open for a vast number of young people to contribute towards.

7.3 Personal reflection

I would like to end this dissertation with a personal reflection that perhaps links my own experiences to those of the participants. I grew up in Dundee, Scotland, the fourth largest city but a small one by global standards. My mother is Scottish, an artist and teacher who

has worked in the fields of community arts and interfaith development. My father was studying civil engineering in the UK when the Iranian revolution happened. He was unable to return home - even for a visit - for over 25 years due to the on-going systematic persecution and oppression of the Bahá'í community in that country.

Growing up in an intercultural Bahá'í family, I was exposed to diverse people from all walks of life. My parents opened their home to other families, travellers and youth; they took us to Bahá'í residential schools as well as religious and cultural celebrations of neighbours and friends. They exposed my brother and me to the reality of humanity as one family and the whole earth as one home. We all lived together in perfect harmony – family, friends, neighbours and community.

This was until the year 1995 when I started my first year in the local public secondary school at the age of 11. From the very first week I was teased and bullied mercilessly. Being a “half-caste” meant that my related appearance, name and ambiguous religious and socio-cultural background coupled with a middle class upbringing and associated advantages made me an obvious target. Ironically, some of the pupils who teased me had similar middle class backgrounds but used their hateful words and behaviour as social leverage. Of course, this is how most bullies operate, and it's easy to mock someone who doesn't fit in, has few allies and a plethora of peculiarities. To add to the misery, I was excluded from the preppy clique that my primary school classmates had formed. As a result, I was left to fend for myself. There were a few lonely lunchtimes in the playground and many, many more challenging experiences to come. Thankfully, I had a few relatively likeminded yet meek classmates to stick to.

Teachers remained ignorant of the problem and made no attempt to intervene and neither did my parents, despite my deteriorating behaviour at home and my plummeting attendance at school. I was often suicidal, depressed or plain miserable for much of that period.

During this time family friends from another part of Scotland began hosting Bahá'í youth weekends. Without a doubt, my parents wanted us to reap the benefit of fostering

veritable friendships with other youth at these residentials and to develop our own Bahá'í identity.

So we were packed off to these “youth weekends” a couple of times a year between the ages of 12 and 16. Although I remember nothing about our topics of study, what I do remember most vividly is the gorge trekking, mountain biking, swimming, hiking, live music, discos and all the other young people from around the country. Most of all, I remember the sessions with a theatre practitioner named Grant Morley, a 2 metre tall, 130kg ginger haired man who must have been in his 20s at the time. All of his sessions were an absolute blast. Grant's vast repertoire of energisers, vocal and physical warm-ups, team games, drama-skills development and improvisation activities were my highlight of the youth weekends. In addition, he created a safe environment in which everyone was able to participate. This was very different from the school experience I would inevitably return to on Monday morning.

I left secondary school when I was 16 without the preparation and mobility to do what I really wanted – I was told (in between guffaws) during a career guidance session that a course that allows you to pursue music *and* art doesn't exist. I then bounced between tertiary courses in the social sciences before I finally ejected myself from the system and left the city of Dundee for the distant shores of South Africa.

A stroke of luck coupled with sheer determination allowed me the opportunity to expand my horizons through embarking on a gap year with a performing arts and youth empowerment program. There were a dozen international and local youth who travelled together to various Bahá'í communities around South Africa that year. During our visits we would perform in government schools and community centres, conduct workshops on social issues and support local Bahá'í initiatives. I learned about the socio-cultural dynamics of this country through the many young people whose paths I crossed during our travels. I developed important human emotions like compassion and dedication. The angry young woman was fading away. In addition, my eyes were finally opened to the injustice that surrounded me and I embraced being part of a larger solution.

Since that time my orientation and passion towards working with young people and artistic media has been cemented. For now I will spare you from the following 13 years, but needless to say it was these early experiences that have in large part informed the focus and scope of my career and ultimately of this study. I stumbled into the field of peacebuilding by chance and writing this dissertation has given me the opportunity to hone my particular interests to create a project that combines this groundbreaking discipline with my personal interest in youth development.

My sincere intention was to offer a space for other young people, who, like myself at their age, may be struggling with their circumstances. I wish for that space to be one that allows them to explore and become empowered, form authentic friendships and ultimately to take the message of peace and harmony to their younger peers, families and communities. Admittedly, I am merely a novice in this arena attempting to channel all that I have learned in my life up to now towards a profound and meaningful cause.

Aluta continua!



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Appendix

Appendix 1: Consent forms and information letters



CONSENT FORM

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

PLEASE PUT A ✓ ☐ IF YOU AGREE ☐ OR A ✗ ☐ IF YOU DISAGREE:

I have been given enough information about this project ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐

I agree to (name of young person) participating ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐
in the project

It has been explained to me what activities he/she will be doing ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐

I understand that my young person can stop participating at any time ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐

I am happy for my young person to be filmed or recorded ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐

I give permission for my young person's words to be written down ✓ ☐ ✗ ☐
but understand that their name will not be mentioned

Full Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
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Full Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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Full Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
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Full Name of Witness	Signature	Date
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CONSENT FORM

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

PLEASE PUT A ✓ IF YOU AGREE OR A ✗ IF YOU DISAGREE:

I have been given enough information about this project

✓ ☐ ✗ ☐

I agree to be a group member in the project

✓ ☐ X ☐

It has been explained to me what activities we will be doing for the next week

✓ ☐ X ☐

I understand that I can leave at any time

✓ ☐ X ☐

I am happy to be filmed or recorded

✓ ☐ X ☐

I give permission for my words to be written down but that my name will not be mentioned

✓ ☐ X ☐

Name Date



PEACE PROJECT AT MAYVILLE SECONDARY

INFORMATION LETTER

FOR STAFF/GATEKEEPERS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for taking an interest in my study.

My name is Roya Varjavandi and I am currently a student doing a Master's degree in Peace at DUT. Professor Geoff Harris is supervising this study.

This letter contains some information that I hope will give you a clearer understanding about the Peace Project happening every weekday **Monday 27th June to Friday 8th July** at Mayville High School.

I would be very grateful if you would allow the young people in your care to take part.

- 20 volunteers from Grade 8 and 9 will take part in the Peace Project **every morning from 9am to 1pm** from the 27th June to the 8th of July. They will be working together to find ways to promote peace and unity in school and in the community.
- Myself and Ms Bhengu, the Geography teacher, will oversee the program and some older learners in the school will also be helping.
- They will do interviews with other young people, work together as a team to find out what they can do and plan a project of their own that promotes peace.
- If the young person in your care decides they no longer want to take part they can stop at anytime.
- Even though there will be no payment, lunch will be provided and the volunteers will go for an outing on Saturday 9 July.
- The young people will be filmed during these sessions so that we can all learn as much as we can from them. When a final report is done names or identities will not be mentioned and the video material will be kept in a safe place and only seen by the student, Roya Varjavandi.

Should you have any more questions please feel free to speak to me or contact me on 0728071705.

My supervisor Prof. Geoff Harris at DUT is available on 0313735609.

Sincerely,

Roya Varjavandi



PEACE PROJECT AT MAYVILLE HIGH

INFORMATION LETTER

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for taking an interest in my study.

My name is Roya Varjavandi and I am currently a student doing a Master's degree in Peace at DUT. Professor Geoff Harris is supervising this study.

This letter contains some information that I hope will give you a clearer understanding about the Peace Project happening from **Monday 4th July to Friday 8th July** at Mayville High School.

I would be very grateful if you would allow the young person in your care to take part.

- 20 volunteers from Grade 8 and 9 will take part in the Peace Project **every morning from 9am to 1pm** from the 4th June to the 8th July. They will be working together to find ways to promote peace and unity in school and in the community.
- Myself and Ms Bhengu, the Geography teacher, will be present and some older learners in the school will also be helping.
- They will do interviews with other young people, work together as a team to find out what they can do and plan a project of their own that promotes peace.
- If the young person in your care decides they no longer want to take part they can stop at anytime.
- Even though there will be no payment, lunch will be provided and the volunteers are invited to go for an outing together on Saturday 9 July.
- The young people will be filmed during these sessions so that we can all learn as much as we can from them. When a final report is done names or identities will not be mentioned and the video material will be kept in a safe place and only seen by the student, Roya Varjavandi.

Should you have any more questions please feel free to speak to me or contact me on 0728071705.

My supervisor Prof. Geoff Harris at DUT is available on 0313735609.

Sincerely,

Roya Varjavandi

Appendix 2: Sample of Group 1 and 2's survey results

Name of interviewer: Kutlwano

Age: 18

Gender: female

1. What causes teen pregnancy?

Teen girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents.

Many parents have busy lives that prevent them from providing the guidance and support that their young teenagers need to make good decisions on issues such as sex.

2. What are the effects of teen pregnancy?

Teen pregnancy is a serious that may impact the future of a young woman. Any teen pregnancy will be a challenge as teens typically lack skills, needed to be handle a pregnancy and motherhood, patience, maturity and ability to handle stress. Teen pregnancy may also impact the baby.

3. What can prevent it?

You can prevent unwanted pregnancy with:

- total abstinence from sex
- use of contraceptive
- if you are sexually active and do not want to get pregnant always use contraception and condom

Mayville Secondary Peace Educators Survey

1. What are the causes of blessers?

- ☒ Poverty
- ✓ Greed
- ✓ Inequality
- ✓ High life

2. Are blessers the main cause of teenage pregnancy and the spread of HIV/AIDS?

- ✓ Yes
- ☒ No

3. How can young men and young women stop blessers?

- ✓ With violence
- ✓ Awareness campaigns
- ✓ Income generation through small business
- ☒ Being supportive and encouraging each other

4. Why doesn't the community care?

- ☒ Each family looks out for their own family
- ✓ Parents have given up
- ✓ No information or resources
- ✓ Children on drugs can't be controlled

Notes:

Blessers are not good because they destroy the community future cause student they do not study because they know they have blessers that they will feed them if they do not find work because of infrastructure

Appendix 3: Sample of evaluation forms

Interviewer Othe

Interviewee Nokuthula

Tell me about your experience in Peace Club this week...

It was an awesome experience I learn new things and did things for the first time in my life.

Favourite part?

Yoga and Drama

Least favourite part?

~~Int~~ Intergration and Disintergration

How could it have been better?

It could have been better if we were given a big chart to fit all the pictures reppering to the

What do you think about young people getting involved in building peace? activities.

I think it could help build communities to be united and it would help make a good enviroment

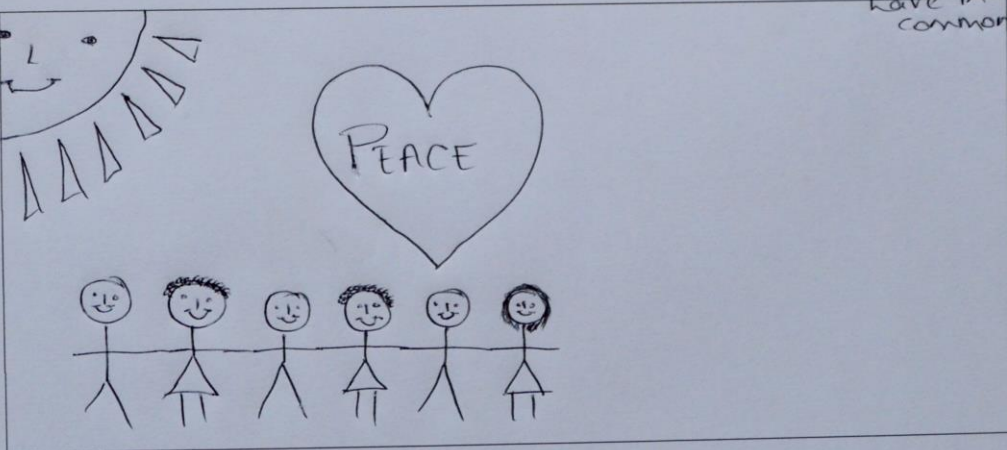
Would you like to do more to build peace? for people to live in.

Yes/yeap

If you could do anything to make the world have more peace what you do?

I would try to find something I could do so that every one can be happy and I would that would

Please draw a picture in the box below of what you think living in peace looks like. be something that people have in common.



Interviewer Olwethu Nyathi

Interviewee Sanelisile Shange

Tell me about your experience in Peace Club this week...

Favourite part?

Yoga

Least favourite part?

None

How could it have been better?

more yoga and trust games

What do you think about young people getting involved in building peace?

It's awesome

Would you like to do more to build peace?

Yes

If you could do anything to make the world have more peace what you do?

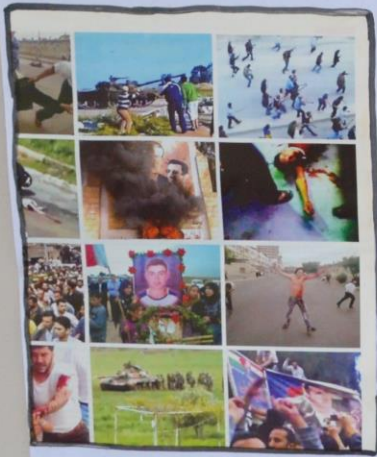
Revoke any xenophobic attacks on refugees.

Please draw a picture in the box below of what you think living in peace looks like:



[illegible]

Disintegration...



Violent protests

Integration

(DOCTORS)



A black and white photograph of a person holding a sign that says "Peace". The sign is tilted and has the word "Peace" written in a cursive, handwritten style. The person holding the sign is partially visible in the background.

HELPER'S

DIS INTEGRATION

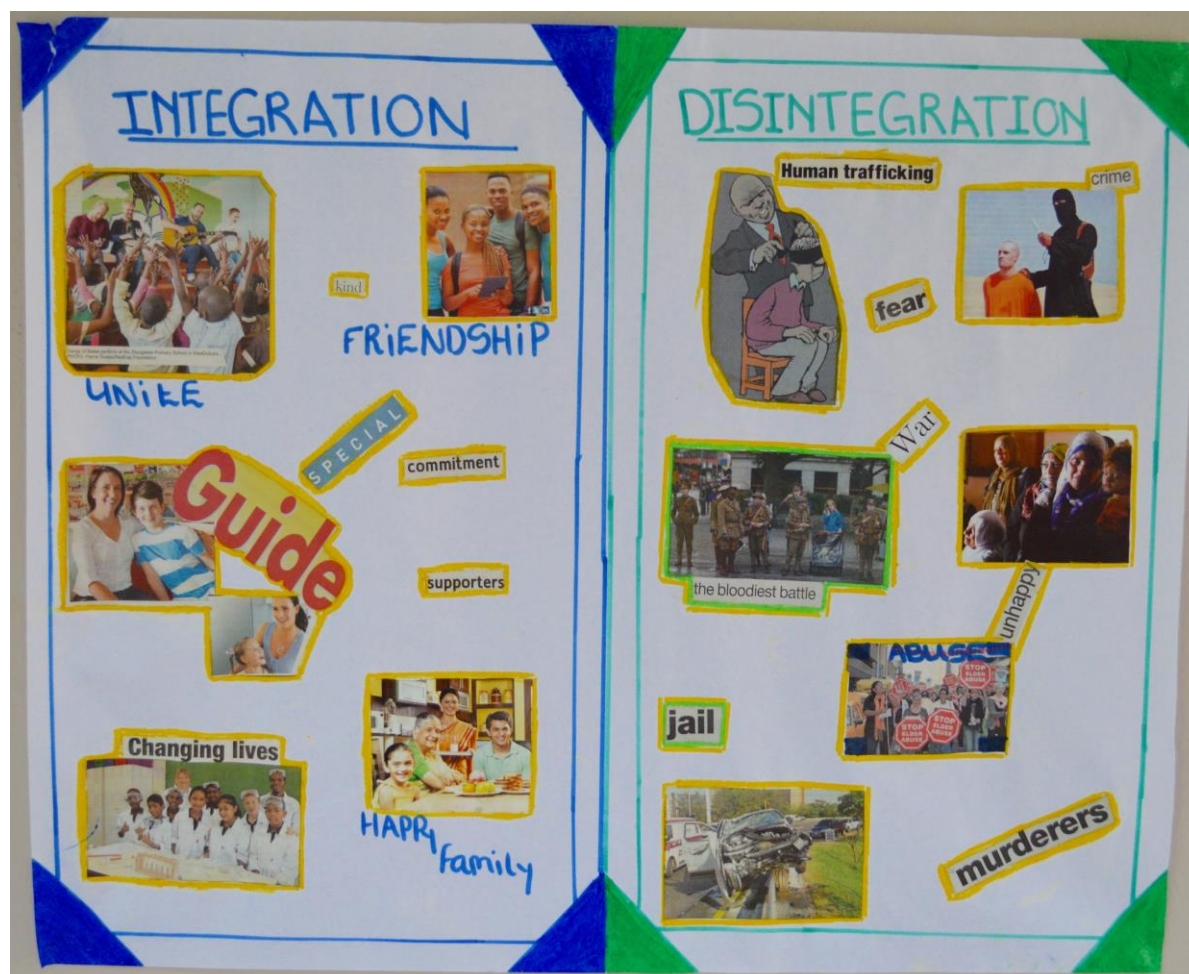


♥... INTEGRATION... LOVE♥



...DISINTEGRATION...





INTEGRATION

PEACE



kind

EMBRACE



closure



UNITY

potential



love

FUN



LOVE

DISINTEGRATION

ILLEGAL



Protest

Discrimination

crime

angry



pressure



DEPRESSION



TERRORISM

MURDERED



aggressive

intimidation

arrest

